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Observing Norms:

Explaining the Causes and Consequences of Internationally Monitored Elections

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Susan Dayton Hyde

Committee in charge:

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Professor Carlos H. Waisman

2006

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2006

## DEDICATION

To my mother, Glenda, to my father, Dayton, and to my husband, Sean

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All errors and omissions are my own.

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Observing Norms:

Explaining the Causes and Consequences of Internationally Monitored Elections

by

Susan Dayton Hyde

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, San Diego, 2006

Professor David A. Lake, Chair

Until 1962, there were no recorded cases of international election observation in sovereign states. By 2004, more than 80 percent of elections held in non-consolidated democracies were internationally monitored, and all internationally legitimate leaders outside of the developed democratic world were expected to invite international observers. This dissertation is motivated by the empirical puzzle that a substantial portion of leaders invite international election observers and then orchestrate massive electoral fraud. My argument is that election observation began as a signal to the international community that the incumbent leader was committed to democratizing. During the Cold War, leaders committed to democratization invited international observers in order to distinguish themselves from other leaders and curry

favor with Western-oriented states. As international benefits for democratizing states increased, the act of inviting observers was imitated by leaders who wanted the benefits of looking like a committed democrat without actually becoming one. I provide a formal model of the decision by incumbent leaders to invite international election observers. I also provide a general model of international benefit allocation, and show how the goal of democracy promotion is related to other goals of foreign policy. The formal model yields propositions that I test with several original large-N datasets. I show that election observation grew as the benefits of being perceived as a legitimate democracy increased, and as leaders grew more skilled at manipulating the election without being detected.

The growth of international election observation also carried domestic consequences. The empirical evidence presented in the later part of this dissertation demonstrates how this change in international politics influenced domestic politics in states that invite observers. First, I demonstrate that observers can reduce election day fraud. This causal claim is supported empirically with natural experimental evidence. A second effect of the spread of election observation is that improvements in certain leaders' ability to manipulate the election led to observable changes in opposition party behavior. Because leaders were more likely to invite observers as they improved their ability to manipulate the election undetected, opposition parties responded by boycotting elections more frequently when international observers were present.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

Until 1962, there were no recorded cases of international election observation in sovereign states. Today, it is rare for a developing country to have a legitimate election without the presence of international observers. Upwards of 80 percent of elections held in non-consolidated democracies are now internationally monitored. This trend is particularly puzzling for the group of leaders who invite observers and then orchestrate obvious electoral fraud. Alberto Fujimori of Peru, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, Manuel Noriega of Panama, and Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia have invited large delegations of international observers to judge their elections and were subsequently condemned internationally for widespread manipulation of the electoral process, in most cases ending ultimately in their removal from office. Inspired by this empirical puzzle, this dissertation will answer two research questions. First, if we assume that incumbents want to stay in power and exert the least effort possible in order to do so, what explains their willingness to invite international observers to judge their elections? Second, do international election observers influence politics in the countries where they observe?

Despite the growth of election observation, and the importance of democracy promotion in the foreign policy of powerful states and in international organizations, social scientists have not yet explained why sovereign nations accept these potentially costly intrusions into their domestic political processes, and what the domestic

consequences of these various forms of external assistance may be.<sup>1</sup> This dissertation explores the causes and consequences of one increasingly popular component of international democracy promotion: international election monitoring.

### **Why are international observers invited?**

I argue that election observation was initiated as a signal to the international community of a country's commitment to democracy. As the international benefits allocated based on democracy increased, this signal was then imitated by leaders wishing to maximize international benefits, but who were not necessarily committed democrats. Because of these incentives and the possibility that cheating incumbents could invite observers and not be caught and punished, election observation spread rapidly. As democracy became more important to the international community, international actors began to rely more on the reports of international observers, and further resources were invested in improving the quality of election observation. The repeated invitations from incumbent leaders allowed international support for democracy and self-determination to outweigh concerns that sending observers violated state sovereignty. Ultimately, the expectations of the international community changed such that international observers were an expected component of all internationally legitimate elections.

Initially, the international community was hesitant to send international observers because of concerns with violating sovereignty and because of the norm of nonintervention in domestic affairs of other states (Slater 1967, Beigbeder 1994,

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of work that discusses election observation see Abbink and Hessling 2000, Bjornlund 2004, Carothers 1997, Chand 1997, Diamond 2002, Geisler 1993, Kumar 1998, Laakso 2002, Middlebrook 1998, Pastor 1998, Santa-Cruz 2005. None of these pieces explicitly treat the research questions in this dissertation.

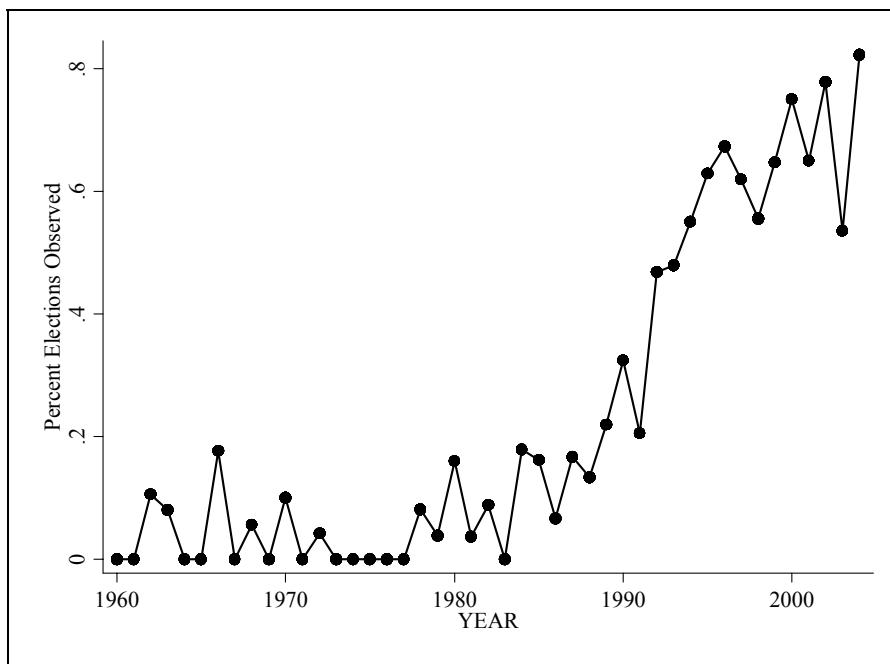


Bjornlund 2004). Incumbent leaders persisted in inviting observers even after being turned down by different international organizations. The fact that incumbent leaders continued to invite observer groups to evaluate their elections, along with growing global acceptance of democracy, eventually overrode concerns about sovereignty and election observation was accepted by international and domestic actors as a valid means to promote democracy in other countries. The fact that international observers are invited by incumbent leaders was crucial in this development. A voluntarily accepted limit on sovereignty could be interpreted as consistent with respect for sovereignty (Krasner 1999). Over time, however, the expectation became that all election-holding leaders outside of the developed-democratic world would invite international election observers, and those leaders who do not invite observers are now often punished. Figure 1.1 shows the rate of observed elections over time.

As international observers improved their methods and the international community became more willing to sanction flawed elections, the costs faced by incumbent leaders changed. Today, the type of leader who could previously invite observers and get away with fraud faces a tough choice. A leader unwilling to accept defeat in an election can choose to invite international observers and risk getting caught and punished for holding fraudulent elections, or the leader can choose not to invite international observers and send a clear signal that the elections are rigged, and that the leader is not interested in being a legitimate member of the international community.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Hedley Bull (1977) for a definition and discussion of international society.



**Figure 1.1: Percent of Elections Observed, 1960-2004**

**Note: Excludes Long-Term Consolidated Democracies and States with Population < 200,000**

In short, election observation began as a signal to international audiences that a leader was committed to democratizing. As international benefits tied to democracy increased, inviting observers was in the interest of most incumbent leaders, even those who were planning to rig their elections. Election observation spread rapidly when the probable benefits from inviting observers outweighed the risks. However, as incumbent leaders of all types continued to invite observers, and democracy promotion became a more prominent part of the foreign policy of developed democracies, the international community began to expect that observers would be invited. The act of not inviting observers became a clear signal that a leader was not committed to democratizing, and began to carry consequences.

### **Do international observers influence domestic politics?**

The traditional sub-field divide between international relations and comparative politics has not fostered a large scholarly discourse on how international politics influence domestic politics. Peter Gourevitch (1978) and Robert Putnam (1988) stand out as the most prominent exceptions to this generalization, but the effects of international actors are not systematically incorporated into many topics in comparative politics, and within international relations, outside of studies of military interventions, the domestic effects of international variables are often ignored completely.<sup>3</sup>

This has begun to change in several areas, most explicitly in international political economy. In fields more closely linked to election monitoring, studies have explored how the development of international human rights norms influence domestic politics. These studies provide specific information about how international norms influence domestic policy debates (Cortell and Davis 1996), or argue that the emotionally powerful topic of human rights norms have brought about domestic change in human rights policies (Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999). In the case of democratization, the attempt by international actors to manipulate domestic politics is overt, yet even democracy promotion organizations themselves have a poor understanding of how their activities influence politics in other countries. There is a need for rigorous empirical work on this topic, and only a few studies have branched into this area. Gleditsch (2002) and Gleditsch and Ward (2000) provide solid evidence that democratization is not just a domestic phenomenon. Pevehouse (2002)

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<sup>3</sup> For exceptions see Goldstein 1998, Pevehouse 2002, Drezner 2003, Marinov 2005, Milner 1997.

demonstrates that membership in international organizations increases the probability that a country will successfully democratize. Carothers (1997) argues that the record of American democracy promotion efforts is mediocre when judged against its stated purpose, however his analysis does not provide tests of specific policies.

International election observation represents a clear example of international involvement in domestic politics. Democracy promotion has become a major component of the foreign policy of most developed democracies. However, it remains a topic for debate whether this involvement has any substantive influence on the political process. In the latter part of this dissertation I focus on two tests of observer influence: whether international observers reduce election day fraud, and how observers influence opposition party behavior.

Electoral fraud can take many forms, and electoral manipulation continues to take place across the spectrum of political systems, even in the most advanced democracies (Cox and Kousser 1981, Lehoucq 2003, Lehoucq and Molina 2002, Schedler 2002b). Just as there are many types of electoral fraud, there are also many ways that it can be deterred. One way that international observers may reduce electoral fraud is that the presence of foreign observers in polling stations could discourage the polling station officials from engaging in election day fraud. There is disagreement about whether or not this is plausible, and to date there is no systematic evidence to prove or disprove claims about the effects of observers.

Some individuals and organizations in the democracy promotion community argue that one of the benefits of election observation is that it reduces election day fraud (Carothers 1997, Bjornlund 2004); however others argue that observers are

ineffectual bystanders (Geisler 1993). Whether observers can reduce election day fraud is an empirical question that can be answered with experimental research methods. In two cases, I test whether the presence of foreign observers throughout the country affects election day behavior. Since incumbent sponsored election day fraud increases the vote total for the incumbent, the average incumbent vote share can be compared between monitored and unmonitored polling stations. I present a field experiment and a natural experiment that test observers' effect on election day behavior, and show that under some conditions observers can reduce the rate of fraud directly.

Specifically, in the case of the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia, international monitors observed about one third of all polling stations in the first round of the election. The incumbent was widely believed to be cheating. International observers were assigned to polling stations in a way that closely approximates random assignment. Supporting the argument that observers deter fraud, the average vote share for the incumbent in observed polling stations was 6% lower than the average vote share in unobserved polling stations. This evidence is robust to other tests, and provides the only systematic evidence to date that international observers can reduce election day fraud. In the 2004 presidential elections in Indonesia, the election process turned out to be relatively fraud-free on election day. In contrast to Armenia, there is no observable difference between observed and unobserved areas, as would be expected in a clean election. This does not necessarily mean that observers had no effect. It is possible that the candidates chose not to engage in election day

manipulation because international observers were invited and they wished to avoid drawing negative international attention to election day.

By bringing additional media attention to elections and potentially legitimizing the outcome of an election by granting it a favorable report, international observers can have other effects on the electoral process. One of the causes of the rapid spread of election observation is that some incumbent leaders got better at manipulating the election and not getting caught by observers. Because opposition parties lose the most when a fraudulent election is declared internationally legitimate, they have an incentive to call attention to a manipulated election. Therefore, the improvement in incumbents' abilities to manipulate electoral outcomes without getting caught by observers caused an increase in the rate of opposition party election boycotts when observers are present. This dynamic interaction between the causes of election observation, domestic actors, and the international community underscores the importance of examining international changes in tandem with their domestic effects.

Increasing the probability that an incumbent politician will lose office is the most significant possible domestic effect of international observers. As mentioned, international observers can reduce election fraud, thereby making it more difficult for cheating incumbents to steal an election. An even more costly possible effect of international observers is that a negative report following an election can legitimize post-election protests, and increase the probability that an incumbent will be forced to leave office. This potential effect of observers is much more difficult to demonstrate systematically, but several anecdotal cases point to a trend that should make cheating incumbents wary. Post-election protests, when accompanied by a negative report from

international observers, are more commonly associated with the ouster of the incumbent leader than post-election protests that are not accompanied by a negative report from international observers. These negative reports can serve as a coordinating mechanism for opposition groups, and can bring additional external support and condemnation of the fraudulent election, as in Ukraine 2004 and Georgia 2003 (Fearon 2006, Marinov 2006). Without a negative report from international observers, as was initially the case in the 2005 elections in Ethiopia and in the 2004 recall referendum in Venezuela, post-election protests and complaints of fraud are more readily characterized as the actions of poor losers, and are therefore less likely to be successful in delegitimizing the election.

### **Sovereignty and International Election Observation**

These domestic effects of international observers also raise questions regarding the relationship between international observers and national sovereignty. Violations of Westphalian sovereignty are quite common (Krasner 1999, Lake 2003), and because violations of sovereignty have always taken place, demonstrating that a particular activity is a violation of sovereignty is not by itself an innovative contribution to the political science literature. However, it is useful to put the research questions presented here into this context.

The initial invitations from incumbent leaders to international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were contractual violations of Westphalian sovereignty, as described by Krasner. The presence of international observers was “mutually acceptable, Pareto-improving, and contingent” (1999, 33). Incumbents who invited international observers believed they would be better off as a

result, and there was no punishment for not inviting observers. As more leaders invited international observers, the Cold War came to an end, and promoting democracy became an international focal point, international actors began to punish leaders who did not invite observers. This eventually led to what Krasner calls “coercion,” in which “rulers in one state threaten to impose sanctions unless their counterparts in another compromise their domestic autonomy”(1999, 36). This change, from a contractual violation of sovereignty to a more coercive violation of sovereignty illustrates the change in the choice faced by incumbent leaders, and partially explains why the rate of observed elections continues to increase even as the consequences of cheating in front of international observers have grown more severe.

However, the literature on sovereignty stops short of explaining why so many incumbents now invite international observers and cheat in front of them. It also does not explain why international actors overcame their reluctance to intervene in the domestic affairs of sovereign states. In Chapter 4, I argue that a plausible explanation is that election observation has become an international norm. Incumbent leaders continue to invite international observers even when inviting them is likely to be extremely costly because international expectations have changed dramatically, and inviting observers has become an international standard of behavior.

### **Is International Election Observation an International Norm?**

International election observation is often referred to as an international norm by other scholars. For example, as Roland Rich notes,

International observation of national elections and referendums in countries claiming to be democratic has become the norm. The rejection of foreign electoral observers has come to be taken as a signal



that the country concerned is not prepared to open itself to international scrutiny and is not interested in the international legitimacy that a positive report would bestow. (2001, 26)

Arturo Santa-Cruz provides a detailed explanation of the development of the norm of election observation, arguing that “the precedent set by the Americas was instrumental for its normalization.” (2005, 664). As Eric Bjornlund writes,

In democratizing and semiauthoritarian countries, election monitoring has become the norm and is now effectively a prerequisite in such countries for elections to be viewed as legitimate. (2004, 31)

However, despite these statements by other scholars, the characterization of election observation as an international norm is debatable. Following Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), as well as Klotz (1995), and Katzenstein (1996), an international norm is “a standard of behavior appropriate for actors with a given identity.” Like many debates within academia, interpretations vary, even of the same definition. It is now expected by a wide variety of international actors that international observers will be invited to most elections. It is not a stretch to say that inviting international election observers has become a standard of appropriate behavior for incumbent leaders of countries that hold elections but are not already considered democracies. However, two issues raise doubts about whether international election observation has in fact become an international norm.

First, international election observation lacks the strong moral component of many international norms. Although international observers are now expected at legitimate elections outside of the developed democracies, the failure to invite observers does not provoke moral indignation. In theory, and according to the most common definition of international norms, a “shared standard of appropriate behavior”

can be morally good, bad, or neither; although the tendency in existing studies of international norms has been to focus on “good” norms. Human rights norms, the end of the slave trade, taboos in military technology such as land mines and the use of civilian targets, and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa have all served as substantive centerpieces of studies on norms. Although a norm clearly must have a normative component, the literature provides inconsistent answers on the degree to which the shared expectation of a certain behavior must be considered morally “good.” To what extent does “oughtness” equal “goodness” in the context of international norms? The substance of existing studies of international norms would suggest that norms are morally “good,” yet this characteristic is rarely outlined as a necessary condition.

Goertz and Diehl (1992) argue that one of the variables that distinguish different types of norms is the relationship between the norm and morality, implying that the degree to which an international norm is tied to moral judgments is not constant. Risse and Sikkink (1999) focus explicitly on the norms that are created from principled ideas. Their focus on human rights norms is probably best treated as a specific subtype of international norm. If election observation is an international norm, it provides an example of a frequent behavior, rather than a principled idea, that has become an international norm. Finnemore and Sikkink make the point that “by definition, there are no bad norms from the vantage point of those who promote the norm” (1998, 892). However, this statement presupposes a norm promoter. What if a behavior spreads and develops into a norm in the absence of norm promoters? Can a norm result simply from repeated behavior?

International election observation is closely tied to international acceptance of democracy, which is clearly an international norm. However, the widespread practice of election observation should not be conflated with the norm of democracy. The decision by incumbent leaders to invite international election observers is a behavioral response by state leaders to changes in the broader normative and strategic environment. Can this behavior be considered an international norm?

The second concern about whether election observation is an international norm is that although it is clear from the empirical record that the international community now expects that international observers will be invited to elections, compliance with this expectation is not automatic. In other words, if international election observation is an international norm, it is not internalized by the actors that are complying with the norm.<sup>4</sup> Some leaders continue to refuse defiantly to invite international observers to their elections, and justify their behavior by complaining that election observation is a violation of sovereignty. Again, the literature on international norms provides a somewhat ambiguous answer to whether automatic compliance is a necessary condition for an international norm to exist. Goertz and Diehl argue that regularity and consistency of behavior distinguish norms from rational behavior (1992, 636). Thomas (2001) takes issue with this interpretation, arguing that

[international norms] are collective in the sense that they are the standards by which actors in international society expect or agree to be judged, but not necessarily in the sense that actors always comply or

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<sup>4</sup> For an excellent discussion of the relationship between coercion, self-interest and legitimacy of motivations within international politics, see Hurd (2003).

even that they accept the moral or causal premises upon which the standards are based. (7)

He goes on to quote Hedley Bull, “If there were no possibility that actual behavior would differ from prescribed behavior, there would be no point in having the rule” (Bull 1977, 56).

As Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) argue, norms do not emerge into a vacuum, and they are often inconsistent with existing international norms. The practice of election observation was initially viewed as a violation of state sovereignty, and some leaders today continue to justify their decision not to invite observers on the basis of sovereignty. The fact that new norms are often competing with existing norms is also recognized by Florini (1996) as a reason why compliance may not be automatic. Norm “internalization” is treated by Finnemore and Sikkink as the extreme end of a norm life cycle. Many norms may never reach this stage. Even though some scholars would argue that the fact that state leaders continue to choose to invite international observers indicates that it is not an international norm, it is possible that election observation is an international norm, albeit one that is not internalized and exists in a conflicting normative environment.

Without a doubt, international election observation has become routinized behavior. In the context of distinguishing between rational and norm motivated behavior, Goertz and Diehl (1992) make the point that much norm-like behavior can be perfectly consistent with rational behavior. “That rational behavior may be norm-like can be seen by noting a large category of norms that might rightly be called conventions” (Goertz and Diehl 1992, 637). Election observation may fall into this

category, particularly prior to the mid-1990s, and therefore some may argue that election observation be more appropriately termed a convention.

Although there are some questions as to whether election observation has become an international norm, I argue that the evidence to date points in this direction, and that engaging the literature on international norms is useful in explaining why incumbent leaders invite observers and cheat in front of them. It may be too early to tell if election observation will endure as an international norm, but the concerns about whether election observation is in fact becoming an international norm are also reasons why it may be an excellent case to contribute to the debate on norm development.

One of the persistent questions in the literature on norm development relates to how norms and rationality are related. This question underpins much of the disagreement between the international relations paradigms on the subject of international norms. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) cite this question as one of the major goals in the tradition of scholars who study norms. This dissertation provides an interest-based explanation of the initiation and spread of international election observation, and shows that repeated invitations from incumbent leaders led to a change in international expectations about appropriate behavior surrounding elections. In contrast to existing theories of international norm development, the argument presented here focuses on how international incentives, rather than ideationally motivated norm entrepreneurs, are the driving force in the initiation and rapid spread of international election observation. Chapter 4 develops this argument in greater detail.

In addition to attempting to fill some of the gap between rationalist and constructivist accounts of international norm development, this dissertation draws on the comparative literature on democratization and the IR literatures on the foreign policy of democracy promotion.

### **Democratization and Election Observation**

Not surprisingly, the trend of election observation roughly parallels the “third-wave” of democratization (Huntington 1991). As the rate of observed elections was increasing, so was the total number of elections per year. The two trends are not unrelated. Although it is uncommon in the democratization literature to include measures of international influence when explaining the trend of democratization, some scholars recognize that the “wave” of democratization may be a wave precisely because of changes in international politics (Drake 1998, Farer 1996, Lowenthal 1991, Pevehouse 2003 and 2005, Whitehead 1996). Gleditsch (2002) provides one of the few empirical tests of international causes of democratization, and finds that “it is implausible that the changes observed in the distribution of democracy over time can be attributed to the consequences of domestic processes alone” (148). Gleditsch finds that the regional context of democracy can be just as important to democratization as the level of economic development, if not more so. These results provide solid evidence that changes in regime type are strongly influenced by variables external to domestic politics. However, the literature has not progressed to the point that it reveals exactly how the dynamic of “regional context” influences democratization.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Some work is beginning to move in this direction. See Levitsky and Way (2005).

Examining the development of international election observation can provide just such evidence. The behavior of incumbent leaders toward the international community in the context of international election observation provides opportunity for substantive empirical tests of how the phenomenon documented by Gleditsch operates. McCoy (1998) identifies an incumbent's desire for international legitimacy as an important component in whether a given election observation mission is successful. Granted, inviting observers is a signal that the incumbent desires international legitimacy, and there is little variation in this variable among observed elections. However, election observation provides a transparent and well documented window into the interaction between incumbent politicians and the international community. Because inviting international observers is an observable action that signals to the international community an incumbent leader's interest in democratizing and in international legitimacy, it can be used to unpack how international pressure and incentives are related to democratization.

The increasing role that democracy promotion plays in foreign policy, in the US and throughout developed democracies, has received limited scholarly attention, most of which does the heavy lifting of documenting democracy promotion efforts (Carothers 1997, Ethier 2003, Ottaway and Carothers 2000, Smith 1994, Youngs 2001). The micro-foundations of how democracy promotion efforts are expected to change the behavior of domestic actors have not yet been laid out. As Cox, Ikenberry and Inoguchi write in their edited volume on American democracy promotion,

Unfortunately, the exponential growth in democracy studies in political science has not been matched by an equally significant body of work by students of international relations or American foreign policy; and if

political scientists might legitimately be accused of a failure to relate the dynamics of democratization to larger changes in the world system, scholars in international politics might be attacked with equal force for ignoring democracy. (2000, 4)

Contributing a theory and empirical tests of how efforts to promote democracy have influenced the behavior domestic actors, including state leaders and opposition parties, is the subject of this dissertation.

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

This dissertation provides theoretically grounded empirical tests of why election observation was initiated and spread, and the domestic political consequences of this still growing phenomenon.

Because international election observation is relatively new and, although most people have heard of it, few people are familiar with what observers actually “do” or the variety of organizations that send election observation missions, Chapter 2 provides detailed background on election observation. I review the major actors, prominent moments in the record of election observation to date, current best-practice, and other trends in election observation. I document that international election observation was initiated by incumbent leaders of democratizing states, and that the international community was initially reluctant to provide international observers because of concerns with sovereignty and principles of non-intervention.

Chapter 3 presents a formal model of incomplete information in order to explain why election observation spread, even to fraudulent elections. The major actors are the international community, international election observers, and the incumbent government. The formal model generates propositions that explain why



international election observation spread rapidly, and relates this change to the domestic consequences of election observation.

Chapter 4 provides a more detailed explanation of the spread of election observation, and presents one of three empirical tests of the theory presented in Chapter 3. As part of the evidence that changes in international benefits drove the initial increase in observed elections, it examines the pattern of foreign aid following fraudulent and/or unobserved elections. I provide evidence that the threat by the international community to withdrawal aid is credible, and demonstrate that this threat has influenced the behavior of incumbent politicians. Chapter 4 also examines the question of whether international election observation has become an international norm. The nearly universal adoption of the practice and the willingness of international actors to punish leaders who do not invite are presented as evidence that inviting international observers is likely a newly developed international norm.

Chapter 5 provides a second set of empirical tests of the general propositions outlined in Chapter 3 by using a cross-national dataset of all national elections held since 1960. Increased international benefits tied to democracy, the prior level of democracy in the country, and the percentage of countries in the region that have also invited observers are associated with a higher probability that a given election will be monitored. The quality of observer missions and the number of elections that are criticized by observers are also shown to have increased over time.

Does international election observation matter to domestic political actors? Chapters 6 and 7 provide empirical tests of this question. It remains untested whether the physical presence of an international observer team in a polling station can deter

fraud or otherwise influence the electoral process. Chapter 6 presents a field experiment conducted during the 2004 presidential elections in Indonesia. Chapter 7 presents the results of a similar natural experiment during the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia.

The formal model presented in Chapter 3 also predicts that incumbent leaders will improve their methods of concealing electoral manipulation. Chapter 8 examines the existence and the effects of concealed electoral manipulation, and shows that an increase in concealed manipulation is the most logical explanation for why the presence of international election observers increased the probability of opposition party boycotts in the 1990s. Chapter 8 lends additional empirical support to the model, and documents an additional effect that international observers have on domestic politics.

Taken as a whole, this dissertation will contribute to a better understanding of how international norms develop and add to the sparse empirical work on the international dimensions of democratization. Unlike much of the existing work involving international norms, this dissertation provides several empirical tests of whether and how the new standard of behavior matters, and shows how the changes brought about in the domestic arena are related to changes in international level politics. Although it is not explicitly geared toward an audience in the democracy promotion industry, the final three empirical chapters provide concrete evidence of the effects of election observation. The results of the natural experiment from Armenia and the field experiment from Indonesia combined with future tests from other

countries will help organizations that sponsor international observation missions to understand better the domestic effects of their actions as democracy promoters.

## **Chapter 2**

# **The Demand and Supply of International Election Observation**

How did election observation begin? Where does international election observation have its roots? This chapter presents an overview of election observation in order to motivate this dissertation and familiarize the reader with the practice of international election monitoring. It includes background on the rise of election observation, notable elections, documentation of the regional spread of observed elections, recent trends in election observation, current best practice, and a description of a typical observation mission.

### **Precursors to International Election Observation in Sovereign States**

International election observation began as a means for the international community to supervise national referendums on territorial issues in non-sovereign territories. The first elections under international “supervision” took place in 1857. As a result of the Treaty of Paris, a European commission<sup>6</sup> observed the general elections in the disputed territories of Moldavia and Wallachia. Historians of these elections highlight the nationwide vote on the future of a territory as the newsworthy event, and the presence of international observers was merely mentioned in passing.

For the first time in history, an international congress of great Powers, which had met to settle the future of a small, weak, and disunited people, postponed their action until they had ascertained the

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<sup>6</sup> The commission was composed of French, British, Prussian, Russian, Austrian and Turkish representatives.

desire of the people themselves, and, as a further innovations, they agreed that this desire should be expressed by a vote taken under the supervision of an international commission. (Beigbeder 1994, 78 and Wambaugh 1920)

In the 1800s national elections and referendums were rare in general. It was not until Woodrow Wilson's campaign for self-determination in the wake of WWI that debates over internationally observed plebiscites again entered the diplomatic dialogue. Similarly, these referenda were over territorial issues in non-sovereign states. Five plebiscites over disputed territory took place as a result of post-WWI negotiations, with international or interallied commissions present to observe each one.<sup>7</sup> There are also several references to US supervision and observation of elections in Latin America prior to WWII, but these were primarily occupied territories (Drake 1991, Wright 1964).

Records of debates within the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS) provide evidence of conflict between sovereignty and the organizations' desire to support self-determination. Initially, the UN was only willing to observe elections in non-sovereign trust territories when the mission encouraged territorial self-determination. Despite requests, they refused to observe elections in sovereign states for national leadership, as this, at the time, was considered to be outside the jurisdiction of the UN. The Assembly was concerned that electoral assistance in independent states, including election observation, would violate the UN charter which prohibits the organization from intervening "in matters which are

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<sup>7</sup> These were Schleswig, February 10 and March 14, 1920; Allenstein and Marienwerder, July 11, 1920; Klagenfurt Basin, October 10, 1920; Upper Silesia, March 20, 1921; and Sopron December 14-16, 1921 (Beigbeder 1994).

essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the state” (Article 2, Paragraph 7). Other international and non-governmental organizations shared similar concerns about violating the sovereignty of independent states. The idea of OAS election observers had been discussed at OAS meetings in 1959 and 1960, but proposals were turned down on the grounds that election observation would violate the principle of non-intervention (Santa-Cruz 2005, 676). As late as 1960, the Dominican Republic had asked for international observers, but OAS foreign ministers rejected the opportunity because sending observers “would constitute OAS intervention in the internal affairs of a member state.”

The UN followed a general guideline of organizing observation missions only when self-determination of a non-independent territory was at stake, and they explicitly refused to become involved with elections for national offices in sovereign states until 1990.

The first and more notable cases of UN observing under the restrictive conditions of observing elections in non-sovereign or occupied territories took place in Korea and Germany immediately following WWII (Beigbeder, 1994, 120). In this post-war period the United Nations and its members were concerned with territorial sovereignty, and were only willing to send observers to the occupied regions when elections were held, and to elections or plebiscites concerning other territorial issues.

### **The Roots of Election Observation Today**

The first reported case of an internationally observed election in a sovereign state was the Organization of American States (OAS) mission to the Costa Rican general elections of February 4, 1962, followed ten months later by OAS observers at

the general elections in the Dominican Republic. The rate of observed elections continued at a just a handful a year until the early 1970s. As Jennifer McCoy writes, the OAS' purpose was "less to monitor the electoral process per se than to show moral support for democratic elections" (1998). They sent only one or two observers to the capitol city on election day and rarely criticized the process. No elections were observed between 1972 and 1976, and the practice picked up again in the late 1970s when non-governmental organizations became involved in election observation. The International Human Rights Law Group (IHLRG), the US church sponsored Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), and several other small organizations began sending international observers and issuing post-election reports. Members of the US Congress were often participants in the early IHLRG and WOLA missions, but the missions were not sponsored by the US government. The early involvement of NGOs in election observation was generally under the auspices of supporting human rights as this issue gained ground during the 1970s. About the same time, the Commonwealth Secretariat began observing elections in Africa, with observation missions in Zimbabwe<sup>8</sup> and Uganda in 1980.<sup>9</sup>

In Latin America, observers were invited to several high-profile elections following transitions from authoritarian rule. Between 1978 and 1985, elections were observed in Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Uruguay, as well as the previously mentioned elections in Uganda and Zimbabwe. News wire reports attribute

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<sup>8</sup> The election resulted in the creation of independent Zimbabwe from Southern Rhodesia.

<sup>9</sup> The Commonwealth Secretariat is now an organization composed of states that made up the British Commonwealth. The Commonwealth also observed elections in the technically non-sovereign countries of British Guiana (1964), Mauritius (1967), and Gibraltar (1967).

fraud accusations to international observers following these elections in only two cases: Bolivia (1978), and Guyana (1980). During this period, election observers criticized few elections, and some organizations, notably the UN, continued to advocate the position that election observation violated sovereignty. The UN refused a number of invitations to monitor elections in the 1970s and 1980s, and as late as 1988, the UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar was quoted as saying that the United Nations “does not send observers to elections” in sovereign states.<sup>10</sup> The fact that observers criticized very few elections in the early period does not mean that observers were unwilling to do so, or that inviting observers was completely risk free. Rather, as I will argue in the next chapter, the quality of observers and the quality of the elections are endogenous to the spread of election observation. For the most part, observers in the initial period of election observation were invited to elections that were already likely to be clean, and therefore did not provide high-quality or comprehensive observation missions.

The Costa Rican elections in 1962, 1966, 1978 and 1982 were observed by the OAS. The Costa Rican presidents elected in 1978 and 1982 are notable for their commitment to democracy and peace, and for their exceptional leadership on these issues in the region. The 1984 Guatemalan elections were observed by the OAS during one of the most turbulent times in Guatemalan history. The previous year the Rios Montt government, remembered for the worst human rights abuses in Guatemala’s history, was deposed in a coup led by Oscar Mejias. Although Mejias came to power through a coup, he attempted to manage a return to democracy in Guatemala. He lifted

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<sup>10</sup> Santa-Cruz (2005, 664). Stoelting (1992, 372).



the state of siege, put forth electoral laws, and allowed political activity that had been banned under Rios Montt. As his final act in the transition, he did not run for office, and allowed another individual to be elected president.

During the turbulent 1980s in El Salvador, the OAS observed the 1982 elections to the constituent assembly which were conducted as an attempt to return to democracy. In 1984 presidential elections were held amid widespread violence. The OAS also sent an observer to these elections, and Jose Napoleon Duarte Fuentes was elected. The OAS observed elections in Grenada in 1984 following the 1983 US invasion; the 1962, 1966, and 1978 general elections in the Dominican Republic in which the former dictator's front-man Balaguer was finally ousted; the 1978 national assembly elections in Panama in which there was a peaceful transfer of power; and the 1978 Bolivian elections for the General Assembly. Nicaragua's elections in 1963 and 1972 were also observed, in which the Samozá family put forth friends of the family as candidates for president.

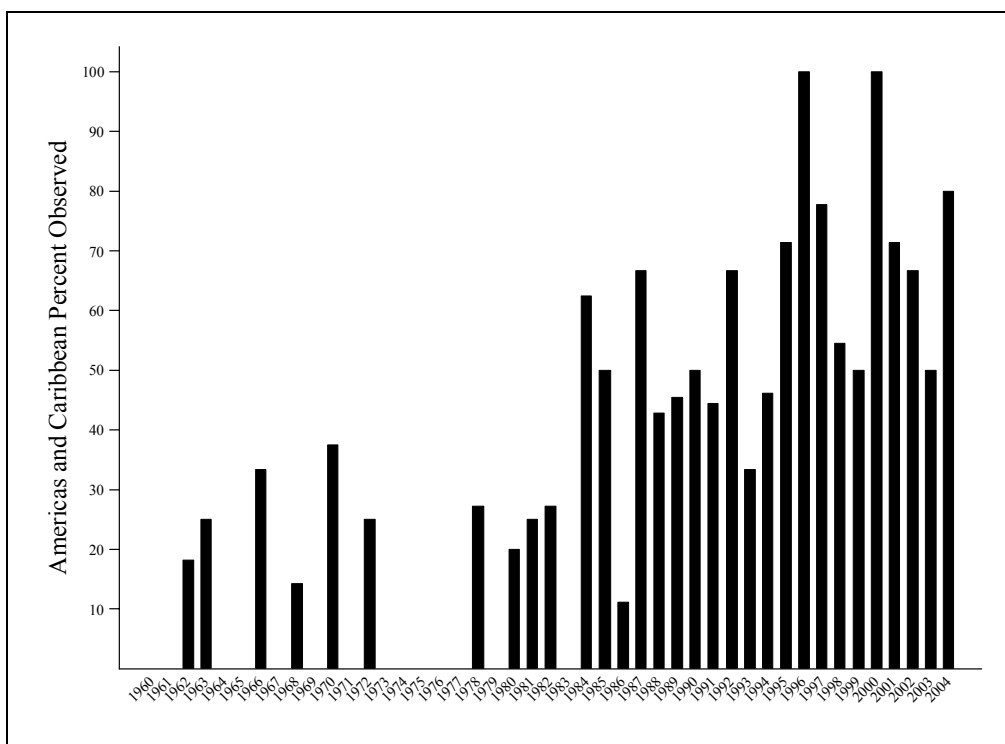
Early election observation shows a majority of cases in which leaders were attempting to lead genuine transitions to democracy, and a few cases, such as in the Dominican Republic in 1966, Bolivia in 1978, and Nicaragua in 1963, in which autocrats were trying to bring some undeserved democratic legitimacy to their continued rule by holding elections and allowing a managed transition to a puppet president.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, a number of organizations were created to promote democracy, and these organizations also observed elections. These include the OAS's Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (1990), the UN's Electoral

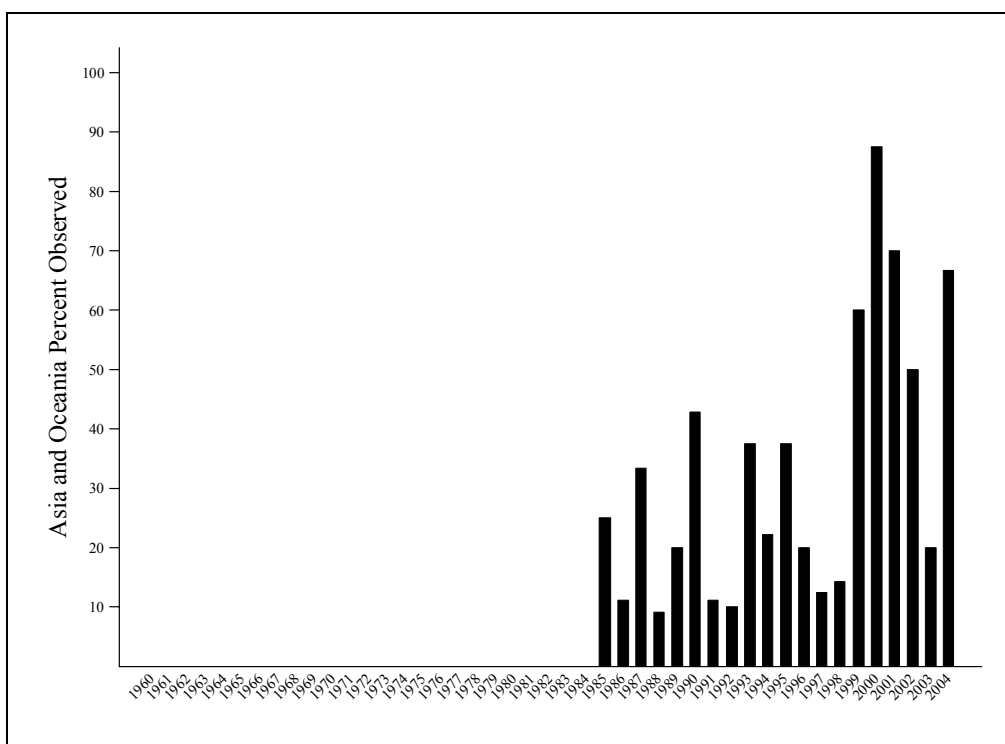
Assistance Division (1991), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (1990), and the National Endowment for Democracy in the US (1983), which in turn funded the creation of the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute. NDI and IRI observed their first election in 1986 in the Philippines. The Carter Center observed its first election in 1989 in Panama. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)<sup>11</sup> was founded in 1987 and began observing elections and providing technical electoral assistance shortly thereafter. Regional intergovernmental organizations in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Caribbean created their own observation programs. Dozens of other groups sprung up organically in the early 1990s. Since that time, international election observation has spread rapidly to all regions of the world. Figures 2.1-2.5 document the trend by region. Note that all figures excluded long-term developed democracies.

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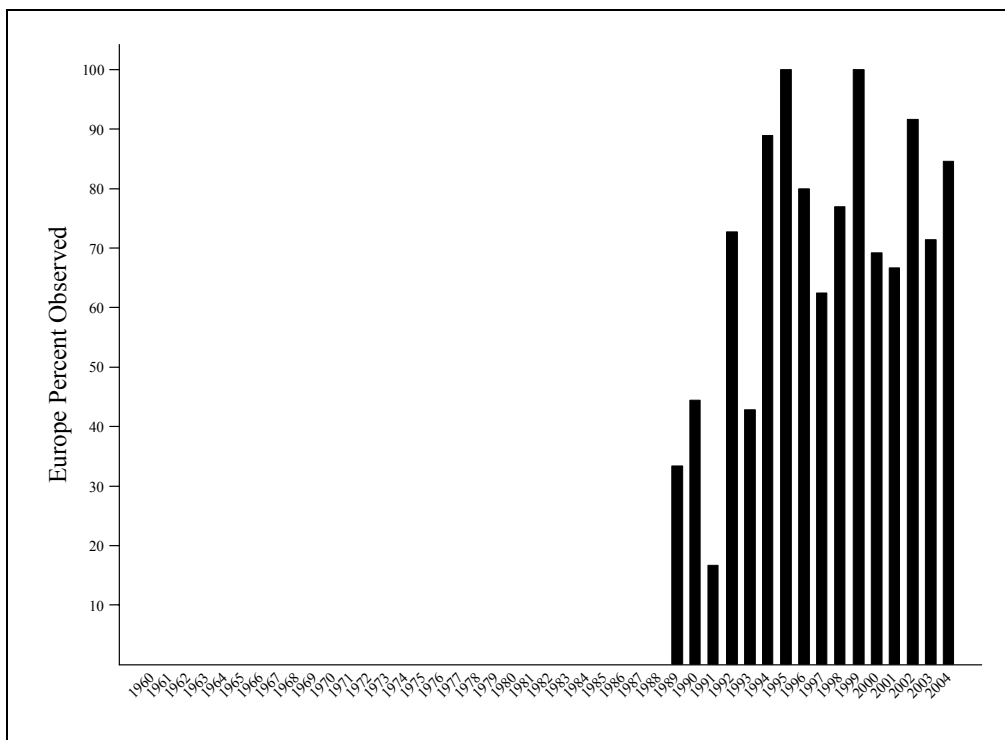
<sup>11</sup> The International Foundation for Electoral Systems has abandoned its full name in favor of its acronym, IFES.



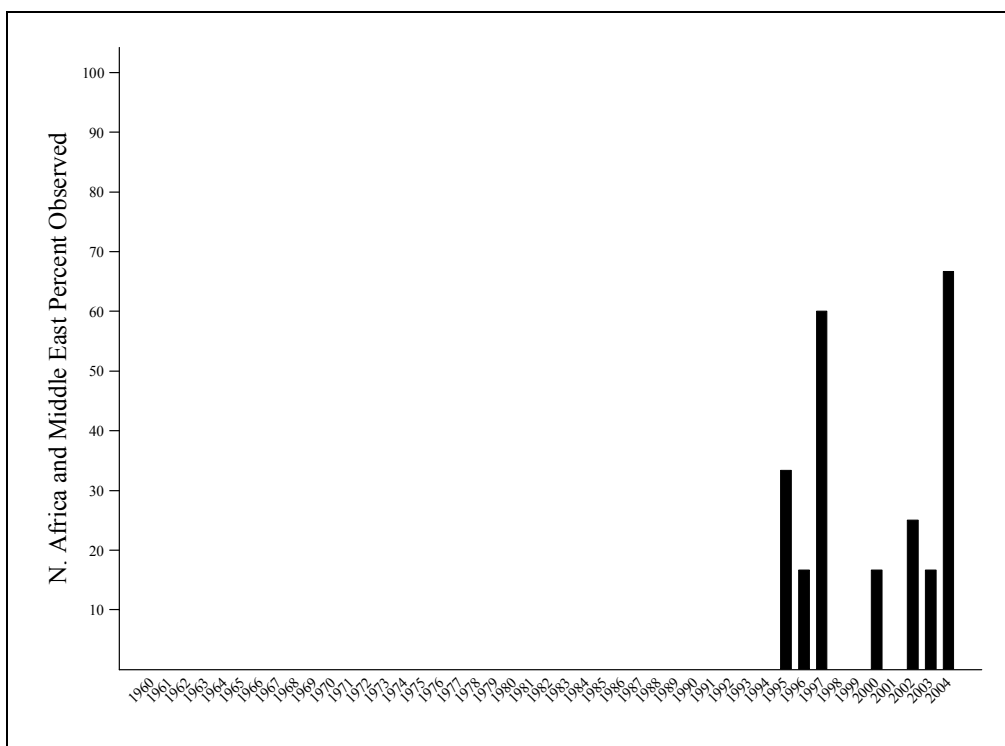
**Figure 2.1 Percent of all Elections Observed in Latin America and the Caribbean**



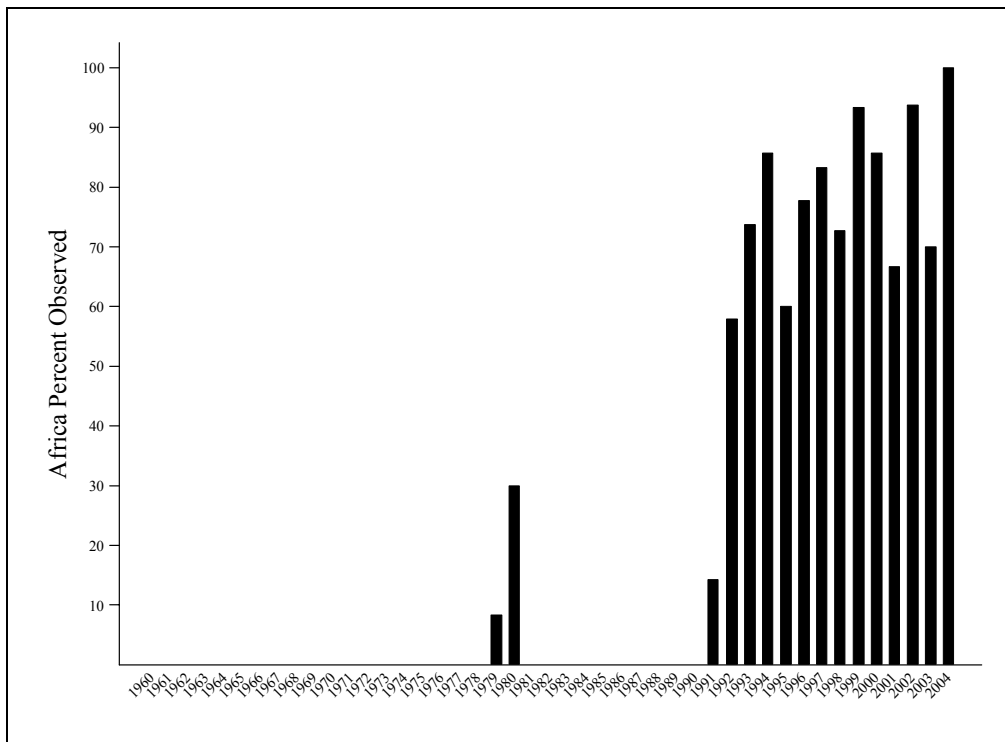
**Figure 2.2 Percent of all Elections Observed in Asia and Oceania**



**Figure 2.3 Percent of all Elections Observed in Europe**



**Figure 2.4 Percent of all Elections Observed in North Africa and the Middle East**



**Figure 2.5 Percent of all Elections Observed in Africa**

### Early and Notable Elections

There are a number of notable elections which influenced the development of election observation. The previously mentioned elections in Latin America initiated the trend of election observation during the very early ripples of the “third wave” of democratization (Huntington 1991). Early OAS missions, although important for initiating the concept of election observation, were substantively different from subsequent observation missions because of their typical 1-3 person delegation size and their one-day observation.<sup>12</sup> As democracy promotion was given an explicit place on the foreign policy agendas of many Western governments, and as leaders of

<sup>12</sup> The 1962 OAS mission to the Dominican Republic is an exception, with an international delegation of more than 40 observers.

transitional countries were given even greater incentive to prove their commitment to democracy, the quality of election observation changed dramatically.

The case of the Philippines clearly illustrates this dynamic. This was the first instance of a standing president inviting a full delegation of election observers to his own election. In November of 1985, President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines announced his decision to hold snap elections and invite international observers on “This Week with David Brinkley,” a US talk show. Marcos’ invitation corresponded with the creation of several democracy promotion organizations in the US that were eager to oblige. Under the auspices of the US-based Center for Democracy,<sup>13</sup> NDI and IRI sent a team of observers to evaluate the political situation two months prior to the presidential election.

There had not yet been a prominent case in which international observers had successfully drawn widespread international attention to serious election flaws, and according to one journalist, international observers “had already perfected their ability to turn a blind eye” to election violations. Once a large delegation was on its way to the Philippines that had signaled its willingness to criticize the election, Marcos issued a statement calling the observers he had invited “meddlers and interventionists” and saying that “to preserve our sovereign integrity, we must prove to them nobody need tell us how to hold a clean and democratic election.”<sup>14</sup> Brian Atwood, the leader of the NDI mission, had already made a public statement that he anticipated “a 20 to 30

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<sup>13</sup> Under the urging of the chair of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in The New York Times January 26, 1986. Article by Seth Mydans. “Marcos Criticizes ‘Meddlers’ in vote.”

percent fraud factor,” likely giving Marcos reason to be nervous about his decision to invite observers.

The 44-member observer delegation, along with the domestic election observers, found significant evidence of fraud by the Marcos regime and his supporters. Immediately following election day, when widespread fraud was obvious but the official victor was not immediately apparent, Marcos was persuaded to go into exile in Hawaii (NDI 1991). This was the first high-profile involvement of international election observers in a presidential election. The impact appeared even larger because the incumbent leader was forced out of office and into exile. After the 1986 Philippine election, it became more common for international election observers to participate in elections when it was not already clear that the election was likely to be democratic. The results of the Philippine election provided evidence that election observation could result in incumbent leaders paying a hefty price for fraud.

Although Marcos failed at inviting international observers, cheating in front of them, and getting away with it, this did not prevent other leaders from trying to do the same. International benefits intended to promote democracy were increasing, giving leaders additional incentives to attempt to risk an invitation to international observers.

The planned 1987 Haitian election marked the first time that former US President Jimmy Carter intended to serve as an international observer. NDI and his newly founded organization, the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, planned to observe the tumultuous 1987 Haitian electoral process. Although the elections were eventually canceled, the high profile involvement of Jimmy Carter

would lead him to future involvement, and eventually make him and The Carter Center one of the most popularly recognized actors in election observation.

The 1988 Chilean plebiscite on the continued rule of Augusto Pinochet also marked a historic moment in election observation. There is clear evidence from NDI's observation of a shift in the mandate of election observation. The delegation from NDI was chaired by former Spanish Premier Adolfo Suarez, the leader of Spain's 1977 transition to democracy. The historical significance of international observation of the Chilean plebiscite is best described in his words:

The recent Chilean plebiscite, although formally an internal matter falling within the sovereign rights of Chile, also had an international dimension of major relevance. The old principle of classic international law regarding nonintervention in the internal affairs of other states is gradually receding in importance; consequently, the international community cannot be indifferent to the fight for freedom, human rights and the rule of law, and the interest of all humanity to construct a completely free world. Indeed, the lack of freedom and systematic human rights violations have become transgressions of international law that justify actions by the community of nations. (NDI 1988, page v)

As is clear from the above quote, the involvement of NDI in Chile, along with thousands of international journalists, marked a conscious decision by international observers that the possible violation of sovereignty caused by their presence was outweighed by the importance of promoting democracy abroad.

The 1989 Panamanian elections previewed how incumbents could attempt to manipulate the judgments of international observers, and also showed how international observers became more effective by improving monitoring technology and establishing clear independence from political parties. Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford led a delegation from NDI and IRI to observe the elections between Manuel



Noriega's desired successor and opposition candidate Guillermo Endara. The interaction between Carter and Noriega showed how incumbents hungry for international legitimacy but unwilling to give up power (e.g. Noriega) interact with international observers intent on producing a valid judgment on the legitimacy of the electoral process.

Noriega initially sent an open invitation to international observers but then balked at a full sized delegation, attempting to refuse visas to all but six observers, including the Carters and Ford. Carter refused to attend unless a full sized delegation was also accredited, and Noriega capitulated. Bjornlund marks this moment as crucial in the development of independent election observers.

By refusing to negotiate over the size and composition of his team and making clear his willingness to forgo monitoring if his conditions were not met, Carter established the autonomy of observers as an important principle. (2004, 77)

Also during this election, NDI supported an independent quick count.

A quick count, or parallel vote tabulation, still stands as one of the major methodological innovations in election observation (Garber and Cowan 1993). By randomly selecting a sample of polling stations and sending observers to watch the vote tabulation at each site and call in the results to a central location, an independent and accurate vote tally is created apart from the government's potentially manipulated count.

The use of the quick count in Panama allowed the international observers and the opposition to prove that the opposition won a resounding victory, even though the government nullified the election results under the

pretense that some of the tally sheets had been lost. The true winner of the election did not take office until after the US had invaded Panama and arrested Noriega in December 1989. The quick count has been used successfully in many elections since 1989.

The 1990 Nicaraguan elections marked the first time that the UN accepted an invitation to observe domestic elections in a sovereign country. The OAS, the Center for Democracy, and the Carter Center, among others, joined the UN in one of the largest official observation missions to date. The Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs requested the presence of the election observers. The UN had denied several requests for observers on the grounds that observing the election of leaders would be a violation of sovereignty, but they chose to make an exception in the Nicaraguan case for three reasons. First, there was high profile regional support for the request.<sup>15</sup> Second, observing the elections was perceived to support the peace process in Central America. Finally, the invitation was to observe the entire process, not just election day. This final consideration was important because by 1990, international observers had already been heavily criticized for trying to judge an entire election from a few hours worth of election-day observation. By expanding the observation to the entire process, the UN perceived that their judgments would be more accurate. The elections of February 25, 1990 marked a peaceful transfer power, and the first election ever to take place in Nicaragua in which both sides accepted the results (The Carter Center, 1990).

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<sup>15</sup> The four other Central American governments in the Esquipulas peace process also supported the request for UN observers.

This served as a prominent and successful experience with international election observers. Furthering the widespread acceptance of election observation, “The request [from the Nicaraguan government] and the response to it symbolized an emerging international consensus to protect and support democracy in individual nations” (Orozco 2002, 1).

### **The Spread of the Election Observation Trend**

Today’s international election observation began primarily in Latin America and countries such as the Philippines that were under heavy Western influence. In the early 1990s election monitoring began to spread rapidly in Africa. After the few cases of Commonwealth observation in Africa in the early 1980s, no elections were observed in sovereign African states until the 1991 elections in Zambia. For Commonwealth countries, the Harare Declaration, signed by member states in 1991, “provided the general democratic mandate within which election observing was to play such a prominent role” (Sives 2001, 138). The 1991 Zambian elections marked the country’s first peaceful transition of power and also moved it from a single to a multi-party system of governance. The Carter Center, NDI, and the Commonwealth observed the election, and some credit the presence of international observers with helping to convince the losing incumbent, Kenneth Kaunda, to step down.

As the reports of the international observers became more important to the international community, international observers came under fire for not accurately assessing the elections. In many cases in the early 1990s, particularly in Africa, reputable observer groups seemed unsure of how to evaluate elections that were clearly flawed (Geisler 1993). In many cases, they appeared to be aware that the

election was riddled with problems, but were unable to decide if the problems affected the outcome of the election. Many reports from this time period in Africa evaluated faulty elections as ‘a step in the right direction.’ Abbink and Hessling refer to this as “one of the most worn-out metaphors in [election observation]” (2000, 12). It was commonly understood that this phrase was a diplomatic way of saying that the election was better than civil war. Observers were widely criticized for their failure to highlight accurately the widespread problems in the 1992 elections in Kenya, Ghana, and Angola, among others (Geisler 1993), and Abbink and Hessling point out a number of persistent criticisms of election observation in Africa, including that “the presence of observers and their often hesitant reports can be easily misappropriated by African governments and bent in their favour” (2000, 8).

Despite all of the criticism, election observation became even more common in Africa than it was in Latin America, and leaders in other regions of the world quickly joined the trend and began inviting international election observers. By the mid-1990s, nearly all elections in Africa were internationally observed, and the percentage of elections was also close to 100 in the former Soviet states.

### **“By Invitation Only” Election Observation**

Today, many observers of international politics view international election observation as an activity that is pressed upon developing countries by international organizations and Western states. In fact, these organizations were reluctant participants in election observation. International organizations and neighboring states were wary of intruding in the clearly domestic process of elections. To this day, no reputable international observation group will observe an election unless they have

been extended a formal invitation from the host government or have otherwise been formally approved through domestic political channels.<sup>16</sup> In some cases the incumbent government invites international observers and then later decides to expel them or refuses to grant the appropriate visas and accreditation. In these cases the observer mission may insist that, given their previously invited status, the incumbent government follow through with their invitation. In other cases attempts to limit observers is treated as evidence that the incumbent has something to hide.

Some observation organizations also accept invitations from opposition parties, and attempt to obtain permission from the incumbent government after the opposition parties have requested their presence. This is a relatively rare event, but on occasion opposition parties have been able to pressure the incumbent through the international media to allow observers.

### **A Typical Election Observation Mission**

Election observation missions can vary widely in practices. There is some mystery surrounding what short-term observers actually do during an election observation mission. As of this writing I have participated in four missions with two organizations, and I have interviewed a number of individuals that have served on dozens of missions. The following is a sketch of a typical election observation mission.

Before choosing to send an election observation mission, the sending organization conducts a pre-election evaluation mission during which they determine

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<sup>16</sup> Although many foreign journalists “observe” elections and report about them, they typically do not have the same credentials to enter polling stations, and their reports are rarely coordinated with other journalists, and therefore do not carry the same weight as the reports of official delegations of international observers (particularly to domestic audiences).

the feasibility of sending a mission and the requirements for conducting a successful mission, including the number of long and short-term observers. If they decide to send a mission, the organization will establish a field office with up to a few dozen staff, usually composed of several foreigners and a number of support staff from the host country. Long-term observers are deployed across the country at least a month prior to the election day, are charged with substantive monitoring of possible problems and setting up the logistics for the arrival of the short-term observers.

Short-term observers (STOs) are invited to join the delegation a few weeks in advance of election day, primarily on a volunteer basis, although their expenses are often paid. They arrive in the country several days ahead of an election and spend one or two days in intensive briefing. STOs do not find out where they will be sent to observe the election until immediately before election day, sometimes on the day that they are deployed. STOs are deployed in teams of two, and drive or fly to their area of responsibility. If they arrive the day before election day, they meet with a local driver and interpreter (when necessary), and spend the day familiarizing themselves with the region. STOs may choose to locate a variety of polling stations in their area so that an efficient route can be followed on election day. They are sometimes asked to meet with local government officials, civil society organizations, the police, and political party representatives.

On election day, each STO team is instructed to arrive at a polling station before it opens so that they can report on the opening time and procedures. After the opening, each team travels from polling station to polling station, filling out standardized forms at each one. If any serious violations are observed, STOs are

instructed to report these violations to the central office of the observation mission, attempt to document them as best they can, and submit an extended report. STOs are firmly prohibited from interfering in the process in any way, including giving advice to the polling station officials. STOs are generally encouraged to act in such a way that emphasizes their non-interference. Some of the standard items on the form require the STOs to ask the polling station officials questions, but most are based on observations of voter behavior, voting procedures, and the setup of the polling station. This process continues throughout the voting period. At the conclusion of voting, each team is instructed to observe the closing and counting process at one polling station, and then if possible, follow the ballot box to the tabulation center and observe any ongoing counting, dispute reconciliation, or tabulation of the results.

Needless to say, election “day” can often stretch for more than 24 hours, and some observer teams have more endurance than others. This creates some variation in how much of the tabulation process is observed. As an extreme example, during the attempted recall of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, some STOs stayed in the field for several extra days and actually slept in the same room with ballot boxes and a policeman in order to ensure that the boxes were not tampered with. Typically, STOs travel back to the capitol city after election day and, depending on the size of the delegation, participate in a debriefing. The central office of the observation mission drafts a preliminary statement as quickly as possible while still including the compilation of election day observations. One or two days after the election they hold a press conference, and most of the STOs fly out the next morning. Long-term observers are charged with investigating claims of irregularities and following any

formal complaint procedures. The mission does not complete the final report until the results are certified and the complaints process is complete, usually several months after the election.

### **Current Best Practice in Election Observation**

During the 1990s, international election observation underwent rapid change in scope, methodology, global reach, and credibility. Inviting international observers became a condition of membership for states in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of American States. Other regional organizations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat also made this an implicit condition of continued membership, and, as was the case for Zimbabwe, became willing to suspend the membership of a country following unsatisfactory elections or other anti-democratic actions.

By the end of the decade, several principles of election observation were well established. The leading organizations spent considerable time and resources developing best practices of election observation and coordinating and standardizing their missions. These best practices now include extensive long-term election observation and larger and more professionalized delegations of short term observers. In addition, they refuse to observe an election unless they can witness the entire electoral process. They deploy long-term observers throughout the host country several months before election day, and rely on their observations to evaluate the legitimacy of the campaign and voter registration periods. Increasingly large delegations of short-term international observers arrive in advance of election-day for extensive briefing and deployment to all regions of the country, even the most remote.



The selection criteria for short-term observers is intended to be rigorous enough to exclude “electoral tourists” and, to the extent that it is possible, bring in observers familiar with the language, the host country politics and culture, electoral processes, democratic institutions and practices, as well as experience as an impartial observer. Many observer groups have developed codes of conduct, and most of these include the following: International observers should be well trained regarding the political situation in the country, they should be completely impartial in regards to the outcome, they will be officially certified by the host government (and the host government will, in return, not put undue restrictions on their ability to observe), observers will not interfere in the election process in any way, individual observers are prohibited from making public comments about the process until after the mission has issued a final report, and the mission’s report will be based on hard evidence and not released until election day has been completed. In October 2005, twenty-one international organizations signed onto the *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation* and the *Code of Conduct for International Election Observers*, committing these organizations to more professionalized election observation.<sup>17</sup>

In elections in which there is some possibility of fraud or dispute over the vote total, a parallel vote-tabulation (or quick count) is usually conducted. This makes it very difficult for manipulation of the counting process to occur. Reputable international observation groups prefer to work with large delegations of nonpartisan domestic observers, the work of whom is seen as instrumental to democratic

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<sup>17</sup> UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza, NDI Chairman and former U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright, and Jimmy Carter led the high profile endorsement ceremony.

development as well as accurate assessment of the electoral process. At some elections more than one organization will conduct a PVT. International democracy promotion organizations such as IFES are often on the ground for years at a time in new democracies providing technical electoral assistance. The evaluation of the election is not limited to election day, and observer reports are often critical of political institutions that perpetuate bias in the system, unbalanced media access, inappropriate use of state resources, and of maladministration. Most organizations avoid judgments of whether an election is “free and fair” because this categorization is now perceived to be overly simplistic. When feasible, election observation is part of a broader strategy to improve the transparency, representativeness, and accountability of the political system.

The leading organizations in the field continue to spend considerable resources evaluating and professionalizing their practices, as well as looking for new innovations in election observation.

This is not to say that poor quality observers no longer exist. Attempts by incumbent leaders to invite observers that are more likely to give a friendly report are still common. The previously mentioned *Declaration of Principles* and *Code of Conduct* are an explicit attempt by the more professionalized observer groups to raise the bar of election observation, but this effort is far from complete.

### **Selective Invitation of Friendly Observers**

Although observer technology has become much more sophisticated, all international observer groups are not alike. In fact, as pressure to invite observers has increased, some of the less stringent observer groups have flourished. Some

organizations continue to work at improving their methods, and recognize that the credibility of their reports is only as good as their reputation. Other groups continue to send small delegations that rubber stamp their approval of the election process. They do not attempt to comply with international standards for professionalized international observers, nor do they define the criteria by which they judge the election. They are more likely to give election day press conferences, sometimes before voting has been completed. And, in contrast to the well-respected observer groups who follow and report on the post-election process, the entire delegation usually leaves the country on the day after the election. The Commonwealth of Independent States, composed of former Soviet states, made international headlines when one of its own members refused to send observers to participate in the CIS mission to Moldova and Kyrgyzstan because of the CIS's notoriously inaccurate election observation.

Ukraine's refusal to take part in a seemingly endless charade of impartial election monitoring by the CIS Secretariat in Minsk, dealt a serious blow to an organization and a practice that has infuriated human-rights groups for many years. This practice, seen by some as nothing more than a KGB disinformation operation leftover from Soviet times, consists of groups of trusted CIS employees from the secretariat in Minsk who roam the CIS to observe elections and invariably announce that they were transparent, fair, and democratic -- providing that the more pro-Kremlin candidate wins. (Radio Free Europe April 12, 2005)

Although the reputations of observer organizations are clear within the democracy promotion community, this knowledge is less pervasive amongst journalists and the general public. This has allowed incumbent leaders to retain the option of inviting international observer groups that are unlikely to sanction a

fraudulent election. They can then cheat with impunity and still receive a glowing report from “friendly” and un-rigorous international observers. This glowing report may then be picked up by journalists desiring a quick evaluation of the election. If this happens, the incumbent will have successfully muddied the waters enough to be able to cast doubt on claims of fraud.

An interview broadcast on BBC World News (March 30, 2005) demonstrated the ability of incumbents to strategically invite friendly observer groups and use them to their advantage. The day before the 2005 parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean ambassador to the UK was interviewed by a BBC reporter. During the period leading up to the election there were wide reports of irregularities, and the campaign was conducted in an atmosphere of widespread political terror in which the availability of food was reportedly conditioned upon a voter’s support for President Mugabe. When asked why Mugabe did not extend an invitation to the EU election observers or the Commonwealth Secretariat, the ambassador replied with an emphatic statement that these groups were not extended an invitation because they had already demonstrated their bias by pointing out flaws in the electoral process.

Instead, the government of Zimbabwe invited international observers that were not likely to criticize the election (even when fraud was quite obvious). These groups consisted primarily of delegations from neighboring African states. By not inviting observers from reputable observer groups, Mugabe attempted to slide by with glowing reports from friendly groups, namely the African Union,<sup>18</sup> and was moderately

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<sup>18</sup> The AU (formerly the Organization of African Unity), had previously criticized elections, and their support was not guaranteed. However, because the EU and the Commonwealth had already questioned

successful at convincing the international media to spin the post-election analysis in his favor.

### **Current Trends in Election Observation**

There are three additional trends in election observation that have only been evident in the past several years. First, international observation has begun to spread to developed democracies. The OSCE sent an official delegation of international observers to the US for the 2002 congressional elections and for the 2004 presidential elections. The OSCE has also sent observers to France, Britain, and Italy, but the reports from these missions receive little media attention within the host country. It remains to be seen whether international election observation will become standard practice in all election holding countries, regardless of whether they are already considered “consolidated” democracies.

Second, when international observers see significant electoral fraud, they are increasingly more likely to write overtly negative reports. In recent years, these highly critical reports have played a role in giving ammunition and legitimacy to opposition movements that have unseated electoral autocrats. For some time, observer reports were written in extraordinarily diplomatic language, to the point that one had to read between the lines in order to tell whether the observers witnessed electoral fraud and reports were only overtly critical if the observers believed a clean election would have resulted in a different outcome. Reports and press releases are still couched in diplomatic language, but criticisms are now more explicit and well documented.

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some of Mugabe’s practices, and the AU had not, their presence was likely less threatening to Mugabe. Their report was positive.

During 2004, for example, documentation and announcement of fraud by international observers played a part in triggering a re-run of the Ukrainian presidential election. Just a few months prior, in November 2003, the Parliamentary Elections in Georgia experienced similar fraud, and the reports by international observers gave the opposition additional credibility in their claims that Eduard Shevardnadze had orchestrated the cheating and that his presidency was therefore illegitimate. He voluntarily stepped down under enormous domestic and international pressure. Critical reports by international observers have played a similar role in a number of other countries.

Finally, the organizations that are observing elections appear to be changing. In the mid-1990s one of the common critiques of international observers was that each election had multiple groups and that their reports often conflicted. In the mid-1990s there were numerous calls by professionalized observer groups for the “electoral tourists” to get out of the way (Carothers 1997), and it appears that to some degree, their calls were heeded. Regional intergovernmental organizations have taken responsibility for an increasingly large share of election observation, and coordination between missions has increased.

There are, however, some elections that are thought to be pivotal, and in these cases there seem to be a number of groups who are unwilling to give up their role in the observation process just because their efforts will be redundant. In Latin America, the OAS and The Carter Center overlap with some frequency. Coordination of missions between organizations is logistically and diplomatically difficult, paralleled only by the backlash against observer groups who give conflicting reports following

the election. The present working model is for international observers to pool resources and information whenever possible, but to issue separate reports. Joint statements are highly problematic, particularly when there are representatives from intergovernmental and nongovernmental observer groups. The NGOs do not want to be held back by the constraints of controversy-shy member states, and the IGOs do not want to be dragged into a controversy by statements that are outside of normal diplomatic boundaries. In general, there is periodic overlap between missions, but the sometimes conflicting mandates of different groups make full coordination difficult.

### **The Effects of Negative Reports**

When international observers issue a negative report following an election, are there any real consequences? Togo provides an anecdotal answer to this question. In 1993 President Gnassingbè Eyadema bowed to international pressure and agreed to hold presidential elections for the first time. Eyadema invited international observers from The Carter Center and the National Democratic Institute. After ten months of observation, the groups called off their observation mission one day prior to election-day because of a “lack of significant opposition participation” (NDI 1993). Most bilateral donors suspended foreign aid, and conditioned resumption of this aid upon the holding of free and fair elections. In 1998 Eyadema again held presidential elections and invited international observers. The EU and The Carter Center again found the electoral process to fall far short of international standards, and aid was not resumed from the EU and other bilateral donors. Virtually the same process was repeated in 2003, and again in 2005 following the death of Eyadema. Despite the country’s persistent failures to pass international muster, Togo continues to hold

(fraudulent) elections and invite international observers in an attempt to regain international legitimacy.

Peru provides an example of a similar dynamic in a country that had already cleared international standards for free and fair elections several times. The period leading up to Peru's 2000 presidential elections was characterized by rapid democratic reversal. Incumbent President Alberto Fujimori's 1992 "*autogolpe*" brought significant international attention to the possibility that Peruvian democracy was threatened, but the 2000 elections were viewed as the point of no return. International election observers were invited by Fujimori, who was eager to put concerns at rest. After a clearly fraudulent first round, international observers were hesitant even to stay for the second round for fear that their presence would provide some legitimacy to the process. The Carter Center, the European Union, NDI, the OAS, and thousands of domestic observers withdrew their official delegations in protest. As an example of the unquestionable large-scale fraud, in the second round, official government tallies initially reported that the number of votes cast exceeded the number of registered voters by 1.4 million. Not surprisingly, the negative reports by election observers were enough to discredit Fujimori, and bring about significant reductions in international benefits. However, he would have remained president for another term if it had not been the discovery of videotapes proving that his staff member bribed members of opposition parties on his behalf for their support in parliament.

There are numerous other examples of the international community withdrawing a variety of international benefits from countries that fail to comply with international standards for democracy. The withdrawal of aid and other benefits is not



automatic, but the prominent cases of international condemnation or domestic uprising following observed elections that are found to be fraudulent raises questions about why these leaders continue to invite international observers to their elections. The link between international benefits and election observation is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

### **Conclusion**

Since the late 1980s, international election observation has spread rapidly throughout the world. Initiated by leaders of Latin American countries, international election observers have become an expected presence at nearly all elections. In the international media following an election, the evaluation of the election by international observers is as much of a focus as who won the election. This chapter provided background on the initiation of election observation in sovereign states, the early pivotal moments in election observation, a description of what election observers do in practice, and current trends in election observation. As election observation has spread, more organizations have become involved in sending observers and the reports of observers are more widely utilized. Defining a theory of how and why this phenomenon came about is the subject of the next chapter.

### **Chapter 3**

## **The Democratic Signal**

### **Formal Theory**

The international community of democratic states has taken particular interest in encouraging democracy in other polities, and has expressly committed substantial resources toward encouraging democracy. By making a wide range of international benefits available to countries that are judged as moving toward democracy, and reducing international benefits for those countries that move in the opposite direction, the international community has made an overt attempt to increase the number of democratic states in the world. A number of scholars have spent considerable time judging the effectiveness of these efforts at creating more democracies (see Knack 2004). Although the record is not clear on the effectiveness of democracy promotion, the number of countries that are neither full autocracies nor full democracies has increased dramatically (Diamond 2002). The theory presented in this chapter examines how these targeted international benefits have influenced incumbent behavior in the context of elections.

I argue that the premium for looking and acting like a democratic regime gave “true-democrats” an incentive to signal their commitment to democracy. These leaders invited international election observers as a costly signal to establish their commitment to democratizing. Other benefit-seeking leaders imitated the signal, regardless of whether or not they were committed to democracy, and before long, inviting international election observers was an expected practice for all leaders of election-holding countries. Whereas the decision to invite observers was intended to

be a signal that the country was democratizing, by the early 1990s, the lack of observers in the first election following a period of non-democratic rule had become a conspicuous signal that the election was not legitimate. As Samuel Huntington pointed out in his 1991 book, if the incumbent leadership “refused to allow ‘impartial’ external observers to witness the vote, that in itself now became proof that it was rigging the election...Authoritarian rulers who sponsored elections to bolster their declining legitimacy were in a no-win position” (1991, 184). Although Huntington is referring to “first elections,” the same standard of behavior soon spread to all elections in countries outside of the thirty or so long-term consolidated democracies.

Other scholars have noted that by the end of the 1990s, international observers were present at nearly all elections outside of the developed world, and inviting international election observers had become an international norm for leaders of these countries (Bjornlund 2004, Rich 2001, Santa-Cruz 2005). However, the reason that these otherwise independent rulers began to welcome the presence of international observers, even when the reports of observers could force them to pay a hefty domestic and international price, has not been explained. Particularly puzzling to theories of international relations and comparative politics is why incumbent leaders invite observers and then orchestrate widespread election fraud in their presence.

This chapter outlines the micro-foundations of the interaction between the international community and incumbent leaders by formalizing the argument in a decision theoretic model. This model outlines the logic of why international election observation became a nearly universal practice, and the implications of the model spell out how these international level developments influence domestic behavior

surrounding elections. The organization of this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I define the actors that influence the trajectory of international election observation. Second, I provide a formal model of international benefit allocation. Third, the model of the decision to invite international observers is presented. The final section discusses the equilibrium outcomes and the implications of the game.

### **Defining the Actors**

Throughout this chapter, national leaders of transitional countries are referred to as “incumbents.” This assumed actor can be one individual or a group of leaders, depending on the regime type. They choose to hold elections, whether to invite international monitors, and to what degree they will participate in a democratic election. I assume that there are two general types of incumbents: “true-democrats” and “pseudo-democrats.”<sup>19</sup> The other actor influencing the game is the international community,<sup>20</sup> represented in elections by international observers.

A common assumption in political science research is that the primary goal of incumbent politicians is to maintain power. This is often a useful assumption, but it can be misleading when applied to countries without institutionalized political rules. For some incumbents in democratizing countries, the goal of democratization trumps the incumbent’s goal of staying in power. Throughout democratic history, there have been leaders who have put their desire to lead their country toward democracy ahead

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<sup>19</sup> This is not an inclusive typology of all leaders. There are also those leaders who do not hold elections, and those that are already leading consolidated democracies.

<sup>20</sup> This is a somewhat controversial actor because an argument can be made that the international community does not exist as a cohesive unit, and its preferences cannot be described. For this chapter, I assume that it does exist and that its relevant preferences favor democracy. I also assume that international election monitors can represent the international community. Assuming the existence of the “international community” as a cohesive actor is primarily a pragmatic modeling decision.

of their desire to stay in office. US President George Washington was one of the first prominent politicians to do so,<sup>21</sup> and transferred power to an elected successor despite popular opinion that he should serve indefinitely. Since that time, a number of incumbent politicians have risked their own popularity and political future in order to help their country progress toward democracy. Other prominent examples include Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Clerk in South Africa and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

I define true-democrats as those incumbents who obey the letter and the spirit of electoral laws: they follow rules regulating electoral competition (they don't commit electoral fraud) and comply with expected behavior following an election (if they lose, they peacefully transfer power). Within the confines of a democratic election, it remains a valid assumption that these politicians wish to maintain power.

For other leaders of countries in transition, the assumption of power hungry politicians remains appropriate. Pseudo-democrats hold free and fair elections if they believe that they are popular enough to win outright, and if they are not sure that they will win, they manipulate the election to their benefit. The crucial differences between true-democrats and pseudo-democrats are that first, pseudo-democrats will cheat and, second, if they are defeated, they do not willingly transfer power to another party. History shows that these leaders are sometimes surprised when an election reveals that they are not as popular as they believed. For example, it was widely reported that Marcos agreed to hold the 1986 Philippine elections because he believed he would win in a landslide. Similarly, in Uruguay in 1980, and in Nicaragua in 1990, unelected

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<sup>21</sup> At the time, George Washington was considered a "modern Cincinnatus."

dictators or strongmen failed to anticipate that they were likely to be voted out of office. In each case, the leaders held elections because they felt they would win overwhelmingly, and were resistant to transferring power after losing. Even though, in each of the examples above, the incumbent eventually allowed a transfer of power to the winner of the election, this transfer was caused by enormous popular uprising and international pressure rather than the dictators' inherent preference for democracy.

These “stunning” elections (Huntington 1991, 174) are one way in which countries transition to democracy without the leadership of a true-democrat (for a more extensive argument along these lines, see Marinov 2006). Errors of judgment aside, pseudo-democrats are likely to hold elections on a heavily tilted playing field that they have manipulated in their favor. As Schedler points out, these electoral autocracies “...neither practice democracy nor resort regularly to naked repression. By organizing periodic elections they try to obtain at least a semblance of democratic legitimacy, hoping to satisfy external as well as internal actors” (Schedler 2002b, 36; Diamond 2002).

The existence of true-democrats and pseudo-democrats plays a central role in why inviting international election observers has become an internationally expected behavior. The implications of the existence of these two types of leaders will be discussed later in this chapter.

The other major actor in the development of election observation is the international community. I assume that the international community can be reasonably modeled as a coherent actor. During the Cold War, I focus exclusively on the preferences of the Western oriented international community. Since the Cold War, in

the context of international democracy promotion, the international community of democratic states has shared similar preferences and primarily acts in concert through intergovernmental organizations. The United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Union, the Southern African Development Community, and the African Union have each made official proclamations confirming their preference for democracy and transparency in other states in the world.<sup>22</sup> They have also backed up this preference for democracy with significant investment in democracy promotion, and increases in the amount of aid that was linked to progress toward democratic and transparent institutions. Membership in regional intergovernmental organizations such as the OSCE, the EU, the Commonwealth, and the OAS is at least partially conditioned on an acceptable level of democracy.

The international community began to increase emphasis on promoting democracy during the later years of the Cold War. However, promoting democracy is just one of several other common goals of foreign policy, and their relative importance has changed over time. During the Cold War, the declared preference for democracy was easily trumped by anti-communism, and after the Cold War the West's preference for democratic regimes could still be overridden by a country with a high level of geopolitical importance (the US and Egypt for example). However, to varying degrees,

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<sup>22</sup> Among many documents that discuss these official proclamations, see the series of United Nations documents entitled "Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections, specifically A/RES/44/146; Guy Goodwin-Gill's book produced by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Free and Fair Elections: International Law and Practice;" the OSCE's 1990 Copenhagen Document; Merloe (1999); as well as the pieces by Diamond (2002), and Carothers (1997, 2002).

democracy has served as one of the characteristics that powerful democracies value and promote in other countries.

International election observers are representatives of the international community. Their presence at an election is primarily to judge whether the election meets international standards or not, and is therefore not modeled as a strategic decision. In practice, international observers maintain the ability to “move the goalposts” depending on a variety of factors specific to the election, including their desire to be invited to future elections in the country, the consequences of a negative report (they don’t want to send a country back into civil war), or their wish to support a process that they judge is moving in the right direction. International observation missions, and the international community that they represent, generally benefit from accurate reporting. Accurate reporting supports their goal of supporting democracy (by separating the true-democrats from the imitators) and also helps them develop and maintain a good reputation as a quality observation group.

### **The Allocation of International Benefits**

In the late Cold War, the Western international community valued several specific characteristics in other states. In descending order, the characteristics they valued included a state’s commitment to anti-communism, a state’s geo-political position, and finally a state’s commitment to democracy. Above all else, the West valued anti-communism in other states. Holding other factors constant during the late Cold War, the West also professed a preference for democracy.<sup>23</sup> When anti-

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<sup>23</sup> See Burnell (2000); Cox, Ikenberry, and Inoguchi (2002); Chand (1997); Nelson and Eglinton (1992); Rose (2000); Stokke (1995); and Von Hippel (2000).



communism was already determined for countries aligned with the West, those benefit-seeking countries could receive more benefits by becoming more democratic.

The benefits that the international community allocates to states based on their value include but are not limited to international legitimacy, foreign aid, preferential trade agreements, membership in international organizations, and increased foreign direct investment. These international benefits can also be withheld or withdrawn as a penalty for various reasons, including actions related to democratic reversals.

### **A General Theory of International Benefit Allocation**

As a rule, the international community prefers to support incumbent leaders of countries with high value, although the characteristics that are valued change over time. This section formalizes this concept. Assume that the West assigns a score of  $S$  to every incumbent leader seeking international benefits. This score can be based on any number of criteria. For simplicity, assume that the West assigns this score based on three criteria: support for or against communism, geo-political position, and commitment to democracy, represented by  $s_1$ ,  $s_2$ , and  $s_3$ . Each score is also assigned a corresponding weight of  $w_1$ ,  $w_2$ , and  $w_3$ . Therefore,

$$S = s_1 * w_1 + s_2 * w_2 + s_3 * w_3, \text{ where } w_1 + w_2 + w_3 = 1 \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

Let  $s_1$  range from -1 to 1 with -1 representing a very pro-communist country and 1 representing a completely anti-communist country. Let the expected amount of international benefits that a state receives given its score be  $F(S)$ . Assume that  $F' > 0$ , or that the higher the value of  $S$ , the greater the amount of expected international benefits.

$$F(S) = F(s_1 * w_1 + s_2 * w_2 + s_3 * w_3) \quad (\text{Equation 2})$$

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial s_3} = F' * \frac{\partial(s_1 * w_1 + s_2 * w_2 + s_3 * w_3)}{\partial s_3} \quad (\text{Equation 3})$$

So,

$$\frac{\partial(s_1 * w_1 + s_2 * w_2 + s_3 * w_3)}{\partial s_3} = w_3 \quad (\text{Equation 4})$$

Thus,  $\frac{\partial F}{\partial s_3} = F' w_3$ , with  $F'$  representing some positive amount of international

benefits. Because the values of  $w$  sum to one, a change in  $w_i$  necessarily implies an opposing change in at least one other value of  $w$ .

During the Cold War, increasing  $s_3$  would only lead to a small boost in international benefits because  $w_3$  was small. After the Cold War, the value of  $w_3$  increased relative to  $w_1$  and  $w_2$ . Given the above theory of the allocation of international benefits, this implies an increase in the benefits allocated based on a state's commitment to democracy.

How did the increased value of commitment to democracy change the behavior of benefit-seeking states? Specifically, how does this theory of international benefit allocation help explain the development of international election observation?

During the Cold War, characteristics other than democracy were valued by the West when choosing how to allocate international benefits. However, it is reasonable to assume that *ceteris paribus*, the West preferred democratic states over non-democratic states. This assumption is supported by numerous statements from Western leaders during the late 1970s and 1980s, and is further documented in Chapter 4. Upon recognizing the West's growing preference for democracy, leaders of benefit-seeking

states that were already clearly aligned with the West could marginally increase their share of benefits by signaling their commitment to democracy.

Gradually, other countries in similar positions vis-à-vis the West also invited international observers. From the perspective of the international community during this period, international observation was a controversial practice for external actors to advocate, with the UN calling it a violation of sovereignty. As anti-communism was still more important to the West than democracy, influential international actors did not press for international observation, nor did the organizations sending observers develop high quality observation methods. During the Cold War, the impetus to invite international observers was entirely with incumbent leaders seeking a marginal increase in their international benefits from the West. The Western international community was primarily concerned with anti-communism, beginning to be concerned with democratization, and relatively indifferent to the practice of election observation.

Which countries would we expect to have signaled their commitment to democracy during the late Cold War? Most African countries profited from engaging the Soviets and the West in a bidding war for their loyalty. With a few exceptions, Latin America was firmly on the side of the West, and was located within the US's "sphere of influence" (Lake 1999, 2001; Skidmore and Smith 1997). Because of their clear alignment with the West, they had little ability to increase their value by changing their positions on communism. As the US and other Western European countries began professing their preference for democracy, many Latin American countries had an opportunity to further increase their value relative to each other by

signaling their commitment to democracy. During the 1980s, as the Western preference for democracy increased, countries in Latin America and other areas of prominent Western influence began inviting international observers.

At the end of the Cold War, a state's commitment to anti-communism or non-communism dramatically lessened relative to democracy. With the possible exceptions of China and Cuba, communism no longer mattered as much to the Western international community. As the preferences of the international community changed toward overt global preference toward democracies (with geo-political importance remaining the trump card), the actions of benefit-receiving countries and the international community changed. International election observation became a way that benefit-seeking countries could signal their value to the international community. Inviting international observers changed from a signal that was only marginally important to the international community to *the* internationally recognized necessary condition for a state to demonstrate its commitment to democracy. In order to clearly outline this dynamic and its implications, a formal decision-theoretic model is presented in the next section.

### **The Democratic Signal**

The following formal model clarifies the assumptions made about domestic and international actors and the environment surrounding the development of international election observation, and lays out how changing preferences on the part of the international community led to election observation becoming an international standard of behavior.

### Sequence of Moves

The sequence of the game is as follows. Prior to the start of the game shown in Figure 3.1, the international community moves to determine the level of international benefits that are allocated based on commitment to democracy. In the first stage of the game, the type of the incumbent is determined by chance. The incumbent can be one of two types, a true-democrat or a pseudo-democrat. Let  $T$  represent an incumbent that is a true-democrat, and  $P$  represent an incumbent that is a pseudo-democrat. The probability of  $T$  is represented by  $\gamma$ , which is, of course,  $0 \leq \gamma \leq 1$ , and the corresponding probability of  $P$  is  $1 - \gamma$ . Incumbents can make two choices: First, they choose to invite international observers ( $I=1$ ) or not ( $I=0$ ). If the incumbent is a pseudo-democrat who invites observers, she<sup>24</sup> then chooses the level of effort devoted to hiding her cheating ( $H \geq 0$ ). True democrats never cheat, so I assume that  $H|T=0$ . For simplicity, assume that pseudo-democrats always cheat. The cost of hiding election fraud at level  $H$  is  $c(H)$ .

Nature moves and the incumbent can win or lose the election. The probability that an incumbent wins the election is denoted by  $p$ . For simplicity I assume that the probability of victory is the same for both types. If the incumbent loses the election, the payoff is zero, even if observers are invited.

### Payoffs

For the incumbent, winning the election brings several benefits. Some of these benefits do not depend on the international community such as salary and domestic

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<sup>24</sup> For clarity, I refer to the true-democrat with a masculine pronoun and the pseudo-democrat with a feminine pronoun.

prestige. These benefits are denoted by  $B$ . Winning office also brings with it international benefits, which for simplicity will be referred to as aid, and denoted by  $A$ .  $A = F(S)$  as defined in Equation 2, or the amount of international benefits a state expects to receive based on its score. The reports issued by observers are used in part to determine a given country's score. The report is denoted by  $R$ . If cheating is detected, observers issue a negative report,  $R=-1$ , and if cheating is not detected, observers issue a positive report,  $R=1$ . Given that an incumbent is cheating, the probability that the report given by international observers is negative is a function of the level of effort devoted to concealing the cheating,  $r(H)$ . If the incumbent is a true-democrat, then the probability that the report is negative is zero because there is never any cheating revealed to the international observers.  $A$  is a function of inviting observers and the report they issue, denoted as  $A(I,R)$ , where  $A(1,1) > A(1,-1) \geq A(0, \bullet)$ . Note that  $A(0, \bullet)$  is the flow of targeted international benefits if monitors are not invited.

### Expected Utilities

Given the information above, I compute the expected utilities for the incumbent leaders. The payoff for losing the election is normalized to zero. For the true-democrats, the expected utilities are as follows.

$$EU_T(I,H) = p[B + A(1,1)] - c(H) \quad (\text{Equation 5})$$

$$EU_T(0) = p[B + A(0, \bullet)] \quad (\text{Equation 6})$$

However, since the true-democrat does not cheat or conceal cheating,  $c(H)$  is always zero. The true-democrat will invite observers when  $EU_T(I,H) > EU_T(0)$ , therefore, true-democrats will invite when  $A(1,1) > A(0, \bullet)$ . So long as the international community

provides some benefits based on signaling a commitment to democracy that are greater than those benefits given if no observers are invited, the true-democrat always invites international observers. Note that  $B$ , or domestic benefits from winning, are not part of the decision calculus. Therefore, if there is any possibility of greater benefits from inviting observers, true-democrats invite.

For the pseudo-democrat, the expected utility is represented by  $EU_P(I, H)$ .

Equation 6 shows that the benefits from inviting observers are a function of the probability of victory and the probability that the report from observers is negative given the effort devoted to concealing manipulation. If the pseudo-democrat wins and successfully conceals manipulation from observers and gains a positive report, she gains  $A(I, I)$ . If the pseudo-democrat wins and does not successfully conceal manipulation from observers, the report is negative, and she gains  $A(I, -I)$ . Regardless, the pseudo-democrat who invites observers must pay the cost of concealing manipulation.

The presence of observers can reduce the probability of victory for a cheating pseudo-democrat. Therefore, when observers are invited pseudo-democrats cheat enough to make the probability of victory equal to the probability of victory if observers were not invited. I assume that this extra effort devoted to cheating (and concealing the cheating from observers) is represented in  $c(H)$ .

$$EU_P(I, H) = p[B + r(H)A(1, -1) + (1 - r(H))A(1, 1)] - c(H) \quad (\text{Equation 6})$$

When observers are invited by a pseudo-democrat, there is an optimal level of  $H$  to conceal fraud without wasting effort. Let the optimal level of  $H$  be denoted by  $H_I$ ,

where  $H_I > 0$ . If the incumbent pseudo-democrat invites observers, the best payoff she can get is,

$$EU_P(I, H_I) = p[B + r(H_I)A(1, -1) + (1 - r(H_I))A(1, 1)] - c(H_I) \quad (\text{Equation 7})$$

On the other hand, if the pseudo-democrat does not invite observers, there is no point in concealing the fraud, and the optimal level of  $H$  is  $H_0=0$ . Therefore,

$$EU_P(0) = p[B + A(0, \bullet)] \quad (\text{Equation 8})$$

Equation 8 shows that the expected utility for a pseudo-democrat who does not invite observers, and therefore does not conceal any electoral manipulation, is equal to the probability that they will win multiplied by the domestic benefits of remaining in office and the international benefits allocated to that state based on other factors valued by the international community.

If  $[EU_P(I, H_I) - EU_P(0)] > 0$ , then the pseudo-democrat will invite observers.

Put differently, if the calculation in Equation 9 is greater than zero, observers will be invited. If it is equal or less than zero, they will not.

$$EU_P(I, H_I) - EU_P(0) = p[r(H_I)A(1, -1) + (1 - r(H_I))A(1, 1) - A(0, \bullet)] - c(H_I)$$

$$(\text{Equation 9})$$

Notice that the non-international benefits, such as the salary from holding office, are no longer part of the decision to invite observers. The decision by a pseudo-democrat to invite international observers is a function of their probability of victory, the probability that their cheating will be revealed, the size of international benefits for holding internationally legitimate elections, and the cost of electoral manipulation.



It is possible to simplify Equation 9 by assuming that the targeted international benefits are only available to those that invite international observers and are not caught cheating, or  $A(I, -I) = A(0, \bullet) = 0$ . Then Equation (9) above simplifies to

$$EU_P(I, H_I) - EU_P(0) = p[(1 - r(H_I))A(I, I)] - c(H_I) \quad (\text{Equation 10})$$

As the above expression shows, the pseudo-democrat is more likely to invite monitors in four scenarios: (1) as  $p$ , the probability that a pseudo-democrat wins the election, increases; (2) as the probability with getting away with cheating increases; (3) as the international reward for holding internationally approved elections increases; and (4) as the cost of hiding electoral cheating decreases.

In this game, the international community simply sets a price schedule indicating the size of international benefits a polity receives for given patterns of observed behavior (invite/not, reported cheating/not). In the simplest case, where  $A(I, -I) = A(0, \bullet) = 0$ ,  $A(I, I)$  is the bonus for being (or seeming to be) more democratic. The international community maintains the ability to change the value of  $A(I, R)$ . In the game modeled here, the international community simply sets a positive value for  $A(I, I)$ . This choice is determined by the model presented in Equation 1, and  $A(I, I)$  can be assumed to be positive and increasing when  $w_3$ , or the relative importance of democracy to the international community, increases.

How does this model explain the trend of more internationally observed elections? Given the above model, one explanation for the increasing trend of monitored elections is that  $A(I, I)$  increased relative to  $A(I, -I)$  and  $A(0, \bullet)$ . The West became increasingly concerned with democracy.

**Proposition 1: As the size of international benefits for holding internationally approved elections increases, pseudo-democrats are more likely to invite monitors.**

An alternative explanation for the increasing trend toward monitored elections is that cheating became more effective or cheaper. Formally, either  $1-r(H_I)$  increased; or  $c(H_I)$  decreased.

**Proposition 2: As the probability that a pseudo-democrat will get away with cheating increases, pseudo-democrats are more likely to invite monitors.**

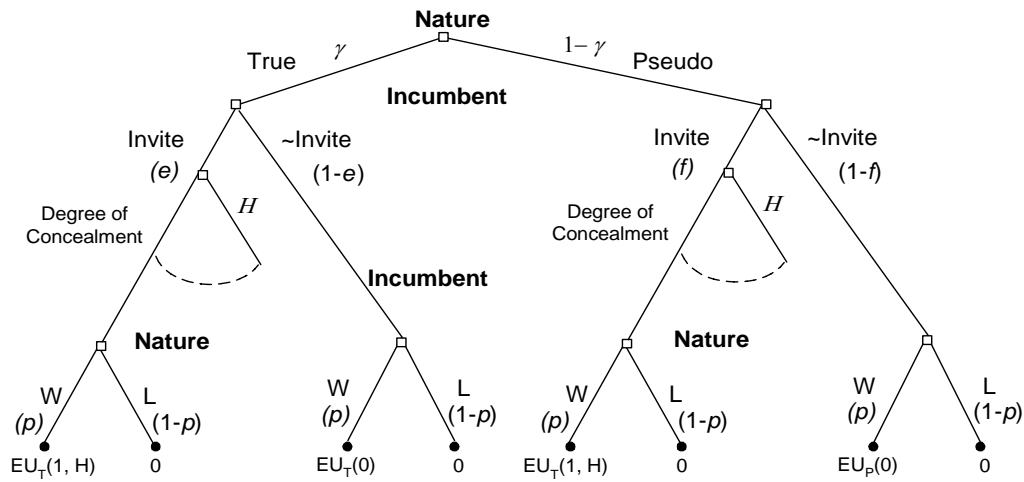
**Proposition 3: As the cost of hiding electoral manipulation decreases, pseudo-democrats are more likely to invite monitors.**

A third possible explanation for the increase in observed elections would be that electoral autocrats became more secure, or more likely to win a given election, worldwide ( $p$  increased).

**Proposition 4: As the probability that a cheating incumbent will win increases, pseudo-democrats are more likely to invite monitors.**

Although Proposition 4 is theoretically possible given the model, the empirical evidence does not support the idea that autocrats have become more secure. On the contrary, Geddes (1999) shows that although there is variation in the failure rate between types of authoritarian regimes, the failure rate across all types has increased since the end of WWII, and the failure rate within single-party regimes jumped dramatically beginning in 1990. Carothers (2002) and Diamond (2002) provide additional support for the point that authoritarian (and semi-authoritarian) rulers were increasingly likely to be thrown out of office or face competition during the 1990s.

This leaves two possible, testable, and not yet refuted explanations as to why international election observation increased so rapidly since its inception: (1) international election observation spread because the international benefits for looking like a democracy increased (Proposition 1), or (2) because it became easier to cheat in front of international observers (Propositions 2 and 3). These two explanations are not mutually exclusive, and may in fact be related.



**Figure 3.1: The Democratic Signal**

### Discussion of Equilibrium Outcomes

This game has some flavor of a signaling game in the sense that the type of the incumbent might be revealed during the course of play. For example, given my assumption that true-democrats never cheat (and the implicit assumption that monitors never render false positives), if any incumbent is caught cheating by monitors, the international community knows that the incumbent is a pseudo-democrat.

Given the preferences and assumptions outlined in the model, and the relationship presented in Equation 10 between investments by international observers in monitoring technology,  $c(H_I)$ ; the ability of incumbents to conceal their cheating from observers  $H_I$ , and the probability that a report will be negative  $(1-r)$ , there are two general equilibrium outcomes of the game.

Since the true-democrat always invites when international benefits exist, there is one possible separating equilibrium: the true-democrats invite observers and the pseudo-democrats do not.

Formally, if  $p[(1-r(H_I))A(1,1)] - c(H_I) \leq 0$  the pseudo-democrats do not invite observers. If the international community outspends the pseudo-democrats significantly, thus driving up the cost of concealing manipulation; a separating equilibrium will result in which true-democrats will be separated from pseudo-democrats because inviting observers (and hiding the electoral manipulation) will have become too costly for the pseudo-democrats. This separating equilibrium also holds if the international benefits allocated based on commitment to democracy are small relative to the cost of hiding electoral manipulation.

Recall that true-democrats invite if  $A > 0$ . If, on the other hand,  $p[(1-r(H_I))A(1,1)] - c(H_I) > 0$ , a pooling equilibrium results in which both types invite observers. If autocrats are able to effectively outspend the international observers and stand to gain sufficient international benefits when their strategy succeeds, then all incumbents should invite international observers.

What is the precise relationship between the quality of monitoring and the incumbent's skill at cheating? Let  $r$  (the probability that the monitor's report,  $R$ , is

negative) be a function of investments by international observer organizations in better monitoring (denoted by  $z$ ), and in hiding technology by the incumbent (denoted by  $y$ );  $r(H; z, y)$ . Higher  $z$  makes  $H$  less effective in lowering  $r$ . An increase in  $y$  makes  $H$  more effective in lowering  $r$ . The basic relationship can be represented in the following way:

$$r(H; z, y) = z/(Hy + z) \quad (\text{Equation 12})$$

This relationship generates a dynamic prediction: if observers get better at catching electoral manipulation (an increase in  $z$ ), pseudo-democrats have the incentive to get better at cheating ( $y$ ), and vice versa. Based on this model, we should observe escalation in both the quality of monitoring and the ability of incumbents to conceal their cheating.

**Proposition 5: As the ability of incumbents to conceal cheating improves, so does the quality of election observation.**

There is also a corollary to Proposition 5. As a pooling equilibrium is reached in which all incumbents invite international observers, the actors that benefit from an accurate signal have the incentive to increase the cost of the signal of a leader's commitment to democracy. Both true-democrats and international observers benefit from an accurate signal. Therefore, when a pooling equilibrium is reached, true-democrats and international observers try to make inviting observers more costly for pseudo-democrats, or make the required signal stronger.

**Corollary 5.1: As the signal of inviting observers is imitated by pseudo-democrats, the cost of the signal or the strength of the signal should increase.**

Increasing the cost of the signal could be accomplished by making the penalty greater for being exposed as a cheat. Increasing the strength of the signal involves allowing international observers to have increased access to the country and to all stages of the electoral process, large networks of coordinated domestic observers, a parallel vote-tabulation or quick count, and inviting an observer group that has a reputation for issuing critical post-election statements in cases in which they are deserved.

Uncovering the concealed electoral manipulation predicted by Proposition 5 is very difficult to do systematically because, as one scholar put it, “no one who stuffs the ballot box wants to leave a trail of incriminating evidence” (Lehoucq 2003). However, if pseudo-democrats became more skilled at electoral manipulation, there are several observable implications, particularly in relation to the behavior of opposition political parties. These groups have the most to lose from a fraudulent election that is declared legitimate by the international community, and therefore have strong incentives to attempt to expose the true type of the incumbent. Chapter 8 of this dissertation deals with this dynamic in detail, and shows that because opposition political parties have better information about the true type of the incumbent, they are motivated to expose a strategic pseudo-democrat’s type with a costly signal, evidenced by the higher rate of opposition party election boycotts when international observers are present. Although electoral manipulation that is effectively concealed would be impossible to observe, the increased tendency of opposition parties to boycott when observers are present provides support to the concept that incumbents have improved methods of concealing electoral manipulation.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a model of international benefit allocation, and a formal model of the decision by incumbent leaders to invite international observers. The model generated several propositions, including two potential explanations for the increased incidence of international election observation.

The next chapter argues that the transition from the separating equilibrium to the pooling equilibrium explains the spread of election observation. It provides an extensive discussion of the reasons for this transition, and supports the theory with empirical tests regarding the link between the change in international benefit allocation and the creation of the new behavioral convention that may represent the development of a new international norm.

## **Chapter 4**

### **From Material Motivations to International Norm?**

In the previous chapter, I argued that international election observation was initiated by true-democrats and then mimicked by pseudo-democrats as a signal of a country's commitment to democracy. In the model, the decision to invite international observers is determined by the international benefits associated with signaling a commitment to democracy and the ease with which pseudo-democrats can manipulate their election and still receive a positive report from international observers. In the terminology of the formal model, election observation began as a separating equilibrium in which only true-democrats invite observers, and then became a pooling equilibrium in which both true and pseudo-democrats invite international observers.

In three parts this chapter further explains the rapid increase and the duration of election observation, and provides several forms of evidence in support of the argument. First, I explain why the transition from the separating equilibrium to the pooling equilibrium took place in terms of changes in international preference for democracy, increased willingness by international actors to support self-determination over sovereignty, and increased international investment in democracy promotion. Second, I examine the link between international benefit allocation and democracy in detail, and use data on bilateral foreign aid to test for a relationship between fraudulent elections and foreign aid reduction. Third, I turn to the question of why the pooling equilibrium has endured even as election observers have become much more adept at catching and calling attention to rigged elections. One possible answer is that an



international norm has developed in which inviting international election observers has become the appropriate behavior for leaders of democratizing states. I discuss international election observation as a potential international norm, and present evidence that the practice of inviting election observers is not yet an internalized norm, as evidenced by the defiant justifications of leaders who do not invite observers.

### **Changing Equilibrium**

What factors contributed to the change from a separating equilibrium in which only true-democrats invite to a pooling equilibrium in which nearly all leaders invite? In the early years of election observation, some leaders invited international election observers to signal their commitment to democracy. They were motivated to send this signal because of changes in the international environment privileging democracy. During the Cold War, although anti-communism was far more important to the West than democracy, countries that were already within the US's sphere of influence could marginally increase the international benefits they were receiving by signaling their commitment to democracy.

Democracy promotion was not a new concept at the end of the Cold War. International support for democracy as a form of government has made a number of appearances in modern political history, particularly in the United States (Smith 1994, Slater 1967, Wright 1964, Drake 1991). Woodrow Wilson championed the cause of self-determination during the creation of the League of Nations. Following WWII the allied governments imposed democracy within occupied countries, but democracy promotion was largely limited to occupied territories. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights' Article 21 sets forth the right to select one's leaders in "periodic and

genuine” elections. Beginning in 1952 the United Nations provided electoral assistance to occupied territories, but did not become involved in non-territorial issues in sovereign countries until 1990.

Why, in 1962, did the first election observation missions take place? For some time, although democracy was valued to varying degrees by several powerful international actors, dictators were tolerated as long as they were loyal. As Tony Smith writes in regard to US policy, after WWII and prior to the Kennedy administration, “Washington had served notice it would aid authoritarians even against constitutional governments if to do otherwise risked a communist takeover” (1994, 216). Although a number of US administrations talked about the importance of democracy, they made clear that other geopolitical concerns were more important. The Kennedy administration attempted to depart radically from this policy with the creation of the Alliance for Progress, which linked peace and security to development and democracy (Smith 1994).

Much of Kennedy’s 1961 inaugural address was oriented not toward the American people, but to other nations. If the leaders in Latin America were using Kennedy’s words to take the pulse on his administration’s likely policies, they received a strong message. To illustrate this point, I quote from his inaugural address at length.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty...

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge—to convert our good words into good deeds—in a new alliance for

progress—to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. (January 20, 1961)

Did Kennedy follow through on his verbal commitment to “convert our good words into good deeds” within Latin America, or more importantly, in 1961, did Latin American leaders believe he would? As partial evidence, under the auspices of the Alliance for Progress, the US disbursed \$22.3 billion in Latin America (Smith 1994). A true empirical test of the claim that international benefits were increased to states that signaled their commitment to democracy would require knowledge of what would have happened had these countries not invited international observers. This is a difficult counterfactual to tease out. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Kennedy’s rhetoric about supporting democracy and the initiation of the Alliance for Progress gave some leaders the incentive to signal their commitment to democracy. The rate of observed elections continued at a just a handful a year until the early 1970s. Zero elections were observed from 1972 to 1976, and the practice picked up again in the late 1970s.

In the 1980s democracy received increased international attention, led by the US, which was reflected in increased monetary investments in democracy promotion and a strengthened link between democracy and anti-communism in foreign policy. This change began to tip the incentive structure for incumbent pseudo-democrats toward the pooling equilibrium. The signal of inviting observers was mimicked by more leaders who were holding rigged elections. Ronald Reagan took steps to tie democracy more directly to anti-communism, although it is well known that his

administration continued support for dictatorships. As the Cold War came to an end and anti-communism diminished in importance, the international benefits for countries that looked and acted like democracies increased rapidly. Several US presidents during the Cold War, including Truman, Kennedy, and Carter talked about the importance of spreading freedom and liberty. When did Western commitments to reward democracies become more credible? Jimmy Carter took some steps to highlight the poor human rights records of many US supported dictatorships (Brinkley 1999, Carter 1982). In the early 1980s Ronald Reagan is credited with a sizable political investment in democracy promotion which he backed up with the founding of the US-based National Endowment for Democracy. Although it is hard to know in retrospect whether Reagan's rhetoric was perceived as more credible to US-allied states at the time, many observers point to Reagan's speech to the British House of Commons in 1982 as the moment in which the battle with communism was explicitly linked to democracy promotion, and the modern democracy promotion movement was established.<sup>25</sup> The international venue is important to note. Shortly after this speech, Reagan created the National Endowment for Democracy, and channeled more money into democracy promotion activities over the course of the 1980s. As democracy eclipsed anti-communism in international importance, the practice of election observation spread rapidly to all regions of the world.

Actions by a number of other international actors underscore the increasing emphasis on democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s. At the end of the Cold War,

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<sup>25</sup> The so-called "Evil Empire" speech was delivered to the British House of Commons on June 8, 1982.

the proportion of international benefits allocated based on democracy increased exponentially.<sup>26</sup>

An explicit manifestation of the post-Cold War focus on democracy promotion can be seen in the US with the “Democracy Initiative” announced by US Agency for International Development (USAID). In 1990, along with the announcement of USAID’s changing policy focus, Secretary of State James Baker announced that the US post-Cold War mission should be the “promotion and consolidation of democracy” (Crawford 2001, 61). The United Nations underscored its support for democracy promotion in their 1988 resolutions on “Efforts of Governments to Promote or Consolidate New or Restored Democracies” and “Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Periodic and Genuine Elections.” The OECD, which coordinates aid efforts for all the major bilateral donors issued a similar statement in favor of democracy promotion in 1994: “DAC Orientations on Participatory Development and Good Governance.” The UN’s 2004 “Compilation of documents or texts adopted and used by various intergovernmental, international, regional and sub-regional organizations aimed at promotion democracy” highlights that democracy promotion has become a global phenomenon, with formal international commitments to democracy made by countries in all regions of the world.

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<sup>26</sup> Much of the information provided in this section is available from a variety of sources, all of which confirm the same basic story. The information about intergovernmental organizations is available directly from their websites, and much of this information is also reported in Abbink and Hesselings’ (2000) edited volume, *Election Observation and Democratization in Africa*; Yves Beigbeder’s (1994) *International Monitoring of Plebiscites, Referenda and National Elections*; Eric Bjornlund’s (2004) *Beyond Free and Fair: Monitoring Elections and Building Democracy*; and Kevin Middlebrook’s (1998) edited volume *Electoral Observation and Democratic Transitions in Latin America*.

The EU Council of Ministers made a declaration in November 1991 on “Human Rights, Democracy and Development” which made the promotion of human rights and democracy both an objective and a condition of development aid, not only for the European Community but also for member states (Crawford 2001). US presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton cited American security as justification for increased democracy promotion efforts (Smith 1994). Clinton made the promotion of democracy and human rights one of the three pillars of US foreign policy. International organizations created autonomous divisions to promote democracy, and made institutional provisions for international election observers. The IMF and the World Bank began to discuss “good governance” and transparent and accountable government as necessary conditions for successful development. The UN, which for decades had been turning down invitations to observe elections, began observing elections in sovereign states in 1989, and created the Electoral Assistance Division in 1991. The OAS created the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy in 1991. Many other actions by international actors sent strong signals to incumbent leaders that democracy was an increasingly valued characteristic.

The increase in international benefits in the late 1980s and early 1990s is the driving force that gave pseudo-democrats the incentive to invite international observers. However, in addition to the increase in international benefits brought about by the end of the Cold War, this change in incumbent behavior occurred for three reasons.

First, election observation spread rapidly in part because the quality of election observation was initially poor, and the willingness of observers to criticize also lagged

behind the spreading trend of internationally observed elections. Second, the high demand by incumbent leaders for international observers lessened concerns by international actors that sending observers was a violation of sovereignty. Third, over the course of the 1990s international actors invested considerably more resources in democracy promotion and election observation explicitly. This increased the supply of professional and high quality election observers, and resulted in higher quality reporting. International actors began to use their evaluations explicitly to target democracy promotion resources appropriately.

If the quality of election observation had been high in the late 1980s, many leaders might have been far less likely to invite international actors to judge their election in exchange for potential international benefits. In the language of the formal model in Chapter 3, the costs of hiding election manipulation might have been high enough to outweigh the likely benefits. The timing was such that international “carrots” associated with signaling a commitment to democracy existed before observers were of high quality. This is reflected in the development of one of the leading organizations that sends observers: the OSCE. In the early 1990s, during the rapid spread of election observation, the quality of election observation remained low relative to today’s standards. The OSCE calls the period between the signing of the Copenhagen document (1990) and 1994 the “free and fair” years in which each election was evaluated based exclusively on election day. In response to criticism and further experience, the mid-1990s brought about an improvement in election observation methodology. By 1996 the OSCE had produced a handbook detailing much more extensive election observation methodology, including the notable

addition of long-term election observation, media monitoring, and pre-election assessments.

The OSCE's experience with election observation, in which judgments about whether an election was "free and fair" were made based on observations of election day, accurately characterize election observation in the early 1990s. As it was spreading, observers were capable of and willing to catch blatant fraud, yet focused almost exclusively on the procedural aspects of election-day administration.

A handful of elections were criticized by international observers before the mid-1990s, including elections in Bulgaria, Cameroon, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Romania, South Korea, and Togo, and a strategic pseudo-democrat would have been wise to anticipate the possibility that observers could attempt to delegitimize their victory. However, most pseudo-democrats were able to invite observers and minimize the chances that they would be caught manipulating the election by cheating in such a way that was less likely to be caught by international observers. Thus, the rate of observed elections increased rapidly. This rapid increase in the rate of election observation had the unintended consequence of contributing to a change in the perceptions of international actors about sovereignty.

The repeated invitations to international observers, coupled with growing international emphasis on democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s allowed international actors to favor the support of self-determination over concerns about violating sovereignty. In the early decades of election observation, concerns about sovereignty had limited the supply of international observers by reducing the number of organizations willing to send international observers and limiting investments in



high quality election observation. However, once the concerns about sovereignty were mitigated by repeated invitations from incumbents and a broader international emphasis on democracy, international actors became more willing to threaten to impose costs on leaders who did not invite observers, and to invest in high quality election observation.

As an example of this change in international perceptions of the relationship between sovereignty and election observation, at a 1991 meeting all 55 member states of the OSCE agreed that “matters pertaining to democracy and human rights are of direct and legitimate concern to all OSCE member states and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.”<sup>27</sup> Additionally, beginning in the late 1990s, governments became explicit in their threats of punishment towards regimes that were not inviting observers, and also began to refuse to lift existing sanctions unless elections were monitored. For example, in 2002 the European Union gave an ultimatum to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe saying that “sanctions would be applied against his government if he does not allow international observers to watch the country’s forthcoming presidential polls.”<sup>28</sup> Zimbabwe bowed to this pressure, while initiating a campaign to discredit the reports of observers from the European Union and Britain. In response to the EU threats, the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister was quoted as saying:

The combination of the assault on Zimbabwe through media channels to which Zimbabwe is no match, with a direct assault on its sovereignty and on its democratic development by certain members of the EU is a

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<sup>27</sup> OSCE (2005) *Election Observation-A Decade of Monitoring Elections*.

<sup>28</sup> Jan. 12, 2002 *Financial Times*

tragic illustration of the kind of hypocrisy that should find no comfort in such a partnership as ours. (*Financial Times*, Jan. 12, 2002)

In May 2002 President George W. Bush said he would not end the Cuban embargo without free elections monitored by international observers, and encouraged reform ahead of the 2003 National Assembly elections. In outlining his conditions, Bush said “[t]o make them free and fair, they must give opposition candidates the freedom to organize, assemble and speak,” and went on to say that the Cuban government must invite international observers to monitor the vote. The US embargo against Cuba is related to many larger issues than election observation, but the link between a seemingly unrelated part of US foreign policy and election observation is telling. Although a few leaders continue to complain that election observers violate sovereignty, election observation became a widely acceptable means to promote democracy, concerns with violating sovereignty were mitigated, and this increased the willingness of international actors to fund and send election observation missions.

Perhaps the most important change was the universal acceptance of democracy as the only internationally legitimate form of government, and the desire of powerful states to target their support toward countries that were actually democratizing, rather than those countries that were only going through the motions on the surface. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, any perceived movement toward democracy was likely to be rewarded. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the large number of transitional elections caused an initial wave of excitement and sense of inevitability about the spread of democratization (Carothers 2002, Huntington 1991, Fukuyama 1992). As it became clear that elections were not always positive developments and international observers

came under heavy fire in the early 1990s for “sprinkling holy water” on blatantly rigged electoral processes, the sense that global democratization was inevitable was replaced with concern about the inherent challenges in promoting democracy. Democracy promoters, including powerful states and international organizations, increased their need to distinguish leaders that were committed to democratization from those that were not. This resulted in higher quality election observation, and increased willingness by international actors to condition international benefits explicitly on whether a leader invited observers, and whether the election received a positive report.

In the latter half of the 1990s, the majority of elections were already internationally observed, and higher quality election observation was used more explicitly by international actors to target international benefits. In an environment in which democracy promotion was widely practiced and supporting self-determination became an acceptable reason to violate sovereignty, international actors began to focus on election observation as a way to gather important information about the democratic credentials of other regimes. The growing international importance of democracy as the only internationally legitimate form of government, and the desire by democracy promoters in the international community to apply the “carrots and sticks” of democracy promotion appropriately gave leaders further incentives to invite observers, even while the quality of election observation was improving.

These three related developments contributed to a strategic situation in which pseudo-democrats had the incentive to mimic the signal of true democrats. Also as a result, election observation organizations improved the scope and quality of their

missions and became more willing to call bad elections when they saw them. The reports of international observers became a more accurate method to distinguish true-democrats from pseudo-democrats. This section has provided descriptive evidence of the strengthening link between international benefit allocation and democracy that took place in the 1980s and 1990s. The next section examines bilateral foreign aid as a form of international benefits to further elucidate the relationship between clean elections and international benefits in the 1990s.

### **Elections and Bilateral Foreign Aid<sup>29</sup>**

The crux of the explanation as to why election observation became a widespread practice is an increase in international benefits for countries that look and act like democracies, and a decrease in international benefits for those countries that do not. Although democracy promotion has more or less been a part of US foreign policy since President Wilson (Smith 1994), democracy promotion was not universally accepted as a practice of developed democracies and international organizations until the end of the Cold War. Even though powerful Western states talked about democracy prior to the mid-1980s, the competition between the Soviet Union and the West for political influence outweighed any attempt to condition aid and other international benefits on democracy (Dunning 2004<sup>30</sup>).

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<sup>29</sup> This section of Chapter 4 is partially based on a paper coauthored with Carew Boulding. The variable descriptions, data compilation, and base model are similar to the paper under the title “Political Terror, Election Fraud, and Foreign Aid: When do donors withdraw aid to promote democracy?” presented in April 2005 at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

<sup>30</sup> Thad Dunning (2004) argues that geopolitical concerns during the Cold War made donor threats to condition aid on democratic forms less credible, and therefore less effective in increasing the level of democracy in aid recipient countries. Dunning shows a change in the link between foreign aid to Africa and democratization in the post-Cold War period. Using data from Goldsmith (2001) he shows that from 1975 to 1986 to statistically significant relationship exists between aid and democracy. From 1987 to 1997 Dunning shows that foreign aid has a positive and statistically significant relationship on

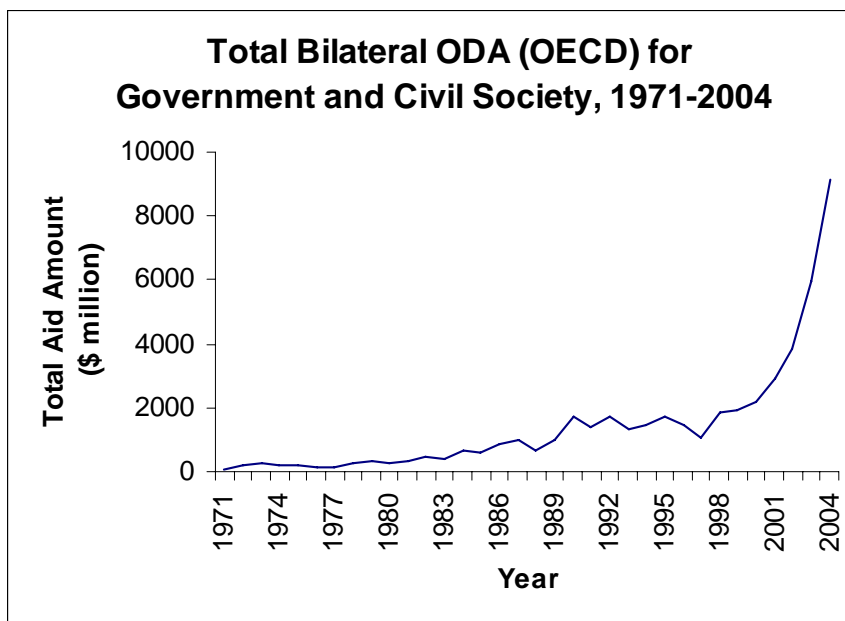
International benefits available to democratizing states come from a variety of sources, and can include international legitimacy, foreign aid, preferential trade agreements, and membership in international organizations. This section examines bilateral foreign aid giving as one piece of evidence that international benefits were conditioned on clean elections in the 1990s.

Bilateral development aid has been increasingly targeted toward improving political institutions and civil society. Figure 4.1 shows that the pattern in bilateral development aid for government and civil society<sup>31</sup> from the OECD DAC experienced a relatively large increase in the late 1980s and an exponential increase at the end of the 1990s. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show a similar pattern in changes in USAID Democracy and Governance aid allocation from 1990-2003. Aid to these sectors is intended to bring about change in the specific program areas. More general forms of development aid were also tied to democracy, as well as human rights and good governance.

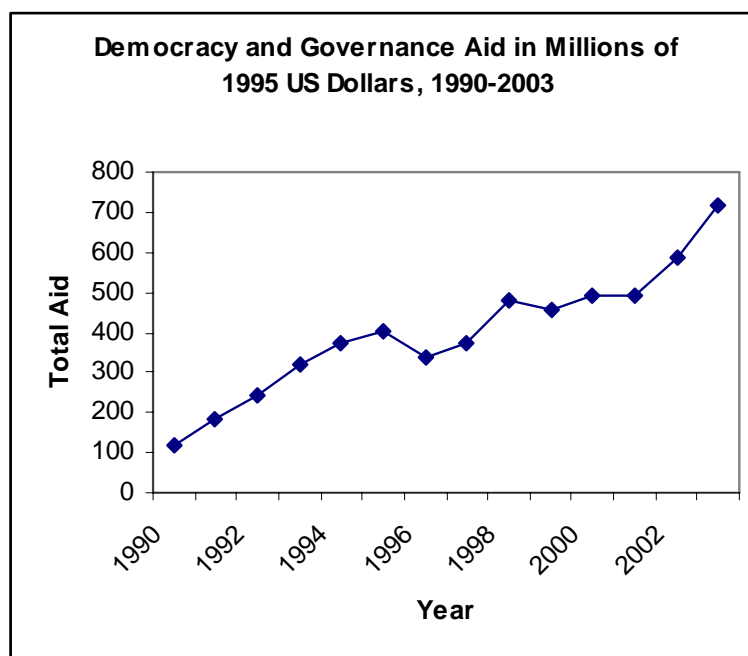
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democracy (410). The analyses (Goldsmith's and Dunning's replication) do not control for prior level of democracy, which undermines the findings.

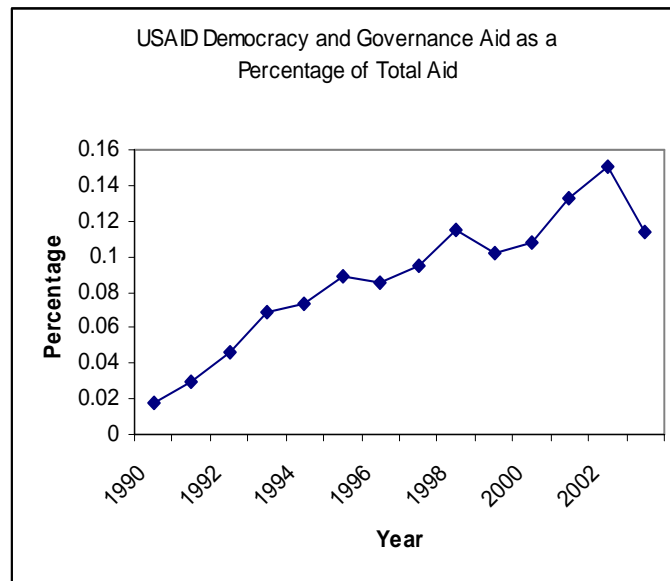
<sup>31</sup> Aid to government and civil society, as reported in Figure 1, includes economic and development policy/planning, public sector financial management, legal and judicial development, government administration, strengthening civil society, elections, human rights, free flow of information.



**Figure 4.1: Total Bilateral ODA (OECD) for Government and Civil Society**  
Source: OECD DAC Official Commitments by Sector (Table 5)



**Figure 4.2: Total USAID Democracy and Governance Aid**



**Figure 4.3: USAID Democracy and Governance Aid as a Percent of Total Aid**  
**Source: Data for figures 4.2 and 4.3 are compiled from Finkel, Perez-Linan, and Seligson (2006)**

One way to measure the link between democratic elections, international observers, and international benefits is to examine year-to-year bilateral foreign aid giving. Although foreign aid levels fluctuate for many reasons, only some of which can be controlled for in a regression analysis, it is still possible to look for patterns in aid reduction.

Many are skeptical that donors follow through on their commitments to link democracy to foreign aid levels (Easterly 2002), and the evidence of whether foreign aid can be used to promote democratization is mixed (Knack 2004; Finkel, Perez-Linan, and Seligson 2006). The central question of interest here is not whether foreign aid can help promote democracy, but whether incumbent leaders have reason to believe that donor commitments to link aid with democracy (and democratic elections) are credible. Only credible commitments to link international benefits to democracy

should be expected to influence incumbent behavior. Theoretically, if a threat is credible and there are no informational problems, then there should be little need to enforce the threat because the threatened actors will anticipate the negative consequences. However, there are often informational problems, as well as agency slack within the aid organizations. It is therefore reasonable to expect that verbal commitments by donors to condition aid on democracy are not credible to some aid recipients. Some state leaders should be expected to test the credibility of this threat. It is therefore instructive to examine how donors react to anti-democratic actions, such as the holding of fraudulent elections. This section examines one question in detail: are aid-receiving countries more likely to experience a significant reduction in bilateral aid when fraud is claimed after an election?

Given statements by donors and case-based evidence, the expectation is that reports of fraudulent elections and other anti-democratic activities should be associated with reductions in bilateral foreign aid. The hypothesis follows:

**H1: Aid should be more likely to be reduced following a fraudulent election than following a clean election.**

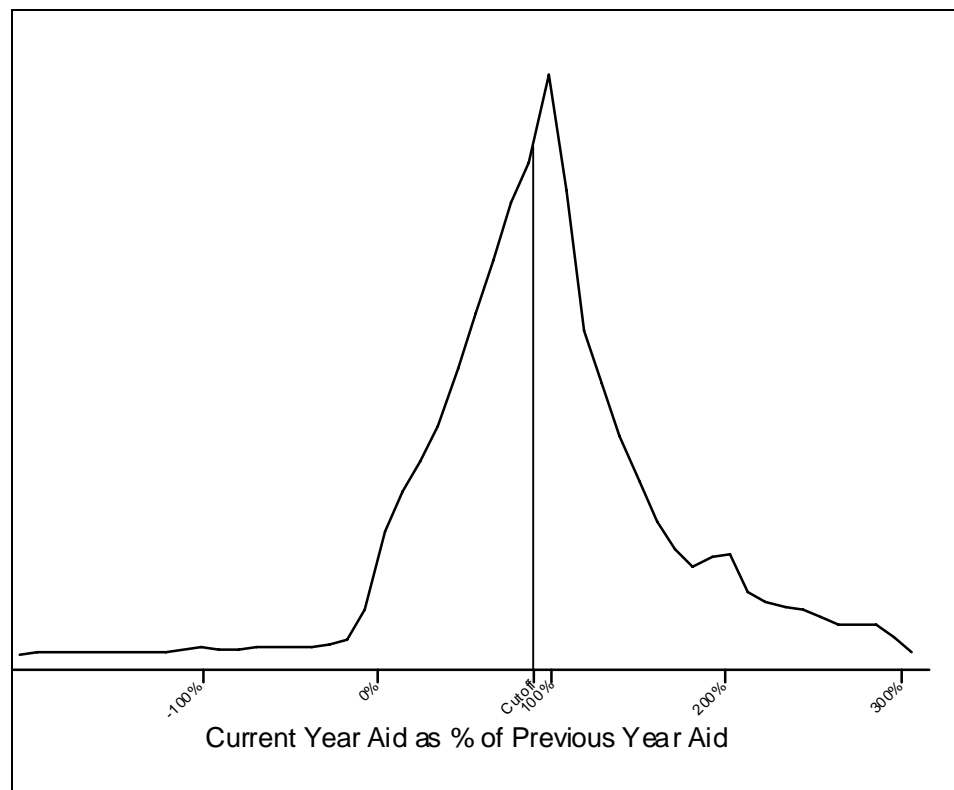
**H1<sub>0</sub>: The probability that aid will be significantly reduced is equal between elections that are clean and elections that experience election fraud.**

In order to test this hypothesis, the following empirical analysis uses aid reduction as a dependent variable. Each observation in the dataset includes the amount of aid from each foreign aid donor to each recipient per year. The OECD DAC reports both disbursements and commitments. If disbursement is not reported by the donor,



the commitment figures are substituted. The period covered in this analysis is 1990-2000. Observations are only included for country-years in which elections were held.

If aid in the current year is 90% or less of the previous year's aid, the dyadic donor to recipient observation is coded as having a significant reduction in aid. In other words, if aid was reduced by 10% or more from the previous year, the dependent variable of aid reduction is coded as a "1." This simplification is somewhat controversial because in most cases continuous variables are superior to dichotomous variables. However, in this case, the theoretical interest is only in whether or not aid is reduced, not in the degree to which aid is reduced. There are many other factors that affect overall aid levels, and aid reduction by donors in relation to events like fraudulent elections is not expected to be of a predictable size. The 10% cutoff is arbitrary. Figure 4.4 presents the distribution of current year aid as a percentage of previous year's aid. The density peaks at one, or when current year aid is 100% of previous year's aid. Anything less than 100% is technically a reduction in aid, but some year-to-year variation is normal. The arbitrary 10% cutoff is intended to exclude this year-to-year fluctuation, yet still capture aid reduction. The vertical line is drawn at the value of aid at 90% of the previous year's aid. All cases that fall to the left of this line are considered cases of aid reduction in this analysis. The models were also run using smaller cutoffs (85% and 80%), and the results for the central independent variable do not change sign or lose statistical significance.



**Figure 4.4: Kernel Density Plot: Total Aid as a Percentage of Previous Year's Aid**  
**Note:** The data presented in this graph have been truncated to exclude extreme values of a change in aid of greater than 300% of previous year's aid or less than -200% of the previous year's aid (which is technically possible based on OECD DAC definitions).

The measure of whether an election is fraudulent is from the Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al. 2001). The measure purports to measure fraud when “the fraud was sufficient to affect the likely outcome of the election.” This definition is problematic for a variety of reasons, but as the only measure of electoral fraud outside of the reports of international observers, it is the best available for a large universe of cases.

Observed elections are those in which an official delegation of foreigners is invited into a country to observe and report on the electoral process, and was coded by the author. Because diplomatic missions sent by embassies rarely issue public

statements, their missions are not included as official international observers. Foreign journalists are not included as international observers. The organizations sending observers include international organizations and non-governmental organizations. International organizations include the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Commonwealth of former British colonies, the Caribbean Community, *La Francophonie*, and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Nongovernmental organizations include the International Human Rights Law Group, the Washington Office on Latin America, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, the Carter Center, and the International Foundation for Election Systems. If any organization sent an official international observer delegation, the election is considered to be internationally observed. This coding is explained in further detail in Chapter 5.

Donors use bilateral foreign aid to advance their strategic goals. Therefore, in examining whether reductions in aid are associated with election fraud, strategic and economic interests should be included in the analysis. A measure of the strategic importance of a recipient country to a donor is the weighted “S” score between the donor and recipient country (Signorino and Ritter 1999). This is a measure of the similarity in military alliance portfolios, similar to Bueno de Mesquita’s tau-b (1975). It ranges from -1 to 1, or from least similar alliance portfolios to most similar, includes non-membership, and is weighted by the capabilities of the member states. A

higher score is a proxy for greater strategic interests between the donor and the recipient.

As an indicator of the donor country's level of economic interest in the recipient country, the total trade (dyadic imports + exports) as a percentage of the donor country's GDP is included. This variable was created using data from Gleditsch 2002. Strong economic relationships could influence a donor's propensity to withdraw aid.

Changes in recipient need are perhaps the biggest reason for fluctuations in development aid. In other literature on the levels of foreign aid, recipient country GDP per capita is a common proxy for need. Because change in aid should be associated with change in need, I included the growth rate in GDP per capita as a proxy for change in recipient need. Increases in recipient need should decrease the probability of aid withdrawal.

Given donor emphasis on democracy and good governance in the 1990s, there are certain periods that a country is likely to be allowed a grace period during political transitions before being held to the full standards of political conditionality, and aid is unlikely to be reduced for any reason. This period of time is likely to coincide with a recipient country's first competitive multiparty election, or "founding" election. Therefore, an indication of whether the election was the first multiparty election is added to the analysis.

Other scholars have found that the former colonial relationship between donors and recipients has a large impact on the foreign aid relationship (Alesina and Dollar

2000). On the basis of this work, a dummy for colonial history between donor and recipient is included (Hensel 1999).

The regression equation for Model 1 can be represented as:

$$P(\text{aid reduction}|x_i) = 1/(1+e^{-x_i\beta})$$

Where  $x_i\beta = \text{Constant} + \beta_1 \text{fraudulent election} + \beta_2 \text{dyadic security interests} + \beta_3 \text{dyadic economic interests} + \beta_4 \text{recipient need} + \beta_5 \text{founding election} + \beta_6 \text{colonial relationship} + e$

The operationalization of the variables and the data sources are defined in Appendix B.

## Results

During years in which an election is held, election fraud is strongly associated with an increase in the probability that aid will be reduced by more than 10% from the previous year. This result becomes even stronger for recipients that are less strategically important to donors and disappears for recipients that are strategically important (see Table 4.2).

The effect of the presence of international observers does not by itself have a statistically significant effect on the probability that aid is reduced. However, when fraud occurs in the presence of international observers, as represented by the interaction term in Model 2, the joint effect is positive and highly significant on the probability of aid withdrawal.

There is also change in the effect of election fraud and international observers on aid between the early and late 1990s. In order to examine this effect, Models 3 and 4 separate the data into two time periods. In the period represented in Model 3, from 1990-1995, the transition to a pooling equilibrium had begun to rapidly increase the

rate of observed elections. Observers still primarily judged elections on procedural and election-day criteria, and were criticized for failing to call out fraudulent elections (Geisler 1993, Bjornlund 2004, Beigbeder 1994). It was not until the mid-1990s that the reports of observers became widely reputable and were explicitly used by organizations outside of those sending the observers. Therefore, as observers became more critical over the 1990s and were invited to more elections with problems, their presence became associated with an increase in the probability of aid reduction.

The relationship between fraudulent elections and aid reduction is not constant across all aid recipients. The strategic importance of some recipient countries to specific donors may make them immune to political conditionality. Table 4.2 presents two models. In Model 5, the variables are the same as in Model 1, but the observations included are only those in which the donor has a high security interests in the recipient country. “High” security interest is defined as those countries having an “S” score that is higher than the median value, or dyads with very similar alliance portfolios. Conversely, Model 6 includes only those dyads with a “low” security interest. Election fraud is only associated with an increase in aid withdrawal for countries that are less strategically important. In other words, donors are not likely to withdrawal aid following a fraudulent election in aid recipient countries that are strategically important.

The magnitude of these effect can be seen using CLARIFY (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2000). Because the coefficients in logit models are difficult to interpret substantively, it is useful to examine the predicted probability of aid withdrawal when other independent variables are set at specified values. In election

years, when no fraud is reported, the mean probability that a donor will reduce aid, as defined above, is 37%. Holding all else constant at the mean, a report of fraud following an election is associated with a 41% chance of significant aid reduction, or an increase in the probability of aid withdrawal of 4%.

As presented in Model 1 (Table 4.1), during election-years from 1990-2000, the presence of international observers has no significant effect on the probability that aid is reduced. However, from 1995-2000, the presence of observers increases the probability of aid withdrawal by 4.7%. When all independent variables are set at their mean from 1995-2000, the probability of aid withdrawal is 38%. The increase in the probability of aid withdrawal associated with the presence of observers likely reflects observers' increasing propensity to criticize fraudulent elections, and the improving quality of information that observers collected about the recipient country, and the increasingly undemocratic countries inviting observers. This trend would be expected to reverse itself in the post-2000 period as the international community began to punish those countries that did not invite international observers, but data on all independent variables after 2000 is not yet available for this analysis.

The magnitude of the effects of fraud and observers on the probability of aid reduction is not enormous, and should be taken in context. At the minimum, this analysis shows that countries that hold fraudulent elections and countries that hold clean elections are not equally likely to experience aid reduction. The null hypothesis on the relationship between fraudulent elections and aid reduction can be rejected. An aid dependent leader in the early 1990s could have reasonably expected to receive less international benefits for holding fraudulent elections.

**Table 4.1. Binary Logit: Aid Reduction (Recipient election years, 1990-2000)**

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
			<b>1990-1995</b>	<b>1996-2000</b>
Constant	-.58*** (.09)	-.54*** (.07)	-.49*** (.14)	-.68*** (.098)
Electoral Fraud	.18** (.06)		.15 (.10)	.16** (.078)
International Observers	.07 (.05)		-.10 (.08)	.19*** (.067)
Interact Fraud * Observers		.24*** (.058)		
Security Interest (Dyadic Global "S" Score –Alliance Portfolio)	-.05 (.13)	-.05 (.13)	-.13 (.22)	.031 (.134)
Economic Interest (Total Bilateral Trade/Donor GDP)	17564** (8272)	16368* (8461)	7880 (10202)	23718 (11082)
Colonial History	.09 (.09)	.08 (.09)	.09 (.15)	.07 (.07)
Founding Election	-.40** (.15)	-.37 (.14)	-.56 (.16)	.44 (.52)
Recipient Need (Growth in GDP per capita)	-.06 (.24)	-.07 (.24)	-.39 (.33)	.12 (.26)
N	7131	7131	3288	3843
Wald Chi2	22.81	32.49	18.39	21.85
Prob > chi2	0.0018	0.0000	0.0103	0.0027
Log pseudo-likelihood	-4698.2245	-4697.991	2144.7257	-2546.3497

\*\*\* $p \leq .001$ , two-tailed z-test\*\* $p \leq .01$ , two-tailed z-test\* $p \leq .05$ , two-tailed z-test

**Note: Robust standard errors are provided in parentheses. Standard errors are adjusted for clustering on donor country.**



**Table 4.2. Binary Logit: Aid Reduction  
Comparing High Security Interest Countries with Low Security Interest  
Countries (1990-2000)**

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Model 5</i>	<i>Model 6</i>
	<i>High Security Interest Between Dyads (Security interest &gt; median value of .423)</i>	<i>Low Security Interest Between Dyads (Security Interest &lt; median value of .423)</i>
Constant	-.48* (.20)	-.46 (.08)
Electoral Fraud	.05 (.07)	.27*** (.08)
International Observers	.07 (.08)	.07 (.06)
Security Interest (Dyadic Global "S" Score –Alliance Portfolio)	-.11 (.24)	-.65 (.34)*
Economic Interest (Total Bilateral Trade/Donor GDP)	12767 (11436)	23700 (15900)
Colonial History	.18 (.13)	.08 (.12)
Founding Election	-.98** (.35)	.0056 (.20)
Recipient Need (Growth in GDP per capita)	-.21 (.24)	-.06 (.37)
N	3562	3569
Wald Chi2	12.43	16.73
Prob > chi2	0.0872	0.0192
Log pseudo-likelihood	-2348.8399	-2342.6038

\*\*\* $p \leq .001$ , two-tailed test

\*\* $p \leq .01$ , two-tailed z-test

\* $p \leq .05$ , two-tailed z-test

**Note: Robust standard errors are provided in parentheses. Standard errors are adjusted for clustering on donor country.**

International pressure to invite observers was low in the early period of election observation. Even as democracy was becoming more important in the early 1990s, it was not until the mid to late 1990s that international actors began to pressure leaders to invite international observers. Additionally, opposition political parties also began to pressure leaders to invite observers.

For example, in February 1992, the Kenyan foreign minister announced the government's decision to refuse opposition party demands that foreign observers be invited, saying that the parties who demanded international observers "lacked self confidence."<sup>32</sup> The ruling party's secretary general, Joseph Kamotho also made his opinion public, saying that an invitation would be "surrendering our internal freedom and sovereignty." However, in April of the same year, Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi announced that international observers from the Commonwealth "to dispel opposition fears of foul play."<sup>33</sup>

Prior to the 1997 elections in Jamaica, opposition parties demanded that international observers be invited. Initially the Prime Minister refused the request saying that "[o]ur respect for democracy and our own self-esteem must compel us to make whatever changes are desirable to the existing political culture, rather than believing that the presence of outsiders will compel the necessary changes."<sup>34</sup> However, the government ultimately bowed to domestic pressure and The Carter Center was invited to observe the election.

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<sup>32</sup> Xinhua General Overseas News Service, Feb 19, 1992

<sup>33</sup> Xinhua General Overseas News Service, April 16, 1992

<sup>34</sup> Associated Press, Aug, 20 1997

In anticipation of Malaysia's 1999 parliamentary elections, opposition political parties challenged the government to allow domestic and international observers. Representatives of the incumbent party criticized the move, with Osu Sukam (deputy chief minister of Sabah) stating that it was "an insult to the sovereignty of the country to suggest international observers to monitor and check the election process in the state." International observers from the Asian Network for Free Elections were eventually invited to the election.

Thus, domestic and international forces in the 1990s increased the stakes for pseudo-democrats choosing to invite observers. There was both more to be lost and more to be gained. However, the growing international consensus that leaders who did not invite observers were trying to hide fraudulent elections made non-inviting a far less attractive option.

### **Who does not invite observers?**

Given both international and domestic pressure to invite observers, which countries do not invite observers? Table 4.3 details the elections to which international observers were not invited from 1992-2004. The table is organized by Polity score (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) and long-term developed democracies have been excluded from the dataset. Even when long-term developed democracies are excluded, some countries remain in the dataset but are not expected to invite observers because they are already widely considered democracies. The total number of elections each year varies, as do the average authority characteristics of the election-holding countries. Although the number of elections held in any given year fluctuates

considerably, there is a clear downward trend in the number of non-democracies who do not invite observers.

**Table 4.3: Elections Held Without International Observers 1993-2004.** Developed countries that transitioned to democracy before 1975 (Primarily Western Europe, the US, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand), and who are not aid recipients were excluded from the dataset.

Year	POLITY Scores that are...				
	Less than -8	-8 to 0	0 to 8	Greater than 8	
	Autocracy			Democracy	N Polity<8
1992	Malawi, Turkmenistan	Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Kuwait, Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria, Yugoslavia, Burkina Faso	Comoros, Fiji, South Korea, The Gambia, Philippines, The Gambia, Bulgaria	Ecuador, Thailand, Israel, Papua New Guinea, Bahamas*, Malta*	18
1993	Swaziland	China, Cuba, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Iran, Equatorial Guinea, Jordan, Singapore, Yemen, Senegal, Lebanon*	Argentina, Belize, Chile, Comoros, Congo Brazzaville*, Maldives, Poland, Solomon Islands, Yugoslavia	Bolivia, Cyprus, Jamaica, Lithuania,	22
1994	Syria, Turkmenistan	Tajikistan, Tunisia	Guatemala, Fiji, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Haiti, Maldives, Slovakia, Brazil	Ecuador, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Barbados	12
1995	Uzbekistan	Tajikistan, Egypt, Zimbabwe	Ethiopia, Malaysia, Argentina, Philippines, Turkey	Thailand, Poland, Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius, Cape Verde*	9
1996	Iraq	Kuwait, Yugoslavia, Mauritania, Zimbabwe, Iran, Mauritania, Gabon, Lebanon*	South Korea	Israel, India, Thailand, Cyprus, Mongolia, Slovenia, Cape Verde*, Malta*	10
1997		Morocco, Indonesia, Laos, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Mauritania, The Gambia, Singapore, Jordan	Iran, South Korea, Argentina, Solomon Islands, Chile	Poland, Slovenia, Mongolia, Bahamas	15
1998	North Korea, Syria	Cuba, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Lebanon*	Iran, Maldives, Colombia, Madagascar, Brazil, South Korea, Philippines	India, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Cyprus, Malta*, Belize*	13

**Table 4.3 Continued**

1999	Syria, Turkmenistan	Kuwait, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Singapore, Yemen	Fiji, Turkey, Maldives, Argentina, Chile	India, Israel, Barbados*	13
2000	Iraq	Syria, Egypt, Lebanon*	Ethiopia, Iran, South Korea, Peru*	Poland, Chile, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Lithuania	8
2001		Mauritania, Singapore	Iran, Madagascar, Philippines, Argentina, Samoa*	Chile, Bulgaria, Poland, Cyprus, Israel, Cape Verde*	7
2002		Vietnam, Bahrain, Morocco, Algeria, Guinea	Brazil, South Korea	Slovenia, Costa Rica, Trinidad and Tobago, Papua New Guinea	7
2003	Turkmenistan, North Korea	Oman, Syria, Cuba, Kuwait, Mauritania, Jordan, Guinea	Benin, Maldives, Latvia, Mexico	Cyprus, Israel, Czech Republic, Barbados*, Belize*, Malta*	13
2004	Turkmenistan	Iran, Malaysia	South Korea	Slovenia, Czech Republic, India, Uruguay	4

**\*Indicates a missing Polity score. Countries without a Polity score are classified based on corresponding Freedom House classifications or, when appropriate, the Polity score from the previous year.**

Elections and election observation arrived slowly to the Middle East and North Africa, although a number of countries listed as “non-invited” in Table 4.3 invited observers in 2005 or 2006. These include Algeria, Cote d’Ivoire, Mauritania, Guinea, and Bahrain. Other persistent non-inviting countries such as Iran, Singapore, Cuba, Turkmenistan and North Korea would be unlikely to invite Western observers in the foreseeable future because their regimes are largely anti-Western. Many of these elections are also far from passing international standards. Leaders of these countries may be correctly predicting a negative report, and given their geopolitical positions or their already isolated status, may be able to afford to forgo international approval of their elections.

Turkmenistan is one of the few countries that has yet to allow international observers access to its electoral process, even though the country is a member of the OSCE and is technically obligated to invite observers as a condition of membership in the organization. However, elections in Turkmenistan are “elections in name only”<sup>35</sup> and prior to the 2004 election the OSCE had stated that it would not have sent a full mission if it had been invited. As one of the most autocratic and closed election-holding countries in the world today, Turkmenistan leaders have never invited observers nor defended their decisions. It is perhaps worth noting that in the most recent election only one party was permitted to compete, and turnout was reportedly 98.9%. The current president was elected with 99.5% of the vote and subsequently declared president for life.

Few leaders of election-holding countries since the late 1990s have chosen not to invite international observers, even as inviting observers has grown increasingly likely to be costly for leaders who hold less democratic elections. What explains the duration of the pooling equilibrium?

### **From Pooling Equilibrium to International Norm?**

Thus far this chapter has shown that incumbents who hold fraudulent elections when international observers are present are likely to experience a reduction in international benefits. The gross level of international benefits linked to democratization has increased dramatically beginning in the late 1980s. This gave incumbent leaders the incentive to invite observers even when they were planning on manipulating the election. However, as observers grew more adept at catching

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<sup>35</sup> Phrase borrowed from a Radio Free Europe 2004 news report.

electoral manipulation, incumbents continued to invite at even greater rates. What explains this seeming contradiction? In other words, why has the pooling equilibrium continued to hold even while the incentive structure that created it has changed?

I argue that the duration of the pooling equilibrium is a result of a change in international expectations. Since the late 1990s, international election observers are an expected part of nearly all elections. Inviting international election observers has become an internationally expected behavior. Has it reached the status of an international norm? It will not be clear for decades whether inviting international observers will become an internalized international norm. Because inviting observers is so clearly against the self-interest of certain incumbent leaders, compliance may never become automatic. As the following section shows, election observation shows many signs of international norm development. If inviting international observers is an international norm, its development can be instructive to existing theories of norm development and international relations scholars' understanding of the relationship between actor rationality and norm development. The traditional rationalist critique of norms is that norms are only complied with when it is in the actor's interest to do so, and are violated when the norm conflicts with material incentives. The "norm" of election observation represents an internationally expected behavior that regularly conflicts with the material incentives of many incumbent leaders who invite observers. Cheating incumbent leaders would be better off if they were not bound by international expectations to invite observers to judge their elections, as was the case prior to the early 1990s.

An international norm is a “standard of behavior appropriate for actors with a given identity,” or, similarly, “shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a community of actors.”<sup>36</sup> If international election observation is an international norm, it is clearly not yet internalized, and the norm of sovereignty provides a competing normative environment which could ultimately be a barrier to norm internalization.<sup>37</sup>

In order for a norm to exist it is not necessary that a norm be internalized by the actors that comply with the behavior.<sup>38</sup> The change in international expectations about whether international observers should be invited to elections and the recent willingness of international actors to threaten and punish those countries who do not invite observers suggests that a norm is developing. If the international community views a particular behavior as appropriate for a subset of international actors, members of the international community can enforce this behavior by punishing non-compliance and pressuring potential non-compliers to engage in the appropriate behavior (Goertz and Diehl 1992). As Robert Axelrod writes “a norm exists in a given social setting to the extent that individuals usually act in a certain way and are often punished when seen not to be acting in this way” (1986, 1097). Thus, threatened and actual sanctions against leaders who do not invite international observers are both a sign that election observation is a norm and a consequence of its development for election-holding leaders. Under these circumstances, even though the costs imposed by the international community for violating the norm are driven by the “logic of

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<sup>36</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), Katzenstein (1996), Finnemore (1996), and Klotz (1995).

<sup>37</sup> Hurd (2003) argues that for internalized international norms there should never be any violations.

<sup>38</sup> For Finnemore and Sikkink, the action can be a norm prior to internalization, and many norms never make it to this stage of norm development.



appropriateness,” individual states complying with the norm may be motivated to do so because of the “logic of consequences” (March and Olsen 1998). To put it more succinctly, international actors may impose costs for non-compliance because they believe incumbent leaders should invite international observers, and some state leaders (pseudo-democrats) comply with the norm because there are internationally imposed costs for non-compliance. State leaders do not “automatically” comply with the expectation that observers will be invited. For most leaders, the decision to invite observers remains a conscious and often strategic decision. However, international expectations that observers will be invited has introduced a cost for not inviting observers. It is the change in international expectations that explains why so many leaders invite international observers even when they know they plan on committing large scale electoral fraud that is likely to be caught and punished.<sup>39</sup>

Election observation also developed in a slightly different manner than existing theories of norm development would predict, and, if election observation can be considered an international norm, this difference illuminates the relationship between material motivations of states and norm development. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) describe the development of an international norm as a life-cycle consisting of three stages: norm emergence, norm cascade, and norm internalization. The observed pattern of election observation closely mirrors the expected pattern described by

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<sup>39</sup> This argument can also be phrased in terms of Hurd’s (2003) characterization of motivations for international actors. According to Hurd, actors in international actors may obey rules because “the actor fears the punishment of rule enforcers,” “because the actor sees the rule as in its own self-interest,” and “because the actor feels the rule is legitimate and ought to be obeyed. In these terms, election observation became a rule and spread rapidly because of self-interest, but actors now comply with the rule for all three reasons.

Finnemore and Sikkink, including a “tipping point” during the norm cascade that led to near-universal adoption of the new behavior.

In their theory, and a number of studies that rely on the Finnemore and Sikkink theory of norm development (examples include Mitchell 2002, Yanacopulos 2004, Harrison 2004, Price 1998), a norm’s emergence and the eventual norm cascade are driven by the work of norm entrepreneurs. As Finnemore and Sikkink write, “[n]orms do not appear out of thin air; they are actively built by agents having strong notions about appropriate or desirable behavior in their community” (1998, 896). These agents contribute to the emergence of a new norm by creating or drawing attention to a particular issue and then framing this issue in popular discourse, and advocating for change in state behavior (*ibid.*, 897). Therefore, for Finnemore and Sikkink, the causal variable in the early initiation and spread of a norm is the persuasiveness of norm entrepreneurs. Although election observation did not appear out of thin air, there is little evidence that norm entrepreneurs were involved in the initiation or early spread of the practice. It was initiated by leaders seeking international benefits who had no incentive to advocate spread of the behavior. International actors, including international organizations and NGOs, were reluctant to become involved and turned down a number of invitations to send observers, and are thus difficult to cast in the role of “norm entrepreneur.” Inviting international observers was a practice initiated by incumbent leaders who had no incentive to (and did not) advocate its spread to other states. In fact, although it was in many leaders’ individual interests to invite observers, those not holding clean elections were better off maintaining the option of when to invite observers. Although state leaders were instrumental to the initiation and

spread of election observation, the fact that they did not advocate for the spread of election observation makes these actors something other than norm entrepreneurs.

To reiterate, the behavior was initiated by the governments that comply with the norm, but these leaders did not encourage the spread of the behavior. Even in the absence of norm entrepreneurs, the behavior spread throughout much of Latin America. Eventually, activists and academics interested in the larger topic of democracy promotion played a role in improving the quality of election observation, but for the first several decades of election observation, it was international attention to democracy that gave individual incumbent leaders the incentive to invite observers, not the persuasiveness of norm entrepreneurs.

If inviting international observers is an international norm, why do some leaders violate it by not inviting international observers? Vaughn Shannon argues that actors are likely to violate a norm “only if there is room for interpretation of the norm or the situation” (2000, 294). Statements by incumbent leaders who have not invited observers show that leaders not inviting observers attempt to muddy the issue by invoking the norm of sovereignty. Their statements are also instructive in demonstrating that leaders who do not invite are often quite defiant in their public statements, illustrating further that election observation is not an internalized norm.

The rhetoric of incumbent leaders is evidence of the norm, or standard of behavior, as well as evidence of the conflicting normative environment. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, “because norms by definition embody a quality of ‘oughtness’ and shared moral assessment, norms prompt justifications for action and leave an extensive trail of communication among actors” (1998, 893). Examining

justifications for norm violation is an indirect means to demonstrate when a norm is developing, and can reveal some elements of the competing normative environment. Along these lines, the following paragraphs provide a short qualitative examination of the rhetoric of incumbent leaders.

Prior to the late 1990s, similar statements are conspicuously absent from the public record, indicating that incumbent leaders began to feel international pressure to invite international observers in the late 1990s.

In the 1999 Algerian presidential elections, all but the military-backed candidate dropped out of the race ahead of the election due to alleged fraud. A representative of the incumbent party who was also the lone candidate and eventual winner of the contest, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, was asked in a press conference about international observers and responded in the following way. "I don't think elections are more transparent because there are a few UN, OAU (Organization of African Unity) or Arab League observers. ... I won't accept, now or in the future, any foreign interference in my country."<sup>40</sup> The US had previously put pressure on the Algerian government to invite international observers but none were invited to the one-candidate election.<sup>41</sup>

In 2000 Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi made an official statement that Ethiopia would not invite international observers to the May 14 parliamentary election.

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<sup>40</sup> Algerian election, April 14, 1999, *Agence Free Press*

<sup>41</sup> "We urge both the government of Algeria and the parties to invite international observers to the elections," said Martin Indyk, Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs (Feb 24, 1999 *Agence Free Press*).

We are people capable of managing ourselves and our affairs. We have to be able to conduct our elections on our own, as part of our right to exercise self-determination. If there is the assumption that the election is not democratic unless foreign observers monitored the process, this is a distorted outlook.<sup>42</sup>

The 2000 elections were not observed, but five years later the same Prime Minister agreed to opposition party demands and invited international observers. The Carter Center and the European Union observed the election.

Egypt has held elections for decades, but has yet to invite international observers. Prior to the 2005 presidential election, domestic groups and the US government joined in attempting to pressure the government of President Hosni Mubarak to invite international observers. Although President Mubarak initially appeared to consider the idea, even going so far as to send a foreign minister on a television speaking tour in the US in which the minister suggested the government's interest in impartial observers, Mubarak ultimately banned their presence. In a press conference just a few weeks before the election, he was quoted as saying, "We are not a trust country to allow our elections to be subjected to international supervision. We can alone organize our elections and ensure their success."<sup>43</sup>

This statement was in contrast to earlier calls by Egyptian human rights groups who called for the opening of the process to international observers. "It is not true that [election observation] constitutes an infringement on sovereignty or interference in

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in "Politics – Ethiopia: No Foreign Election Observers Needed." By Yemisrach Benalfew., September 17, 1999. IPS-Inter Press Service.

<sup>43</sup> 2005 Financial Times Information August 31, 2005

internal affairs” said Hafez Abu Seda, head of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights.<sup>44</sup>

For the high-profile 2004 elections in Iraq, the Washington Post ran a full length story deploring their absence. “The violence in Iraq means that its elections will be the first among dozens of transitional elections over the past two decades ... that will not have an international observer force touring polling stations to assess the votes’ credibility.” The absence of international observers was also the headline in a number of major US newspapers in the day after the Iraqi election.

Also reflecting the global expectation that observers should be at all elections was a trend of leaders in less-democratic countries calling for international election observers at the 2004 US general elections. In an overt public attempt to highlight the paternalistic nature of election observation and US democracy promotion, a leader of the Iranian militia asked UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to appoint observers, saying that “the presence of observers from the Islamic republic of Iran, one of the most democratic regimes in the world, is necessary to guarantee fairness in the U.S. presidential election.”<sup>45</sup> Similar claims demanding international observers for the US elections were made in Malaysian newspapers. Ultimately, in part to enhance the credibility of international election monitoring, the US invited, and the OSCE sent, a delegation of observers to the 2004 US presidential elections. The OSCE has observed elections in other developed democracies including the United Kingdom, France, and Italy.

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<sup>44</sup> *Agence Free Press* June 13, 2005

<sup>45</sup> ANSA English Media Service, October 18, 2004

## Conclusion

The prominence of democracy promotion in foreign policy and the global acceptance of democracy as the only legitimate form of government influence the behavior of state leaders. The practice of election observation is a byproduct of growing global acceptance of democracy, and now carries consequences for many state leaders. This chapter has explained the transition of election observation from a separating equilibrium to a pooling equilibrium. The rapid spread of election observation in the early 1990s was driven by increasing international benefits tied to democracy, as was the subsequent change in international expectations about “appropriate” behavior for incumbent leaders. The fact that the quality of election observation lagged behind the spread of election observation allowed the behavior to spread rapidly, even to elections that were likely to be manipulated. Once international perceptions about appropriate behavior had changed, and incumbent leaders were expected to invite international observers, non-compliance was punished by democratic states and international organizations. Also resulting from democracy promotion efforts, election observation missions have become more able to catch election manipulation, and more willing to punish fraudulent elections.

The near universal willingness of incumbent leaders to invite observers, the rhetoric of incumbent leaders who do not invite observers, and the willingness of the international community to punish non-inviter suggest that inviting international observers is a developing international norm. However, a dose of skepticism is warranted. A resurgence of sovereignty or a dramatic decrease in the importance of democracy could reverse the trend. As a potential international norm, the case of

international election observation has the potential to serve as a partial bridge between rationalist explanations of state behavior and constructivist arguments. Election observation spread because of the material interests of state leaders, but has continued at a high rate because of changes in international expectations about the appropriate behavior of incumbent leaders. Significant numbers of leaders now invite observers in order to comply with international expectations despite the risks that their election will be delegitimized, or that observer reports will contribute to opposition protests, or that their attempts to manipulate the election will be deterred. But simply, they continue to invite observers despite the increased probability that they will be forced to leave office.

The next chapter examines the empirical trend of election observation in detail, and provides tests of hypotheses generated from the formal theory in Chapter 3.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Why Do Leaders Invite International Observers?**

#### **Quantitative Analysis**

This chapter examines the empirical trend of election observation in detail. In Chapter 3, I argued that pseudo-democrats should be more likely to invite international observers as the proportion of international benefits tied to democracy increases. Additionally, I argued that the rate of observed elections should rise with the ease of cheating in front of observers. However, because international observers desire accurate reports, this generates a dynamic prediction. The quality of observers should increase as incumbents improve their methods of manipulation.

This chapter tests these arguments. After outlining the hypotheses derived from the theory in Chapter 3, I describe an original dataset of elections and election observation from 1960-2004. In the third section, I provide quantitative evidence in support of my argument, and discuss the relative influence of the explanatory variables. I find that the availability of international benefits, the regional diffusion of election observation, and the prior level of democracy are all positively associated with the probability that an election will be observed. The quality of monitoring and the incentives to cheat are shown to increase as election observation spread to elections in more countries. I also present evidence that some pseudo-democrats acted strategically by inviting low quality observers and thus manipulating the probability that they would be caught cheating.

### **Explaining the Spread of Election Observation: Testing the Argument**

International-level variables influence the domestic behavior of state leaders. Chapter 4 examined the pattern of bilateral foreign aid as partial evidence that members of the international community conditioned aid on the quality of elections in the 1990s. I argue that election observation spread rapidly because incumbent leaders in the early 1990s who wished to maximize international benefits were better off inviting international observers.

The central dependent variable in this chapter is whether a given election was observed or not. The hypotheses in this section are derived from the general argument presented in Chapter 3. The driving force in the explanation of the spread of election observation is a relative increase in international benefits for countries that act like democratizing countries. Therefore, the overall probability that a given election will be observed should be preceded by increases in international benefits.

**H1: If the level of international benefits tied to democracy increases, then the probability of an observed election should also increase.**

Inviting international observers is just one potential way for incumbent leaders to signal their commitment to democracy. An action such as allowing the opposition to win an election and then peacefully transferring power is also a strong signal to international actors of a state leader's commitment to democratization. Why did election observation become a widely used signal? Once observers were invited to a handful of countries in the 1960s, other state leaders could mimic their actions, and had the incentive to do so when they perceived that the benefits outweighed the costs. As more leaders invited observers, the presence of international election observers

became more widely understood as a signal of a country's commitment to democratize. As more countries in a given region invited international observers to their elections, individual leaders were more likely to link positive outcomes to inviting international observers. Domestically, once opposition political parties saw that international observers were willing to criticize fraudulent elections, they were more likely to mobilize domestic pressure on incumbent leaders and demand that observers be invited.

Leaders are more likely to recognize the benefits of inviting observers (or more likely to feel pressure to invite) if neighboring countries are also inviting observers. The hypothesis is not meant to imply that leaders gain more international benefits when their neighbors invite monitors. Rather, when nearby countries began inviting monitors incumbent leaders were more likely to recognize that there were gains to be had or losses to be avoided by inviting international observers.

**H2: The probability that an election will be monitored increases as the percentage of other elections that are monitored in the region in the previous year increases.**

Hypothesis 2 also follows the literature recognizing the spatial diffusion of political change, including democratization (Gleditsch 2002, Gleditsch and Ward 2000, Simmons and Elkins 2004).

In addition, all else held equal, incumbents who are relatively close to having free and fair elections have less to conceal from observers. Those leaders operating in a very undemocratic political environment will be less likely to invite monitors,

because the likelihood that they will be criticized is much greater than for those leaders who already operate within somewhat democratic institutions. Therefore, given that consolidated democracies are excluded, the chances that an election will be monitored will be higher if the country is more democratic. In terms of the formal model presented in Chapter 3, a higher level of democracy would decrease the costs of hiding electoral manipulation. This hypothesis should not be interpreted as an indication of whether a leader is a true-democrat or a pseudo-democrat. In theory, a leader's type is independent of the domestic political institutions. Even in countries with relatively high levels of democracy, a leader may manipulate the election and choose not to accept the results in the event of a loss. Overall, excluding elections in long-term developed democracies, higher levels of democracy prior to the election should make it less costly for a pseudo-democrat to hold an election that looks clean to international observers, thus increasing the probability that a given election will be monitored. If holding internationally acceptable elections requires significant overhaul of the political institutions and civil service, doing so will be more costly.

**H3: The probability that an election in year  $t$  will be monitored will increase as the level of democracy of the country in year  $t-1$  increases.**

The dynamic relationship between pseudo-democrats and international observers generates several other predictions. As election observation spread, pseudo-democrats had the incentive to cheat using methods that were less likely to be caught by international observers, and international observers had the incentive to improve their methods of catching electoral manipulation. Therefore, the quality of monitoring

as well as the quality of cheating should increase jointly. The quality of election manipulation is very difficult to observe because effectively concealed cheating is, by definition, impossible to observe directly. Chapter 8 deals with this problem in detail. However, if international observers are improving the quality of their observation as pseudo-democrats get better at concealing manipulation, the overall rate of negative reports should increase.

**H4: The rate of negative reports should increase over time.**

Anecdotally, the empirical record also shows that pseudo-democrats could invite observers and increase the probability that they will get away with election manipulation by inviting low-quality election observers that are less likely to criticize election fraud.

**H5: As more pseudo-democrats invite observers, the number of elections monitored by “low-quality” observer groups will increase.**

The dynamic relationship between observer quality and election manipulation means that the relationships outlined in Hypotheses 4 and 5 may not be linear.

**The Dataset of Elections and Election Observation**

The explanation of the spread of election observation is tested on a dataset of all national level elections from 1960-2004. Each observation in the dataset is a separate election. Elections in developed countries that are long-term consolidated democracies are excluded. Developed long-term democracies are substantively different from those countries that are expected to invite observers today. Including them in the analysis would unnecessarily complicate the predicted relationships. Developed countries are defined as those countries that do not receive development

assistance from the OECD. Long-term consolidated democracies are those defined by Lijphart (1999), and have been considered democracies for forty years or more. A total of 160 countries<sup>46</sup> are included for some period of time. Much of Western Europe is excluded from the dataset, but countries like India and Israel are included. A list of Lijphart's 36 democracies and whether they receive foreign aid is included in Appendix A.

A comprehensive dataset of all elections was not available during the data collection of election observation. Therefore, in addition to collecting data on observed elections, it was first necessary to collect data on all election dates. Election dates since 1960 were compiled from a variety of sources, but were drawn most heavily from the data handbooks edited by Dieter Nohlen (with coeditors varying by region); and Tatu Vanhanen's Polyarchy manuscript (1999). From 1998 to 2004, the IFES Election Guide was the principal resource for election dates. The dataset compiled from these resources was supplemented with Lexis-Nexis newswire reports, the SUNY-Binghamton Center on Democratic Performance's Election Results Archive, the Lijphart Elections Archive, and web-accessible information from governmental election management bodies in individual countries.

Also, unlike existing comparative data on elections, elections are included even when they lack genuine competition or are for offices that have little political power. The Vanhanen (1999) manuscript includes elections only for those national offices that are "dominant." The *Journal of Democracy's* "Election Watch" includes

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<sup>46</sup> This figure includes 26 micro-states or newly independent states that drop out of the dataset for most of the analysis.

information on elections in non-democratic countries only when “they exhibit a significant element of genuine competition or, in the case of upcoming elections, when they represent an important test of progress toward democracy” (see Marinov 2006). Truncating the dataset on the dependent variable, in this case the quality or “democraticness” of the elections, would bias the results. Election dates listed in Polity and the Database of Political Institutions are incomplete relative to the election dates that I collected, but the reason for the missing elections is unknown.

If multiple offices are elected on the same day (or during one consecutive multi-day election period), the election is treated as one observation. Elections on separate days, even when held in the same country in the same year, are treated as separate observations (for example, a legislative election in June and a presidential election in December are counted as separate observations). Although data was collected on multi-round elections, the bulk of the analysis examines only first round elections. National referenda on constitutional or other substantive issues were excluded. In some isolated cases incumbents held referenda on their own continued rule. These plebiscites are equivalent to elections with only one candidate, and both are included in the dataset.

### **Observed Elections**

The dataset on observed elections is unique in its scope, covering all election holding countries outside of the developed democratic world. To the extent that it is possible, I also collected data from election observation missions of varying quality.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> I make the point that I included missions of varying quality only to highlight that no groups were excluded based on the perception that their missions are of low quality. It is difficult to draw a bright

Data was first collected from organizations that sponsor election observation missions. The more professionalized organizations make most of their reports available to the public, therefore making it more likely that missing reports would be from the less institutionalized observer organizations. This does not correlate perfectly with the quality of observers, but it may create some bias away from including all observer missions from lower quality and/or lower prestige observer organizations. Because some reports have been lost or were never made public, for each election after 1978, newswire reports on dates surrounding elections were also searched for mention of international observers.<sup>48</sup> In this manner, the record of whether an election was monitored was checked by organization and by election.

Therefore, for each election (each observation in the dataset), there is an indication of whether or not it was observed and, when possible, by whom. Many elections are observed by multiple groups. Table 5.1 lists the organizations that are recorded in the dataset as having sent official delegations of international election observers.

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line between observer groups of high and low quality, and asking a group of experts for their opinion would likely produce some variation in which groups are viewed as high and low quality. This categorization would also be politically controversial within the democracy promotion community.

<sup>48</sup> Combinations of the terms international, foreign, monitors, and observers were used in Lexis-Nexis searches.



<b>Table 5.1: Organizations Sending Election Observation Missions</b>
<b>International Nongovernmental Organizations</b>
British Helsinki Human Rights Group
The Carter Center
The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA)
GERDDES-Africa (Research Group on the Democratic, Economic and Social Development of Africa)
IFES (formerly International Foundation for Electoral Systems)
International Human Rights Law Group
International Republican Institute for International Affairs
Latin American Studies Association
National Democratic Institute
Washington Office on Latin America
<b>Intergovernmental Organizations</b>
Arab League
African Union (formerly Organization of African Unity)
Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)
Commonwealth (organization of former British colonies)
Commonwealth of Independent States
Council of Europe
Economic Community of East African States (ECOWAS)
European Union
Organization of American States
<i>Organisation Internationale de La Francophonie</i>
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe-- Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe
South African Association for Regional Cooperation
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
Southern African Development Community (SADC)
United Nations

The quality of election observation missions is not constant over time or across organizations. Of the organizations listed, there are only a handful of organizations which send missions that are large, extensive, professionalized, and employ the best methodology. Most of these organizations did not begin with high quality missions.

When possible, data were also collected on the size of missions (number of long and short term observers), the duration of the mission, and the methods used to observe the election.

### **Measuring International Benefits**

A given leader's propensity to invite international observers should increase with international benefits tied to democratization. It is difficult to measure international benefits directly. Some international benefits, like international legitimacy, cannot be measured quantitatively, and even benefits that are quantifiable are allocated by a variety of actors in a non-centralized manner. Separating those benefits that are allocated based only on democracy from other international benefits is difficult. As modeled in Chapter 3, international benefits linked to democracy represent a proportion of all international benefits.

The ideal measure of the proportion of international benefits would be a survey of state leaders prior to their decision to invite international observers regarding what they expected to receive as a result of inviting observers. This ideal measure is impractical for a variety of reasons. An alternative that may be feasible in the future but that is not yet available is an examination of project-level foreign aid commitments. This would require extensive searches of all foreign aid project documents for references to democracy. Because aid is used by donors to promote strategic interests, a greater proportion of aid that is explicitly tied to democracy should reflect an increase in the proportion of international benefits available to leaders who signal their commitment to democracy. This measure would distinguish between rewards for inviting observers and punishment for not inviting observers or

for holding fraudulent elections. Although some ambitious scholars have begun coding project-level aid data on specific issue areas (see for example Nielson, Tierney and Weaver 2006), the data are not yet available for democracy.

What existing indicators can be used as a proxy for the available international benefits allocated based on democracy? The policy changes and institutional commitments to democracy promotion discussed in Chapter 4 provided evidence of a large shift in the allocation of international benefits based on democracy. Powerful international actors placed some emphasis on democracy in the 1960s and 1970s, but the value of democracy increased dramatically at the end of the 1980s.

In general, countries allocate aid to sectors that they value. OECD countries report the amount of aid given to each of several dozen sectors, one of which is “government and civil society.” Donor commitments to support this sector should be a signal of broader donor interests to all state leaders seeking to maximize international benefits. I used these commitments of aid to government and civil society in each region as a proxy for the proportion of international benefits tied to democracy. The regional total is used to attempt to account for the variation in timing of the international emphasis on democracy between regions (i.e. external pressure to democratize in the Middle East came much later than in Latin America).<sup>49</sup> The data were reported by donors to the OECD DAC from 1973-2004. Reported aid commitments are distinct from disbursements, and better represent a signal of donor

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<sup>49</sup> This proxy implicitly assumes that international benefits are allocated on a regional basis. It is possible that this is not the case, and countries in all regions of the world take their cues about international benefits from events outside of their region. However, some empirical work supports the plausibility of the regional assumption. See, for example, Simmons and Elkins (2004).

interests.<sup>50</sup> Prior to 1973 these data were not reported by donors. The lack of reporting may be a relatively accurate reflection of the relative importance of government and civil society to OECD countries prior to 1973. Because of this, the models are run for two time periods. For the 1973-2004 all data are complete, but for the 1960-2004 period, zeros are substituted for the amount of aid to government and civil society prior to 1973.

### **Other Variables Explaining Observed Elections**

As Hypothesis 2 predicts, the percentage of elections in the region that were internationally observed in the previous year should affect the probability that observers will be invited. The operationalization of this variable is straightforward. Because national elections rarely happen in the same country in consecutive years, including the percentage of observed elections in the previous year makes it unlikely that the percentage would be biased by including elections in the country in its corresponding regional percentage.

Following Hypothesis 3, the level of democracy in the country prior to an election is also likely to influence a leader's decision to invite observers, particularly when election observation was spreading rapidly. The lagged Polity2 score from the Polity IV dataset is used as a measure of the level of democracy. This measure ranges from -10 to 10, with high scores representing higher levels of democracy (Marshall and Jaggers 2000).

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<sup>50</sup> The donors included are France, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Japan, the European Union, Italy, Denmark, Portugal, Finland, Germany, and Spain.

I also include an interaction between the Polity score of the previous year and the percentage of observed elections in the region in the previous year. Although I excluded developed long-term democracies from the dataset, those countries that have become full democracies during the observed time period may not be expected to invite international observers. Anecdotally, this is reasonable. Brazil has never invited international observers, even though most of its neighbors do.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, a measure of whether the election included voting for the executive office is also included. This follows from the theory's focus on election observation as a behavior that is driven by incumbent leaders. Incumbent leaders should be most likely to want to legitimize their own rule by inviting international observers. Therefore, although it is not a formal hypothesis, an indication of whether the election was for the executive office is included.

### **The Model**

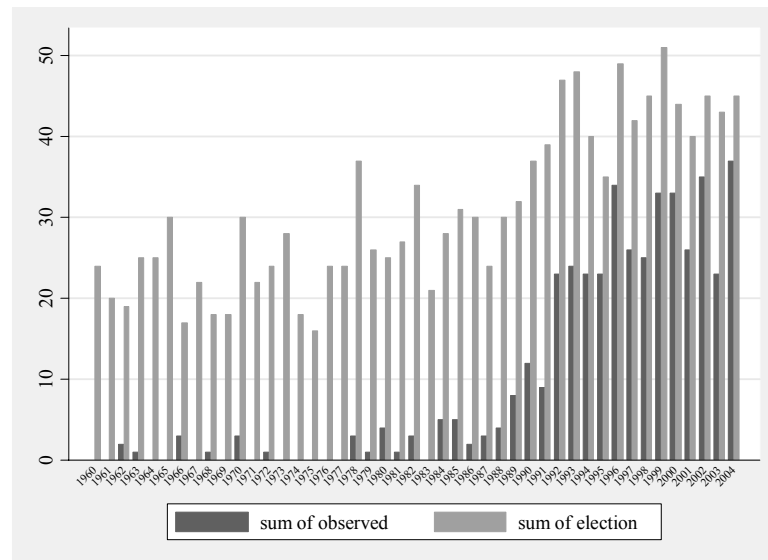
The dependent variable in this analysis is whether a given election was monitored by international election observers invited by the incumbent government. I use a binary logit model. In order to control for panel heteroskedasticity the data are clustered by country. Because the decision to invite observers in the current time period is not likely to be independent from the decision to invite observers in previous time periods, I also include a variable which indicates whether any previous election in the country was internationally monitored.

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<sup>51</sup> The interpretation of interaction terms in non-linear models is more complicated and is discussed in detail later in the analysis.

The dataset consists of 1407 individual elections held between 1960 and 2004. This number includes only first round elections held in independent states, and excludes microstates. The average number of elections held by a given country in this time period is ten, but ranges from one election to 27 elections. Although the data are pooled by country, the variation in the number of temporal observations for each country means that statistical tools for binary time series cross-section analyses are not appropriate.<sup>52</sup> The data are neither traditional time-series nor panel data. Missing Polity scores reduce the number of observations to 1260. Summary statistics are included in Appendix C.

As Figure 5.1 illustrates, the number of elections held per year also varies from year to year, and has been increasing generally over time.



**Figure 5.1 Elections and Observed Elections, 1960-2004**

<sup>52</sup> Statement made based on information in Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1998). Because the number of time points ( $T$ ) is not “reasonably large” for all units, the method is not appropriate. Some countries in the dataset have as few as one election. There is a very high likelihood of temporal dependence between elections in the same country. Without enough time points, the solution used here is to control for temporal dependence by including a dummy variable if any previous election in the country had been internationally observed.

The specification of the model is represented below:

$$P(\text{observed election}|x_i) = 1/(1+e^{-x_i\beta})$$

Where  $x_i\beta = \text{Constant} + \beta_1 \text{ democracy} + \beta_2 \text{ regional percent observed} + \beta_3 \text{ regional percent observed} * \text{democracy} + \beta_4 \text{ government and civil society aid} + \beta_5 \text{ previous invitation} + e$

**Table 5.2. Binary Logit: Observed Elections, Models 1-4**

	(1) 1973- 2004 observed	(2) 1960- 2004 observed	(3) 1960- 2004 observed	(4) 1997- 2004 observed
Polity Score ( $t-1$ )	0.050* (0.021)	0.051* (0.020)	0.054** (0.020)	0.075 (0.059)
Regional Percent Observed ( $t-1$ )	3.078** (0.394)	3.244** (0.398)	3.230** (0.393)	1.953** (0.637)
Interaction (Democracy and Regionally Observed Elections)	-0.180** (0.052)	-0.187** (0.052)	-0.186** (0.052)	-0.218* (0.102)
Total Regional Aid Committed to Government and Civil Society	4.83e-7* (2.32e-7)	5.59e-7* (2.38e-7)	5.97e-7* (2.41e-7)	3.52e-7 (2.83e-7)
Previously Observed Election	1.718** (0.236)	1.862** (0.227)	1.786** (0.230)	2.416** (0.480)
Executive Election			0.438** (0.160)	0.115 (0.239)
Constant	-2.405** (0.156)	-2.652** (0.137)	-2.826** (0.161)	-2.237** (0.502)
Observations	1003	1260	1260	322
Wald chi2	258.29	317.86	333.86	48.63
Prob >chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.3612	0.4056	0.4098	0.2423

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

Table 5.2 shows that the null of hypotheses 1-3 outlined in this chapter can be rejected based on the direction and the significance level of the coefficients. The

magnitude of the results is best interpreted using Clarify (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000).

When all independent variables in Model 2 are set at their mean, the probability that a given election is observed is 25%. Table 5.3 shows that the variables with the largest effect are the percentage of other elections observed in the region and the presence of observers at a previous election. All else held equal (at mean values), a country in a region with zero observed elections in the previous year has a 12% chance of inviting international observers. If the rate of observed elections in the previous year is increased to 66% (the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the variable), the probability that the election will be observed is 54%.

The magnitude of the effect of a previous invitation is also large. When all other variables are set at their mean, the presence of observers at a previous election in the country increases the probability that an election will be observed by about 36%. This shows that within countries, the decision to invite is not independent across time.

The proxy for available international benefits is statistically significant in the predicted direction, but the magnitude of the effect is small relative to the other independent variables. An increase in the committed regional benefits from \$2.4 million to \$446 million (25<sup>th</sup> to 75<sup>th</sup> percentile) increases the probability that an election will be observed by about 4.8%. The null hypothesis that international benefits have no effect on the probability of an observed election can be rejected. However, the small magnitude of the effect is somewhat puzzling. This is likely due to the difficulty in measuring international benefits and the rough nature of the proxy. The percentage of observed elections in the previous year could be absorbing much of



the effect that an increase in available international benefits should have on the probability of an observed election. In fact, when the percentage of observed elections is excluded from the regression, the magnitude of the effect of international benefits more than doubles (the same predicted probability described above in this paragraph increases the probability that an election will be observed by 12.1%). When many elections are internationally observed in the region, leaders are more likely to feel international pressure to invite international observers. Both available international benefits and regional diffusion contributed to the spread of election observation, and the regional diffusion likely increased the chances that incumbent leaders perceived a link between inviting international observers and increased international benefits.

All else held at the mean, an increase in a country's prior Polity score from -7 to 7 (25<sup>th</sup> to 75<sup>th</sup> percentile) increases the probability that an election would be observed by around 14.3%. Countries with higher levels of democracy are more likely to benefit by inviting international observers, either because they have nothing to hide, or because electoral manipulation can be hidden behind procedurally acceptable elections. This effect should fade as observers become better at catching even the more indirect forms of electoral manipulation, as they did in the late 1990s.

Interestingly, if the same model is estimated using only elections after 1997, the level of democracy is no longer statistically significant (Model 4). In this truncated time period, the level of international benefits also loses statistical significance. This result is likely due to the smaller sample and the rough nature of the international benefits proxy, but the results also fit within the larger context of a change in international expectations about incumbent behavior. By the end of the 1990s, in the developing

world, international actors expected that legitimate leaders would invite international observers. Incumbents complied with this expectation even when it was likely to be costly (for countries with low levels of democracy), and when there were not necessarily increases in material international benefits.

**Table 5.3: Effects of Country Characteristics on the Probability of Inviting Observers**

When this Variable...	Shifts from ...to ...	Change in Prob. Of aid withdrawal (upper and lower bounds)
Lagged Polity Score	25 <sup>th</sup> to 75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	<b>14.3%</b> ( <b>3.6%</b> <b>25%</b> )
Percent Observed Elections (regionally in previous year)	25 <sup>th</sup> to 75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	<b>41%</b> ( <b>31.1%</b> <b>51.3%</b> )
Total Aid Committed to Government and Civil Society, by Region	25 <sup>th</sup> to 75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	<b>4.6%</b> ( <b>1.1%</b> <b>8.4%</b> )
Previous Invitation	Zero to One	<b>36%</b> ( <b>25.7%</b> <b>45.9%</b> )
Interact Democracy and Observed	25 <sup>th</sup> to 75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	<b>-7.1%</b> ( <b>-10.8%</b> <b>-3.4%</b> )
Executive Election	Zero to One	<b>8.2%</b> ( <b>2.3%</b> <b>14.3%</b> )

**Notes: Boldface indicates that the 95% confidence interval around a simulated first difference did not contain zero, signifying statistical significance. Based on a logit model estimated in Stata 9.0, with first differences drawn from 1000 simulations performed by CLARIFY (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King).**

### **Interpreting the Interaction between Democracy and Percent Observed**

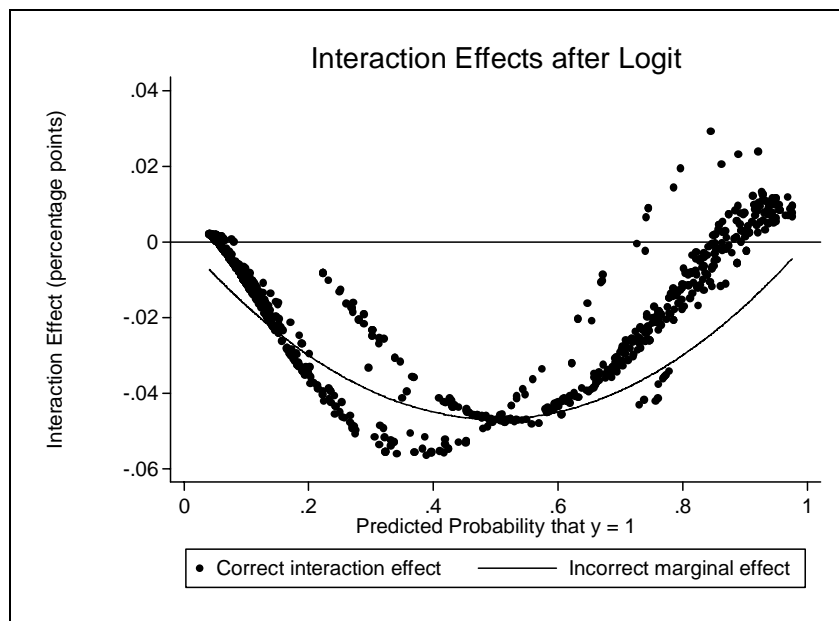
Interaction terms in logit models and other nonlinear models are often misinterpreted (Ai and Norton 2003). In order to interpret the effect of the interaction between the level of democracy and the percentage of observed elections in the region more accurately, the method developed by Norton, Wang and Ai (2004) is used. When

included in the model as separate variables, having a higher level of democracy and being located in a region with many observed elections both increase the probability of an observed election. The overall interaction term, as presented in Models 1-4 in Table 5.2, is negative and significant.

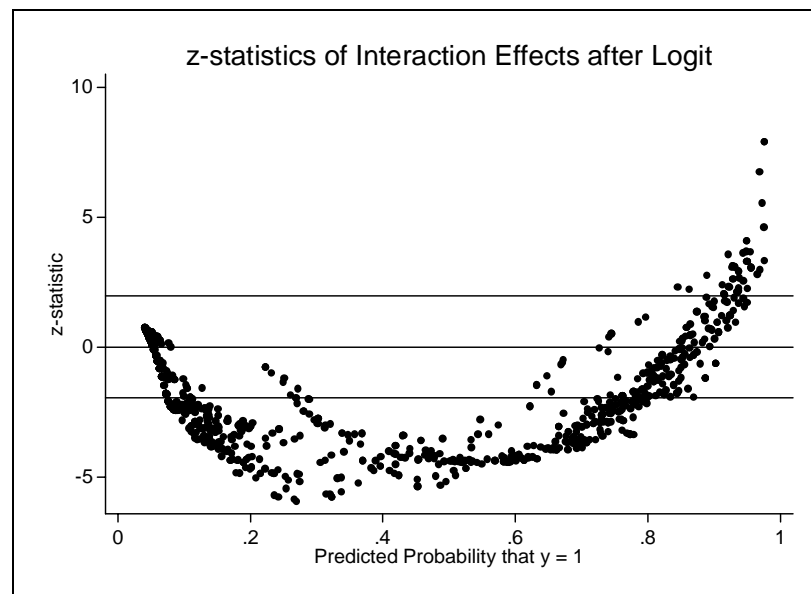
However, the interpretation of interaction terms in non-linear models is not straightforward, and in this case, the effect of the interaction term cannot be summarized as uniformly negative. For many observations, the interaction effect increases the probability of an observed election. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show that although the interaction term is negative in the regression results, for some observations the effect of the interaction term has a positive effect on the probability of an observed election. Figure 5.3 also shows that for many observations the interaction effect is not statistically significant.

More specifically, for many observations with a predicted value of an observed election greater than .7 (and a few with a predicted value of  $<.1$ ), the interaction term has a positive effect (see Figure 5.2). Additionally, observations with high predicted probabilities (and for which the interaction effect is positive) have the highest statistical significance of any observations (see Figure 5.3).

It is important to include the interaction term in the models to account for the joint effect of the two variables, however substantive interpretation of the interaction effect on the probability of an observed election is difficult to summarize. For most observations, the effect is negative, but for many observations, the effect is positive and statistically significant.



**Figure 5.2: Interaction Effects of Democracy and Regionally Observed Elections on the Probability of Observed Elections**



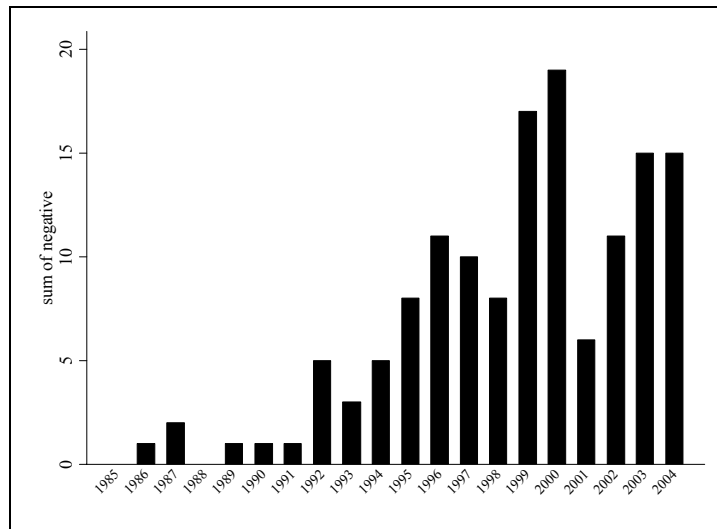
**Figure 5.3: Statistical Significance of Interaction Effects on the Probability of Observed Elections**

Tests of Hypotheses 4 and 5 require further disaggregation of the data.

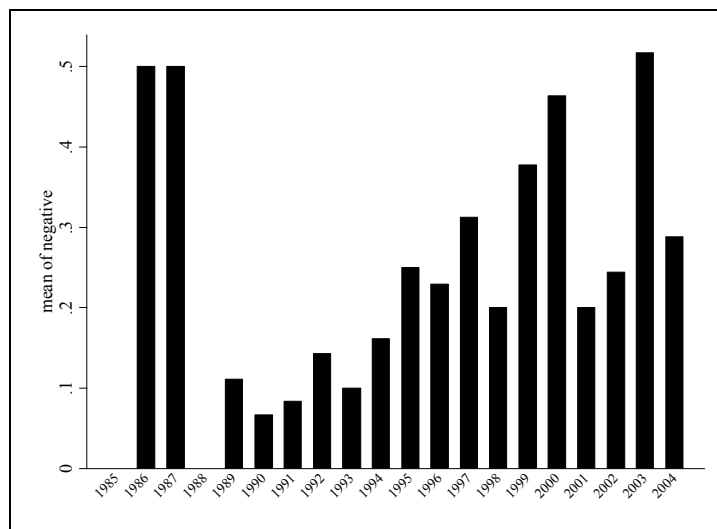
Hypothesis 4 predicts an increase in the rate of negative reports. The first negative reports were in the Philippines in 1986, South Korea in 1987 and Panama in 1989. Observers may or may not have been willing to criticize elections prior to this time, but the quality of elections is endogenous. In the first period of election observation, only true-democrats invited observers. After pseudo-democrats began mimicking the signal of true-democrats, it was not necessarily automatic that observers would be willing or able to catch and criticize fraudulent elections. Figures 5.4 and 5.5 show the number and rate of negative reports over time. “Negative reports” were recorded as those that seriously question the legitimacy of the election or the accuracy of the result. Judgments were made from original reports of international observers and from the news reports surrounding the election. In some cases the press conferences given by international observer groups present more critical evaluations than the official written reports. Elections for which some irregularities were reported were not counted as having received a negative report.

The rate of negative reports increased generally over time, lending some support for Hypothesis 4. However, the increase is not steady. The fluctuation in the rate of negative reports could be due to the character of the election holding countries each year. In each year, there are simply more or less countries that hold clean elections. The fluctuation could also be due to the nature of the “game of strategy” in which incremental changes in strategies for manipulating elections are followed by incremental improvements in monitoring methods. Assuming a relative constant base pattern in the rate of clean elections, the advance by pseudo-democrats in

manipulating the election in such a way that is less likely to be caught by observers would result in short-term reduction in the rate of negative reports, whereas an advance in monitoring technology would increase the rate of negative reports in the short term. This description of the interaction between monitoring methods and incumbent strategy could also be consistent with the pattern observed in Figure 5.5.



**Figure 5.4: Number of Elections Negatively Evaluated by International Observers, 1985-2004**

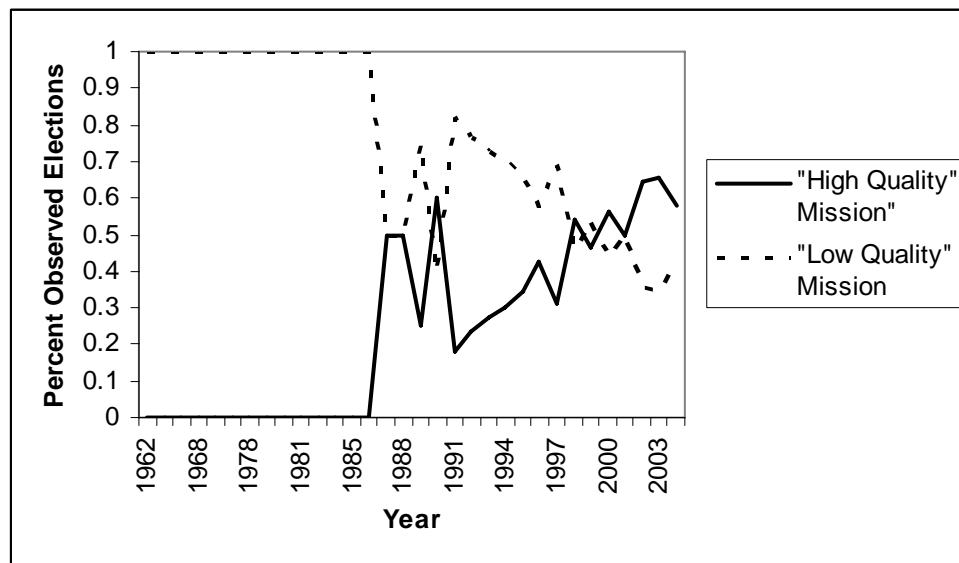


**Figure 5.5: Percentage of Observed Elections Given a Negative Report**

As observers recognized the need for higher quality election observation, some incumbent leaders got better at manipulation. Consistent with Hypothesis 5, some incumbents tried to mimic the signal of true-democrats by inviting observers that were unlikely to criticize. I count missions as “high quality” if the organization sending observers had previously issued a negative report about an election. “Low quality” missions are those sent by organizations that have never issued a negative report. This measure is imperfect, but should give a general sense of the risk that incumbents were taking when inviting different organizations, and provides evidence of the use of “low quality” observer missions as an attempt to lower the risk of inviting observers. Figure 5.6 also reflects that over time more organizations issued critical reports and that these organizations continued to observe many elections. After the 1986 election in the Philippines, the rate of low-quality missions peaked when the rate of observed elections was increasing most rapidly.

In addition, the availability of lower-quality election observers in the early 1990s helps explain the rapid spread of election observation and the transition discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 from the separating to the pooling equilibrium. By the late 1990s, high quality missions were present at more elections than low quality missions, and organizations were generally more willing to issue negative reports.

The pattern depicted in Figure 5.6 is not linear. After observers began to criticize elections in the late 1980s, the percentage of elections observed by low-quality observer missions was well over 50% for most of the 1990s, but fluctuates considerably.

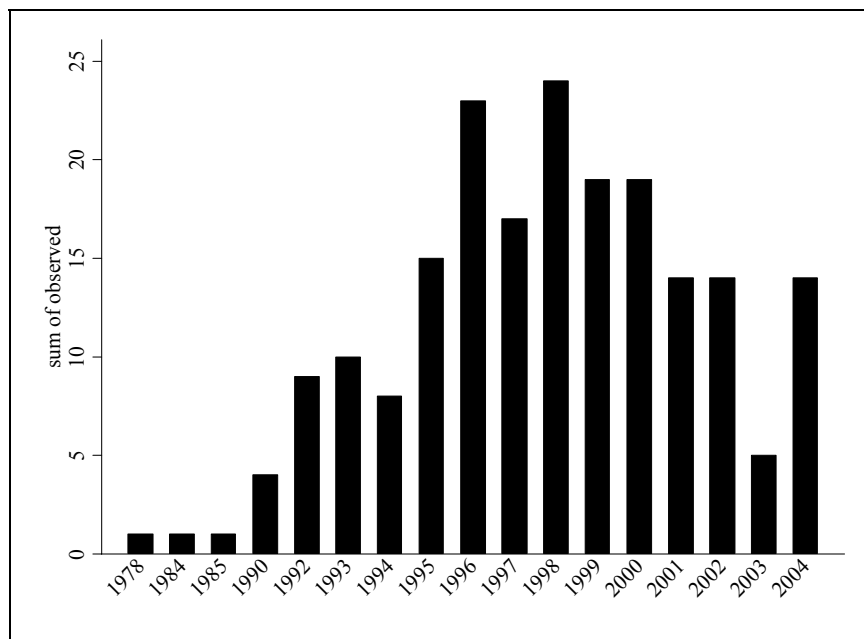


**Figure 5.6: Percentage of High and Low Quality Observation Mission**

Another method used by incumbents to minimize the negative consequences of rigging an election in front of international observers is to invite observer organizations that are likely to reach different conclusions. Multiple observer groups at an election are also a sign of international interest in the election. However, if multiple observation missions give conflicting reports on the same election, the government can characterize the observers' reports as unreliable. Figure 5.7 shows the number of observed elections at which there was more than one observer organization. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the OSCE/ODIHR regularly monitor the same election and issue conflicting reports. The CIS has been accused of judging elections on the basis of Russian foreign policy rather than the conditions of the election. The CIS, in turn, accuses the OSCE of bias and of inappropriately applying Western standards for elections. Even reputable organizations have been pitted against each other by incumbent leaders attempting to discredit criticism of their



elections. Perhaps as a result, observers have made increased efforts to coordinate their information and in many cases, their post-election press conferences.



**Figure 5.7: Number of Observed Elections with Multiple Observer Groups**

As cheating incumbents have improved their methods of manipulating the election and still receiving a favorable report, reputable international observers invested in higher quality election observation. Parallel vote tabulation, coordination with and training of domestic election observers, increased numbers of short-term observers, long-term election observation, media monitoring, evaluations of the legal framework surrounding elections and a general increased willingness to criticize problematic elections are all changes in international observer organizations that make it more difficult for cheating incumbents to escape without international criticism. For cheating parties, these changes have made it more difficult to successfully manipulate an election in front of high quality observers.

### **Cold War and Post-Cold War Patterns of Observed Elections**

The end of the Cold War contributed to a large increase in the proportion of international benefits that are allocated based on democracy. Prior to the end of the Cold War, alignment patterns should predict which countries invited observers. According to my argument, before 1989 countries aligned with the Soviet Union should not have invited international observers. Countries that are more closely aligned with the West should be the countries most likely to invite international observers. Stephen Walt provides a list of formal and informal alignments with the US and with the Soviet Union (1987). Countries are considered aligned if they are in a formal alliance or if military advisors from the US or the USSR were present in the country during the Cold War.

Table 5.4 lists all observed elections prior to 1989 by Cold War alignment patterns. Nicaragua is the only country that does not fit the predicted pattern, although Nicaragua was unaligned during the 1963 and 1972 elections. Walt does not code changes in alignment that took place during the Cold War, and this partially explains the Nicaragua case. Nicaragua's Sandinistas came to power unofficially 1979, and in the 1980s it is well known that the country was the site of a proxy battle between the US and the USSR. The Organization of American States, the Latin American Studies Association, and the International Human Rights Law Group observed the 1984 election of Daniel Ortega. According to Booth (1998) The FSLN (the Sandinistas) government held elections and invited international observers because they were "seeking to legitimize the revolution and weaken the growing Contra insurgency," and were under heavy international pressure to hold elections (188). Interestingly, it was

US meddling in the election that attracted the attention of international observers as the biggest problem, and observers gave the election tentatively positive reports (Booth 1998).

Other than Nicaragua, most countries that invited observers before the end of the Cold War were aligned with the US, either formally or informally. The elections in non-aligned Zimbabwe and Uganda were the first observed in sovereign states by the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the first in Africa. The Commonwealth had observed a handful of elections in its colonies in the 1960s (Sives 2001), but these elections are not included in the analysis because they took place prior to formal independence.

In general, countries seeking international benefits should be more likely to invite international observers. The analysis thus far assumed that all countries are seeking international benefits, but it is likely that some countries need international benefits more than others, and the leaders of these countries are therefore more likely to modify their behavior in order to maximize international benefits. Finding a proxy for a country's need for international benefits is nearly as difficult as measuring international benefits. A reasonable proxy is a country's aid dependence, measured as the annual amount of foreign aid received per capita. Model 5 in Table 5.5 presents the results of the analysis. In Models 6-8 I also include a test of whether Cold War alliance patterns continued to be associated with the probability that observers are invited.

**Table 5.4: Cold War Alignment and Observed Elections, 1962-1989<sup>53</sup>**

<b>Countries Aligned with US</b>	<b>Nonaligned</b>	<b>Countries Aligned with USSR</b>
Argentina 1985	Grenada 1984	Nicaragua 1963, 1972, 1984
Bolivia 1966, 1978	Guyana 1980	
Chile 1988	Suriname 1987	
Costa Rica 1962, 1966, 1970, 1978, 1982	Uganda 1980	
Dominican Republic 1962, 1966, 1970, 1978	Zimbabwe 1979, 1980	
Ecuador 1968		
El Salvador 1982, 1984, 1985, 1988		
Guatemala 1970, 1984, 1985		
Haiti 1987, 1988		
Honduras 1963, 1981, 1985		
Pakistan 1988		
Panama 1978		
Philippines 1986, 1987		
South Korea 1985, 1987		
Trinidad and Tobago 1986		
Uruguay 1984		

<sup>53</sup> Alignments patterns from Appendix B of *The Origins of Alliances*, by Stephen Walt (1987).

**Table 5.5. Binary Logit: Observed Elections, Models 5-6**

	(5) 1960- 2004	(6) 1960- 2004	(7) 1989- 2004	(8) 1989- 2004
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Observed	Observed	Observed	Observed
Lagged Polity2 Score	0.048* (0.021)	0.057** (0.020)	0.040 (0.031)	0.040 (0.031)
Percent Observed Elections (regionally in previous year)	3.179** (0.398)	3.115** (0.381)	2.021** (0.446)	2.021** (0.446)
Interaction (Democracy and Regionally Observed Elections)	-0.181** (0.052)	-0.190** (0.054)	-0.153* (0.066)	-0.153* (0.066)
Total Regional Aid to Government and Civil Society	0.000* (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Previously Observed	1.872** (0.226)	1.978** (0.224)	1.606** (0.289)	1.606** (0.289)
Aid per Capita	0.003 (0.003)			
US Cold War Ally		-0.473 (0.248)	-0.647* (0.325)	
USSR Cold War Ally		-0.214 (0.295)	-0.310 (0.330)	0.337 (0.377)
Non-aligned				0.647* (0.325)
Constant	-2.729** (0.152)	-2.413** (0.184)	-1.097** (0.265)	-1.744** (0.307)
Observations	1260	1260	619	619

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The relationship between aid dependence and the probability that observers will be invited is not statistically significant. This result is somewhat surprising. Foreign aid is one of many international benefits, and it is possible that those states that are not heavily dependent on foreign aid are seeking other forms of international

benefits by inviting international observers, although this is far from clear from the results.

Models 6-8 include dummy variables for alignment during the Cold War (coding from Walt 1987). When dummies for the entire 1960-2004 period are included, US alignment is not statistically significant. It is important to note that the base category in Models 6 and 7 is countries that are nonaligned. Alignment with the Soviets does not have any effect on the probability that observers are invited. To further examine the relationship, Models 7 and 8 examine only the post 1989 period. The information presented in Models 7 and 8 is the same, but for clarity, the base category for Cold War alignment was rotated from nonaligned countries to US aligned countries. When this is done, it becomes clear that the non-aligned countries were the most likely to invite observers at the end of the Cold War. This makes sense if nonaligned countries can be considered those that had the most to gain from signaling their commitment to democracy in the post-Cold War period.

### **Conclusion**

The empirical analysis presented in this chapter provided strong support for the theory presented in Chapter 3. Available international benefits are associated with an increase in the probability that an election is observed, as are higher levels of democracy, higher levels of observed elections in the region, previous election observation in the country, and executive elections. When the sample is limited to elections after 1997, the level of democracy and the available international benefits are no longer statistically significant. Although certainly not definitive proof, and probably due to the smaller sample size, this evidence is consistent with the argument

that material considerations drove the rapid spread of election observation, but that leaders continue to invite today for reasons that are more difficult to account for in an empirical analysis: namely that international expectations have changed and legitimate leaders are now expected to invite international observers to their elections.

The rapid spread of election observation and the growing importance of democracy also generated an escalating game of strategy between state leaders and international observers. As more pseudo-democrats invited international observers, many international observers and members of the international community invested in higher quality election observation. Whereas in the early period of election observation international observers were only invited to elections that were likely to be clean,<sup>54</sup> in the post-Cold War period of election observation, leaders employed a variety of strategies in order to increase the probability that they could invite observers and receive a positive report, most commonly by inviting observers from organizations that were unlikely to criticize.

These results support the argument that election observation was initiated and spread as a result of material driven behavior, but perhaps is continuing at a high rate despite changes in the risk associated with inviting observers. Most countries in the world, outside of the developed democracies, now invite international election observers. The consequences that international observers have on the elections they observe are the subject of the next three chapters.

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<sup>54</sup> In the early period of election observation, the lack of negative reports is endogenous. Only true-democrats had the incentive to invite observers, so observers willing to criticize a fraudulent election would not have been invited to elections that were likely to be rigged.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Introducing Randomization to International Election Observation: The 2004 Presidential Elections in Indonesia**

International monitoring of elections is believed to promote democracy by providing an independent evaluation of whether a given election was democratic, detecting fraud when it exists, deterring fraud, and increasing voter confidence in the electoral process. The track record of election observation over the past four decades shows that many groups improved their ability to detect electoral fraud, and these organizations have also become more willing to denounce fraudulent elections. By improving the ability of international and domestic actors to identify whether an election was clean or fraudulent, the practice of international election observation has helped democracy-promoting countries, as well as domestic advocates for democracy, recognize and punish those governments that fail to hold clean elections. Some policy-makers have also defended the practice of election observation on the grounds that it improves the quality of elections, but this proposition has not yet been empirically tested. Can international observers also deter fraud or increase voter confidence in the process? Can they fulfill their joint mandate of accurately evaluating elections and deterring fraud?

Part of the reason that the question of whether international observers improve election quality remains unanswered is due to an endogeneity problem. As Thomas Carothers has rightly argued, the most significant potential effect of international observers is nearly impossible to measure.



Out of fear of being caught by foreign observers, political authorities may abandon plans to rig elections. Of course, few foreign officials would readily acknowledge having had such plans, making it hard to measure precisely the deterrent effect of electoral observation. Yet that effect should not be underestimated. (Carothers 1997, 18)

Knowledge that international observers will be present at an election may prevent fraud from being attempted by political parties and candidates, although the nature of the decisions to invite international observers and commit fraud prevents any meaningful test of this hypothesis. The pre-election prevention of fraud that Carothers highlights is the ideal outcome for organizations interested in promoting clean elections, but Carothers neglects another possible means by which international observers can deter fraud. It is also a realistic hypothesis that international observers fail to prevent fraud ahead of the election, but that they nevertheless deter fraud on election day by visiting hundreds of polling stations. Because individuals committing fraud, intimidation, or other electoral improprieties may not wish to carry out their intended actions in the physical presence of international observers, the fact that observers are present in a number of polling stations on election day may reduce the level of vote manipulation in those polling stations.

Unlike pre-election fraud prevention, this form of fraud reduction would not eliminate election day fraud. If there are enough observers relative to the size of the country, election day deterrence may translate into a sizable reduction in the planned fraud that is carried out, but perhaps more importantly, if fraud is occurring in an election but being concealed in those locations visited by international observers, this deterrent effect may compromise the ability of international observers to observe fraud directly.

How can the hypothesis that observers affect election day operations be tested?

If international observers are randomly assigned to polling stations, the election outcomes can be compared between the treatment group of internationally monitored polling stations and the control group of unmonitored polling stations. In addition, if observers are randomly assigned, fraud that occurs on election day but is concealed from international observers can be detected. Finally, if observers are randomly assigned and there is no observable difference in election outcomes between treatment and control groups, observers can be more confident in generalizing their observations to the entire electoral process.

The effect that observers may have is unlikely to be uniform across all elections. To illustrate this point, there are at least four types of election scenarios that could be observed given that some election fraud is planned and international observers are invited. In the first type of election, international observers witness a clean election and have no deterrent effect on election day fraud, but fraud occurs anyway, either in a manner that they do not notice, or before and after they visit a polling station. In the second type of election, fraud is planned for election day, observers evaluate a fraudulent election, and have no deterrent effect on fraud (i.e. they do not reduce fraud at the polling stations they visit). In the third type of election, observers reduce fraud in the polling stations they visit but do not observe it directly. In this case, they have a localized deterrent effect on fraud. In the fourth type of election, election day fraud is planned, observers see some fraud, but also have some deterrent effect. In this scenario, local officials and party agents make a partially successful attempt to conceal fraud. Election types 1-4 are represented in Figure 6.1

	Fraud Not Observed	Fraud Observed
Fraud Not Deterred	<b>Type 1</b> <b>Well Concealed Election Day Fraud While Observers are Present</b>	<b>Type 2</b> <b>Blatant Manipulation</b>
Fraud Deterred	<b>Type 3</b> <b>Clean Election in Observed Polling Stations</b>	<b>Type 4</b> <b>Partially Deterred Fraud</b>

**Figure 6.1 Fraud Observations vs. Fraud Deterrence**

Given that fraud occurs on election day, these four scenarios highlight the difficulty that observer missions face in their joint mandate to accurately evaluate elections and deter fraud. There is one additional type of election in which no fraud is planned and observers witness a clean election. They have no deterrent effect on fraud because there is none to deter. Particularly in the first, third, and fourth types of elections, if observers deter fraud, their ability to gauge the level of fraud and the degree to which it influenced the outcome is compromised. To further complicate matters, an election in which no fraud is intended or carried out may look to international observers like Type 1 or 3, and observers could misjudge election, even when election day fraud is occurring. In practice, the coordination between international observers, domestic election observers, and political party witnesses make this type of confusion less likely. However, improved methodology by observers, specifically random assignment of observers to polling stations on election day, can help election observer missions determine whether fraud occurs, particularly when election fraud is not blatant.

### **Random Assignment and the Effects of International Election Observers**

Random assignment of international observers carries a number of advantages. If international observers are randomly assigned on election day, a variety of tests relating to the general question of whether international observers influence the process that they are observing become possible. In addition to making these empirical tests possible, random assignment of observers on election day can provide the observation mission with a random sample of polling stations from which to draw their conclusions about the quality of the election, and can provide another way to detect voting fraud. Random assignment of international observers to polling stations is not standard practice in the field of international election observation. Current practice varies by election and by organization, but the most common scenario is to allow individual observer teams to choose the polling stations that they visit within a given region after they have been deployed throughout the country.

During the 2004 presidential elections in Indonesia, I was given the opportunity to introduce random assignment of international observers to The Carter Center's deployment plan. To my knowledge, this was the first attempt of this type within the field of international election observation. To better understand the effects that international observers have on the elections they observe, similar tests should be replicated (with random assignment of observers) in multiple elections.

The following section presents general hypotheses about the effect of international observers on voting-day behavior. In the subsequent section, the hypotheses are extended to fit the case of the 2004 presidential election in Indonesia. This chapter is intended to describe the project for future replications as well as

present the results from Indonesia. As will become clear in the description of the Indonesian elections, the case was less than ideal to test the effect of observers on fraud, but other conclusions can be drawn from the results of the field experiment.

### **The General Effect of Observers on Election Day Behavior**

How can the effect of observers on election day behavior be tested? If voting fraud occurs on election day, and if international observers deter that fraud via their presence in and around polling stations, then the fraud-sponsoring candidate(s) should perform worse in those areas that were observed. This test is clearest if only one candidate in the area is attempting to commit electoral fraud.

Artificial vote suppression or inflation should be reflected in turnout. Ballot box stuffing, for example, should artificially increase turnout. If officials are less likely to stuff the ballot box when international observers are present, then international observers could be associated with lower turnout. Voter intimidation and other forms of vote suppression should decrease turnout. If international observers decrease intimidation and make it more likely that voters will cast ballots when observers are present, the presence of observers should be associated with higher voter turnout. If ballot box stuffing and voter intimidation are both occurring in the same regions, the effects would work against each other. There are many potential effects of observers on vote manipulation, and the following general hypotheses can be modified to fit the specific circumstances surrounding any election. Generally speaking, if observers reduce election day fraud, those candidates sponsoring fraud should do better in polling stations that are not visited by international observers.

**H1: If international observers reduce election day manipulation, the candidate committing the manipulation should receive a higher average vote share in unmonitored polling stations than in monitored polling stations.**

The direction of the potential effect of observers on turnout depends on the likely forms of electoral manipulation and whether vote suppression occurs. Turnout should be measured by candidate, or as each candidate's vote share as a percent of registered voters.

**H2: If international observers reduce election day manipulation, voter turnout by candidate should be higher (lower) in unmonitored polling stations.**

Hypothesis 1 suggests that only one candidate would be attempting to rig the election. In many cases, the incumbent is the only candidate with the resources and ability to orchestrate widespread voting fraud on election day, and a nationwide test of whether observers deter fraud is appropriate. There are a number of other cases in which it is more likely that multiple candidates attempt to manipulate votes on election day.

Election day vote rigging does not happen automatically when there is motive; candidates and political parties must also have the ability to carry out voting fraud. It is more likely that candidates will have the ability to execute fraud in areas in which their party organization is strong. Without party operatives ready and willing to carry out the planned manipulation, election day manipulation would be unsuccessful. How can the hypothesized effect of international observers be tested when multiple candidates are cheating? Although it is technically possible for two or more candidates to attempt to stuff the same ballot box, it is more likely that manipulation

by multiple candidates would be geographically stratified. In order to account for this possibility, Hypothesis 1 should be tested within regions as well as nationally.

The above hypotheses are presented in their most general form and could be applied to other elections. The next section turns to describing the application of random assignment to the 2004 elections in Indonesia.

### **Applying Experimental Research Design to the 2004 Indonesian Elections**

In cooperation with The Carter Center, I traveled to Indonesia during the 2004 presidential elections and designed the deployment plan for all Carter Center short term observers in the July and September elections. The case of Indonesia was selected because the opportunity to attempt random assignment of international observers was made available. The introduction of randomly assigned international observers had been met with some skepticism by other practitioners. Although international election observation missions regularly assign international observers randomly to vote-counting centers at the end of election day as part of a parallel vote tabulation,<sup>55</sup> random assignment of international observers during polling had not been attempted because it was thought unnecessary, logistically too difficult, or contrary to some of the other goals of election observation.<sup>56</sup>

Indonesia is one of the largest and most geographically diverse election-holding countries in the world. With approximately 150 million eligible voters, 17,508

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<sup>55</sup> The parallel vote tabulation, or quick count, provides an independent measure of the election results, within a margin of error, and is traditionally more reliable than exit polling. Observers (domestic or international) are assigned to a random sample of polling stations to directly observe the counting process. They call in the tallies from the vote count, and because the sample is random, quick counts typically provide very accurate estimations of the election results, and thus guard against manipulation during the counting process (Estok, Nevitte, and Cowan 2002).

<sup>56</sup> Personal conversations by the author with international election observation professionals from NDI, the EU, the OSCE/ODIHR, and The Carter Center.

islands, and nearly 580,000 polling stations, Indonesian elections are no small affair. The 2004 presidential election was the first direct presidential election in Indonesian history, giving little historical precedent on which to base predictions for the 2004 elections.

The random assignment of international observers was challenging in the Indonesian case for several logistical reasons. First, many areas of the country were not accessible to international observers on election day, and therefore random assignment could not be attempted across the entire population of polling stations. Second, there was no complete list of polling stations available from the central government. Third, it was unclear prior to the election whether any disaggregated election results would be made available, the lack of which would have thrown a significant barrier in front of any attempts to better understand the effect of observers on election day behavior. Fourth, because election law mandated that each polling station have a maximum of 300 voters, a full-length election day was determined unnecessary, and polling stations were only open from 7 am to 1 pm, significantly reducing the number of polling stations that an observer team could visit on election day. Finally, because it was the first time that random assignment of international election observers had been attempted, many of the challenges in applying this methodology to election observation had yet to be worked out and agreed upon by the interested parties.

In addition to the immense size and geographic diversity of Indonesia making it a challenging place to attempt random assignment for the first time, another complicating factor is that the election turned out to be relatively free of intimidation



and fraud, making the case less than ideal to test for the effect of observers on election day problems. Anticipating whether the election would be clean was difficult because it was the first direct presidential election of this type, and some election irregularities had been documented in previous elections (voter intimidation, vote-buying, and election-related violence). However, even given these difficulties, the introduction of random assignment to the deployment plan of international observers was completed.

There are five levels of administrative divisions in Indonesia pertaining to elections. There are 33 provinces (*propinsi*) which are divided into 414 regencies (*kabupaten or kota*). These regencies, in turn, are divided into 4,987 sub-districts (*kecamatan*), the districts are divided into approximately 60,000 villages (*kelurahan or desa*), and the villages are divided into 574,945 polling stations (*TPS*). There were 155,048,803 registered voters.

The geographic diversity, inaccessibility of many areas, and size of Indonesia made random assignment across the entire population impossible for The Carter Center's mission of 50 observers (24 observer teams). The long-term election observers and the Jakarta-based staff of The Carter Center selected 24 areas of Indonesia (primarily *kabupaten* and *kota*, or regencies and cities) where The Carter Center would send election observers. In order for an area to be selected, it had to be accessible by car or aircraft within one day's travel time, and had to have some sort of basic accommodations for the observer team that was judged as sufficiently safe.<sup>57</sup> There was also some effort made to avoid extensive overlap with the European Union

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<sup>57</sup> Security concerns are relatively standard on election observation missions, but were slightly heightened in Indonesia because of recent Western targeted bombings of hotels and the Australian embassy.

election observation mission, as well consideration for whether access was granted to areas where foreigners are usually prohibited from traveling such as Banda Aceh, Ambon, and parts of Papua. Thus, the selection of regencies to be visited by The Carter Center was not random. Random assignment was instead applied within each regency or pair of regencies where Carter Center observers would be sent.

This experimental design, in which the treatment is assigned within a smaller subset of like units, is called a blocked randomized design. This design requires that the units within each block be more alike than the units between blocks. Because the popularity of the candidates and voter turnout vary more between regions than within regions, this design is appropriate.

The information on where The Carter Center short term election observers would be deployed was not released ahead of time to the public. International observers typically rove from polling station to polling station during election day. The ideal would have been to assign observers randomly to polling stations within each regency where Carter Center observers were sent. However, at the time of the election, there was no complete list of all of the nearly 580,000 polling stations. Even if there had been a complete list of polling stations, observers would have had a difficult time locating them. Many were set up outdoors at locations without physical addresses, either on badminton courts, in the middle of streets, on sidewalks, in empty lots, etc. The best alternative was a complete list of the next largest administrative divisions above polling stations: *kelurahan* and *desa*. These administrative divisions equate to villages in non-urban areas or neighborhoods within cities. They can be as small as a few hundred people, and as large as 75,000 voters. Most villages are

identifiable on a local map, making it possible for the observer teams to find them. This made random assignment across villages logistically possible, both because a complete list existed, and international observer teams had a reasonable chance of being able to identify and locate the villages on election day.

Each observer team was given a list of randomly selected villages that they were to go to on election day. The method used to randomly select a list of villages for each team was quite rudimentary. A complete list of villages was available by *kabupaten*, or regency. The list was sorted in order of an ID number that roughly identified the village regionally. Every fifth village was marked and included in the sample, but the first village chosen was selected arbitrarily. The intention behind this method was to achieve some geographic stratification in the absence of maps or other characteristics of villages.<sup>58</sup>

Prior to being deployed to the regencies, observers were given instructions on how to select polling stations once they arrived at the village using a method that approximates randomization. Observers were necessarily limited to those polling stations that they could find. Most teams were able to spend the day before election day scouting the area and looking for signs that polling stations were being set up for the election. They were asked not to choose polling stations based on any substantive characteristics such as the number of voters, complaints about the polling station, known popularity of one candidate, or recommendations from local officials or police.

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<sup>58</sup> A better method for most cases is to use a computer program to generate a list of random numbers that correspond with each polling station, sort by the random numbers, and select the appropriate number of polling stations from the top of the list.

Rather, if they went to more than one polling station in a given village, they were instructed to go to every third or fifth polling station that they could locate.<sup>59</sup>

In the case of Indonesia, because observers were assigned randomly across villages (rather than across polling stations), and the small 300-voter polling stations were often adjoining or within sight of each other, the general hypotheses from the previous section are modified to fit the village level.<sup>60</sup>

**H1a: If international observers deter election day manipulation, the candidate committing fraud should receive higher vote share in unmonitored villages than in monitored villages.**

**H2b: If international observers deter election day manipulation, voter turnout by candidate (candidate vote as a percentage of registered voters) should be higher (lower) in unmonitored villages than in monitored villages.**

A further challenge in randomly assigning international observers in Indonesia is that it was difficult to know ahead of time how many villages each team would be able to travel to during the election day period. Polling stations were originally scheduled to be open from 7am until 1pm. For the second round in September, the election commission issued a late ruling that polling stations could close at 11am if all voters registered at the polling station had voted. In practice, many polling stations closed when the local officials felt that everyone who was going to vote had voted, creating wide variation in the length of election day. The terrain and population

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<sup>59</sup> If this was not practical, they were instructed to draw a line or a “V” through the village on a local map and go to polling stations along this line. Both of these methods were intended to encourage observers to select polling stations in areas of a given village of varying demographic characteristics.

<sup>60</sup> I am also attempting to collect polling station level election results, but because of the large number of polling stations, the data collection is significantly more time intensive.

density also varied considerably, and travel time between villages was unknown when the lists of randomly assigned villages were completed.

Because of these uncertainties, each team was given a list of villages that intentionally contained more villages than they should have been able to visit on election day. This ensured that they would not run out of randomly selected villages during election day, and in the event that a listed village was inaccessible, they could continue going to other villages on their list.

### **Data**<sup>61</sup>

Data on the vote share for each candidate and voter turnout were collected for all villages within the regencies visited by Carter Center election observers in the second round of the 2004 presidential election. Polling station level data for the same variables is also being collected. The unofficial results were made available by the Indonesian *KPU* (roughly translated as the General Elections Commission) for most of the country, but data was incomplete for three of the regencies visited by Carter Center observers in the second round: Mimika, Kupang and Manokwari. Excluding the areas with missing data, this leaves 3,964 observations. Within this area Carter Center observers visited 155 villages and about three hundred polling stations.

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<sup>61</sup> Data reported here are for the second round of the presidential elections, and are reported at the village level. The village level is appropriate for substantive reasons, but the polling station level will also be tested when data collection is complete. Additionally, if the first round election results are again made available by the General Elections Commission at the village and polling station levels, these results will also be reported in future iterations of this project.

**Table 6.1 Village Level Summary Statistics for all Available Variables**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Observed	3964	0.039102	0.193862	0	1
Sample	3964	0.09107	0.287744	0	1
SBY Percent	3964	0.694768	0.179155	0.00243	0.992943
MEGA Percent	3964	0.305233	0.179155	0.007057	0.99757
SBY Turnout	3964	0.52727	0.159682	0.00819	0.957672
MEGA Turnout	3964	0.232589	0.149249	0.006778	0.965077
Ballots Received	3964	4083.693	4828.229	35	76741
Valid Ballots	3964	2916.312	3159.018	6	42112
Invalid Ballots	3964	74.04743	112.9177	0	1582
Extra Ballots	3964	3.943996	19.69375	0	345
Damaged Ballots	3964	40.52901	226.2439	0	5923
Ballots Not Used	3964	1056.748	1738.402	0	37530
Total Registered Voters	3964	5046.865	6249.111	35	76713

## Results

Overall, the 2004 presidential elections in Indonesia were widely reported to have met international standards for democratic elections, and there were only isolated complaints about voting day. However, this was not known ahead of the election, and the intended test was whether observers reduce election day fraud. To be clear, observers should only have an effect if election day manipulation exists. If there is no election day manipulation, candidate performance should be equal between monitored and unmonitored polling stations.

The null hypothesis for H1a is that there is no difference in either candidate's vote share between monitored polling stations and unmonitored polling stations. Because of the blocked research design, all tests must control for the blocks, or regencies where observers were assigned. Seven of the Carter Center observer teams were assigned to cover adjacent regencies within the same general area, and these adjacent areas are counted in the same block.

Table 6.2 summarizes the areas observed by Carter Center observers. Note that within each village, observers visited one to four individual polling stations, and in extensions of this project, comparisons will be made between groups of polling stations rather than groups of villages.

In the second round of the 2004 presidential elections, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (commonly referred to as SBY) and his running mate Jusuf Kalla were the leading candidates, having taken 34% of the first round votes in the five candidate field. The incumbent president, Megawati Sukarnoputri (commonly referred to as Megawati), garnered 27% in the first round. The runoff was held on September 20, 2004. SBY won the election with 60.6% of the vote.

The average vote share for SBY across all of the regencies included in the sample in this study was 65.4%, underscoring that the selection of regencies was non-random and non-representative of the entire country. Thus, comparisons are only made within regencies visited by Carter Center observers.

**Table 6.2 Carter Center Observation Coverage**

Block	Province	Regency or City	Number of Villages	Number Villages Observed	Total Voters
1	Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam	Aceh Besar	550	4	200,676
1	Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam	Kota Banda Aceh	90	4	173,265
2	Nusa Tenggara Timur	Kab. Kupang	90	1	115,010
2	Nusa Tenggara Timur	Kota Kupang	26	7	86,412
3	East Java	Kab. Pasuran	365	1	1,057,729
3	East Java	Kota Surabaya	163	3	2,078,486
3	East Java	Sidoarjo	353	3	1,266,640
4	Nusa Tenggara Barat	Kota Mataram	23	4	241,483
4	Nusa Tenggara Barat	Lombok Barat	116	1	468,741
5	East Java	Sampang	186	5	569,216
6	Bali	Tabanan	117	6	325,701
7	East Java	Situbondo	136	10	488,633
8	Papua	Mimika	22	2	19,504
9	DI Yogyakarta	Kota Yogyakarta	45	4	327,873
9	DI Yogyakarta	Sleman	86	14	798,363
10	Irian Jaya Barat	Manokwari	84	0	11,363
11	East Java	Kota Kediri	46	11	200,137
12	North Sumatera	Kota Medan	156	7	1,525,526
13	Riau	Kampar	191	2	342,855
13	Riau	Kota Pekanbaru	52	3	398,069
14	Kalimantan Timur	Kota Samarinda	42	6	453,693
15	West Java	Cianjur	343	4	1,378,863
16	Central Kalimantan	Kota Palangka Raya	31	5	123,596
17	West Kalimantan	Kota Potianak	24	7	371,780
18	West Sumatra	Kota Padang	103	5	525,422
19	South Sumatra	Palembang	103	12	906,169
20	Sulawesi Utara	Kota Bitung	60	7	120,637
21	North Maluku	Kota Ternate	53	6	95,771
22	Maluku	Kota Ambon	56	5	192,097
23	South Sulawesi	Gowa	151	5	386,574
23	South Sulawesi	Kota Makassar	146	4	812,977
24	Nusa Tenggara Barat	Kab. Bima	153	7	260,573
24	Nusa Tenggara Barat	Kota Bima	25	0	80,580
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4187</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>16,404,414</b>

Table 6.3 presents the tests of hypotheses 1a and 2a using a simple OLS model. OLS is used because it most easily incorporates the dummy variables for each block. If the randomization was across the entire country, rather than within regions, it



would be possible to use a difference of means test or an analysis of variance test.

Overall, as should be expected in a clean election, Models 1-4 show that during the second round of the 2004 presidential elections in Indonesia, observers had no effect on the vote share for either candidate, nor on turnout by candidate. In Model 1, the percentage of total vote for SBY is the dependent variable. Controlling for blocks, observers have no effect on the vote percentage for SBY. Model 2 presents the same information as Model 1, but for clarity, the same model is run on the vote share for Megawati.

Election day manipulation could also be reflected in turnout. Models 3 and 4 examine whether either candidate was manipulating voter turnout to his or her benefit. The dependent variable is the total vote for the candidate as a percentage of registered voters in the village. Model 3 shows that the effect of observers on the turnout of voters for Megawati was not statistically significant. Similarly, Model 4 shows that observers had no effect on SBY's voters. The lack of significant effects for the presence of international observers on candidate performance is not surprising given that the election was widely viewed as clean.

**Table 6.3: Effects of Observers on Vote Share and Candidate Vote Turnout**

	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)	Model (4)
	SBY Percent	MEGA Percent	MEGA Turnout	SBY Turnout
Observed	0.000 (0.011)	-0.000 (0.011)	-0.011 (0.009)	-0.017 (0.010)
Block 3	-0.088** (0.006)	0.088** (0.006)	0.050** (0.006)	-0.112** (0.006)
Block 4	-0.043** (0.012)	0.043** (0.012)	0.021* (0.010)	-0.064** (0.011)
Block 5	-0.169** (0.015)	0.169** (0.015)	0.106** (0.013)	-0.191** (0.014)
Block 6	-0.506** (0.014)	0.506** (0.014)	0.471** (0.015)	-0.390** (0.013)

**Table 6.3 Continued**

Block 7	-0.194**	0.194**	0.132**	-0.180**
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Block 8	-0.179**	0.179**	0.116**	-0.188**
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Block 9	-0.285**	0.285**	0.209**	-0.253**
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.011)
Block 11	-0.146**	0.146**	0.042**	-0.250**
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Block 13	-0.033**	0.033**	0.001	-0.102**
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.010)
Block 14	-0.101**	0.101**	0.023*	-0.206**
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.017)
Block 15	-0.204**	0.204**	0.146**	-0.195**
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Block 16	-0.230**	0.230**	0.148**	-0.239**
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.022)
Block 17	-0.097**	0.097**	0.020	-0.210**
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.014)	(0.015)
Block 18	0.066**	-0.066**	-0.083**	-0.109**
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Block 19	-0.265**	0.265**	0.186**	-0.243**
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Block 20	-0.290**	0.290**	0.215**	-0.257**
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.012)
Block 21	-0.074**	0.074**	0.042	-0.127**
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.027)	(0.023)
Block 22	-0.368**	0.368**	0.260**	-0.338**
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.026)	(0.022)
Block 23	0.103**	-0.103**	-0.095**	0.064**
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.010)
Block 24	-0.030**	0.030**	0.021**	-0.022*
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.010)
Constant	0.793**	0.207**	0.172**	0.645**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Observations	3964	3964	3964	3964
R-squared	0.48	0.48	0.49	0.44

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

**Note:** Robust standard errors in parentheses. Blocks 2, 10, and 12 are excluded because of missing data. Block 1 is the reference category.

## Conclusion

Do international election observers deter fraud or increase voter confidence in the electoral process? Does the presence of foreigners in polling stations affect election day events? This chapter has outlined how random assignment of

international election observers can be used to answer these empirical questions. In the case of the second round of the 2004 presidential election in Indonesia, international observers were randomly assigned to the villages that they visited, and instructed to randomly select polling stations within these villages. In the aggregate, it appears that the presence of observers in villages had no overall effect on the vote share or the turnout for either candidate.

From their election day observations, as well as long-term observation of the entire electoral process, The Carter Center election observation mission to Indonesia concluded that the elections took place in “a general atmosphere of calm, order, and peaceful participation” (Carter Center 2004). The irregularities that they noted took place primarily during the pre-election period, and included reports of some individuals being paid to show up at campaign rallies, as well as some partisan campaigning by election officials prior to election day.

Given this positive report by Carter Center observers, if the data above had shown a significant effect of observers, it would have been a sign that fraudulent activities on election day were effectively concealed from international observers.

Although observers cannot have a significant effect on election day fraud when election day fraud does not exist, this does not necessarily mean that the presence of international observers had no effect on election fraud overall. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, it is still possible that the parties and candidates chose not to engage in widespread election day fraud because they knew that the election day activities would be under significant international and domestic scrutiny. This type of potential effect of international observers is virtually impossible to demonstrate, but

the fact that a democratic election took place, regardless of its cause, is a positive development for Indonesia.

The next chapter focuses on a very different type of election in which election day fraud was widespread and blatant, and presents evidence from a natural experiment which demonstrates that international observers can reduce election day fraud. The contrast between the Indonesian and Armenian cases should highlight the importance of random assignment of international election observers for practitioners of election observation. In addition to providing a more representative sample of polling stations, random assignment of international observers can help determine whether election day manipulation was effectively concealed from observers, and can demonstrate whether observers contribute to cleaner elections.

## **Chapter 7**

# **Can International Election Observers Reduce Election Day Fraud?**

### **Evidence from a Natural Experiment**

Nearly all countries hold elections, but these elections vary widely in the degree to which they are democratic. In elections in countries such as Turkmenistan, Singapore, Nepal, and Myanmar, the typical election is uncompetitive, often only a small percentage of the population can vote, and if voters do face a choice between candidates, the choice is either severely constrained or substantively meaningless. For countries in transition to democracy in recent decades, the electoral process is under intense international scrutiny. Many intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and Western governments have highlighted elections as a crucial step toward a diverse set of goals including the promotion of economic development, ending civil war, reducing human rights abuses, and improving the investment climate for multinational corporations.<sup>62</sup> Foreign aid donors have also made elections a condition for much of their aid-giving.<sup>63</sup> Regardless of the true ability of elections to remedy problems in developing countries, the fact remains that elections are a focal point for the

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<sup>62</sup> For a comprehensive listing of all intergovernmental organizations' commitments, see the UN's 2004 "Compilation of documents or texts adopted and used by various intergovernmental, international, regional and sub-regional organizations aimed at promoting democracy." Specifically, see the OSCE Copenhagen Document (1990); the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000), the Southern African Development Community (2004); the Commonwealth's Harare Declaration (1991); and the OAS's (2001). For an academic discussion of these topics, see Chand (1997) and Elkit and Svensson (1997).

<sup>63</sup> Rose (2002), Burnell (2000), Crawford (1995), Geisler (1993), Laakso (2002).

international community, and many countries hold elections, at least in part, to comply with international standards.<sup>64</sup>

It is not well understood how international pressure to hold elections influences politics in developing countries. International election observers are the central means by which international actors evaluate the quality of the elections. As of 2004, upwards of 80% of elections (excluding the long-term consolidated democracies) invite international election observers to independently evaluate their election.<sup>65</sup> Incumbent leaders who do not invite international observers send a clear signal of their lack of commitment to democracy and transparency, and face international condemnation, reductions in foreign aid, and/or public calls that they be treated as a pariah state. Given this environment, how does the presence of international observers affect the elections that they observe?

Current opinion is divided regarding the effects of international observers. Some believe they have no effect, and others argue they deter electoral fraud. Among scholars, some argue that it is impossible for foreigners to walk into a polling station in a developing country and observe fraudulent behavior because their presence is so conspicuous.<sup>66</sup> Others are convinced that international observers are unlikely to deter fraud because they are only invited to elections that are likely to be clean (Carothers

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<sup>64</sup> International standards for elections are not universally agreed upon. However, a number of organizations have produced documents outlining their definitions of universal standards, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the UN Millennium Declaration (2000); the Vienna Declaration (1993); the OSCE's Election Observation Handbook (2005); and the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1994).

<sup>65</sup> Countries that are listed in Lijphart's 1999 *Patterns of Democracy* and that do not receive foreign aid are excluded. Elections included are for national-level leadership, count multiple rounds as one election event, but separate executive and legislative elections that occur on different days as two events.

<sup>66</sup> This statement has not been argued in print, but has been brought up in numerous conversations about the effects of election observation.

2004). Within the democracy promotion community, some tout election observation precisely because it deters fraud, while others stand by international observers' ability to give an accurate evaluation of the level of electoral irregularities (Carothers 2004, 85; Bjornlund 2004, 9 and 161; Middlebrook 1998, 16; European Union 2003; OSCE 2005).

This chapter focuses on the specific question of whether the presence of international observers reduces election day fraud. As argued in the previous chapter, the best way to answer to this question is to use experimental research design. Detecting and measuring the effects of election fraud is notoriously difficult, because “no one who stuffs the ballot box wants to leave a trail of incriminating evidence” (Lehoucq 2003, 233). Fortunately, during the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia, several events coincided to create excellent conditions for a natural experiment that tests whether the presence of international observers reduced the rate of election day fraud.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I introduce the natural experiment as a research method and briefly describe the natural experimental test. I discuss types of fraud, and the possible ways in which international observers influence election fraud. I then provide background on politics in Armenia, details surrounding the 2003 presidential election, and a description of the election observation mission. I then describe in detail the data, the use of natural experimental research design, and the test of whether international observers reduce the rate of election-day fraud. Finally, I present the results from the natural experiment which indicate that, in the case of the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia, international observers reduce election day

fraud by about 6% in the polling stations they visited during the first round, and that the presence of international observers had significant but nuanced effects in the second round.

### **Natural Experimental Design**

The use of experimental methods has achieved renewed popularity in political science and development economics. The distinguishing characteristic of experimental methods vs. observational research is that the central independent variable, or “treatment” variable, is randomly assigned. In field experiments such as those conducted recently by Green and Gerber (2000, 2001), Miguel and Kremer (2004), Wantchekon (2003), and the experiment presented in the previous chapter, the researcher supervises the random assignment of the treatment variable. In natural experiments, the researcher does not manage the assignment of the treatment variable, but natural experiments can only occur when the variable was assigned “as-if” the assignment was random. In natural experiments, the burden rests on the researcher to provide evidence that the treatment can, in fact, be treated “as-if” it was randomly assigned. Existing natural experiments vary in the degree to which the treatment approaches true randomization (Dunning 2005).<sup>67</sup>

I present a natural experiment in which international observers were assigned to polling stations on election day using a method that I did not control, but that comes very close to random assignment. This natural experimental setup allows a test of whether international observers reduced the rate of election day fraud during the 2003

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<sup>67</sup> Dunning arrays natural experiments on a “continuum of plausibility,” on which natural experiments are more plausible than most observational research, and less plausible than researcher-controlled field experiments.



presidential elections in Armenia. If election day fraud occurs, it should have the observable implication of increasing the vote share of the fraud sponsoring candidate. In the case of Armenia, the incumbent sponsored the majority of election day fraud. Therefore, if international observers have no effect on election day fraud, then the incumbent should perform equally well in both groups of polling stations: those that were monitored, and those that were not. If international observers reduce election fraud, the incumbent's vote share should be less in monitored precincts than in unmonitored precincts. The following section explains the focus on election day fraud, the details of how international observers were assigned to polling stations, and background on the presidential elections.

### **Election Fraud**

As the so called “third wave” of democratization spread, the number of countries holding elections increased steadily (Huntington 1991). Over the course of the 1990s, international pressure for internationally certified elections became prevalent, and it became no longer possible for a leader of a developing country<sup>68</sup> to hold an internationally legitimate election without extending an invitation to international observers. However, despite the post-Cold War increase in the percentage of all elections that are observed, many of these elections are not competitive. Electoral autocrats face conflicting interests between pressure to hold internationally certified elections and a need to guarantee their hold on power. Many

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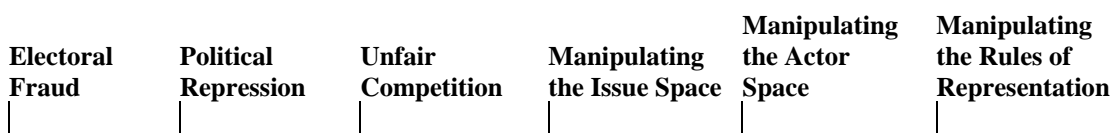
<sup>68</sup> The reference to leaders of developing countries is used reluctantly. The universe of countries included in the study of election observation lacks a good descriptive term. This universe is all countries that hold elections, yet are not widely considered democratic. “Democratizing countries” implies progress in the variables of interest. This group of countries has shifting borders, and although “developing countries” is not entirely accurate, the universe of developing countries overlaps considerably with those countries that hold elections, yet are not widely considered democratic.

incumbents elect to roll the dice and manipulate the election in front of international observers, hoping that the observers will not criticize the election enough to call its legitimacy into question.

Do international observers actually witness electoral fraud? The record of election observation shows a wide variety of electoral manipulation, including direct electoral fraud, conducted in front of international observers. Military intimidation of voters, ballot box stuffing, influence inside the voting booth, vote-buying schemes, intentional inflation of the vote tallies, politically targeted violence, jailing of opposition voters, failure to distribute ballots to opposition strongholds, and manipulation of voter registration lists represent a few of the many types of overt election day fraud that international observers have witnessed first-hand.

Many leaders comply with the letter, if not the spirit, of demands to hold internationally certified elections. Although some formally autocratic countries now allow democratic elections with broad participation on a level playing field, a number of other leaders try to have it both ways, either betting that they will not be caught, or attempting to conceal the manipulation of the election from international observers. There are leaders, such as Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia who have invited international election observers and cheated openly. Other leaders have grown increasingly sophisticated in their methods of electoral manipulation, and attempt to cheat in such a way that international observers are less likely to detect and punish.

Andreas Schedler (2002a) outlines a number of the possible methods of electoral manipulation.<sup>69</sup> They range from direct election day electoral fraud such as ballot box stuffing, to longer-term forms of electoral bias such as gerrymandering.



**Figure 7.1: Continuum of Strategies for Biasing Elections**

This chapter, like Chapter 7, focuses on one class of electoral manipulation: the forms that occur in and around the polling station during the course of election day. Even within this sub-category of electoral manipulation, election day fraud takes many forms, all of which share the characteristic of increasing the vote share for the fraud-sponsoring candidate. Because the fraud sponsoring candidate is typically the incumbent,<sup>70</sup> if fraud is deterred or reduced, the reduction in fraud should be represented in the incumbent's vote share. Depending on the form of election manipulation, this form of fraud reduction could also be reflected in turnout figures. One way that fraud could be reduced is that the presence of international observers in a polling station can motivate corrupt polling station officials to engage in less fraudulent behavior.

Election day deterrence occurs when the presence of a team of international election observers inside a polling station causes the actors at that polling station to

<sup>69</sup> See "The Nested Game of Democratization by Elections," Schedler (2002a). Schedler does not put the strategies on a continuum.

<sup>70</sup> There are a number of exceptions to this generalization. If more than one party or candidate is manipulating the election on election day, their work tends to be regionally focused. If multiple candidates are stuffing the same ballot box, it is more difficult to know who is manipulating the election, but testing for an "observer effect" could still be accomplished through the examination of other variables, such as turnout.

abstain from fraudulent activities. The deterrent effect could occur only while the observers are present or could also persist after the observers leave. This form of election day fraud deterrence is the focus of the natural experiment presented here.

There are other ways that international observers could deter fraud, although they are not tested in this study. The invitation to international observers could make it less likely that a candidate would attempt fraud. Alternatively, they could also increase confidence in the process and make it less likely that voters would be complicit with fraudulent activities such as vote buying or multiple voting.

Alternatively, in cases in which sophisticated or well concealed cheating occurs in advance of election day, election day monitors may have no effect on the existence of fraud. This distinction is difficult to measure empirically because no cheating and effectively concealed cheating are observationally equivalent. This study does not attempt to measure fraud that takes place in advance of election day and focuses on whether international observers deter election day fraud. The following sections provide background on the political climate in Armenia leading up to the 2003 election.

### **Post-Soviet Politics in Armenia**

Since the collapse of Soviet rule, Armenia has gone through many of the motions of a democratizing country, but has not yet experienced truly democratic processes. During the early transition period, one of the political parties successfully orchestrated a power grab which resulted in heavily concentrated power in the executive branch of government. The president can dissolve parliament, appoint all judges, declare martial law, and is generally the controlling force in Armenian politics

(Diamond, 1999, 55). Scholars broadly agree that Armenia has far to go before it can be considered a democracy. However, analysts of Armenia persistently cite the commitment of its citizens, if not its leaders, to democracy (Inglehart 2003).

Armenia's membership in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the corresponding commitments to democratic institutions and practices, has given the OSCE considerable leeway to make recommendations for change in the Armenian political process. A number of constitutional changes and institutional reforms have been implemented since the mid-1990s in an attempt to bring Armenia closer to OSCE standards for democratic government.

However, both of Armenia's two elected presidents have proven to be electoral autocrats. Rather than standing in democratic elections and complying with the rules of their democratic institutions, they have used their position to further seize power from the other branches of government, pad the bank accounts of their friends, and rig the electoral process (Bremmer and Welt 1997).

### **Background on Elections and Political Parties**

Armenia declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, and made this declaration official with a national referendum on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1991. A presidential election was held a month later, and resulted in Armenia's first elected president, Levon Ter-Petrossian. Armenia has held three subsequent presidential elections, in 1996, 1998<sup>71</sup> and 2003. The first parliamentary elections took place in 1990, prior to Armenia's official independence from the Soviet Union. Parliamentary elections again took place in 1995 and 1999. Each of these elections was roundly

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<sup>71</sup> The 1998 election was held following the resignation of President Ter-Petrossian.

criticized by international and domestic observers. Political participation by voters and candidates generally complied with democratic standards, and each election has involved a vigorous country-wide campaign on the part of the major candidates, but open competition in democratic elections has not occurred in any of Armenia's seven national-level elections. International observers from the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) observed and strongly criticized the 1996, 1998 and 1999 elections, and the 2003 elections were viewed as a potential turning point for Armenian democracy. As an OSCE/ODIHR official report stated,

The election provided an important test of the progress of democratic practices in Armenia, since the previous presidential elections were characterized by serious flaws and generally failed to meet international standards. Issues of concern at the two previous presidential elections...included inaccuracy of voter lists, shortcomings in the election administration, media bias, abuse of State resources, flawed voting by military personnel, the presence of unauthorized persons during polling and counting and discrepancies in the vote count. (2003 Presidential Post-Election Report)

Who are the major actors in Armenian politics? The heavy concentration of political power in the executive office allows little room for other influential players outside of the president's office, and therefore there are few other actors with the power to manipulate an election on election day. One alternative source of political power would be a strong political party. However, the political party system in Armenia has not yet consolidated, and as of 2003, there were more than one hundred registered political parties. Various political parties tend to form coalitions or 'blocs' to support presidential candidates and form coalitions within parliament. These

coalitions have proven fluid in Armenia's short democratic history, and the successful political parties are based on a particular candidate rather than on a particular issue platform (OSCE/ODIHR 1999).

The OSCE/ODIHR background information on the 1999 parliamentary elections divides the numerous Armenian political parties into four types: traditional parties, post-independence parties, splinter parties from Armenia's official communist party, and new parties or alliances created for the 1999 elections (OSCE/ODIHR 1999, 7). Traditional parties are defined as those that were formed in the early twentieth century and played a role during the pre-Soviet independence period. Many of these parties maintained support within the Armenia diaspora and were able to re-emerge quickly when independence was gained again in 1990. The post-independence parties formed primarily from dissident groups during the Soviet era. The splinters from the Soviet-era communist party utilize Marxist ideology, and are chiefly led by the Communist Party of Armenia (OSCE/ODIHR 1999). The newer parties formed for the 1999 parliamentary elections were based around the candidacy of popular individuals.

One of the traditional parties dominated the first years of Armenian democratic politics. Immediately upon independence, the Armenia National Movement (ANM) organized quickly with support from abroad and took hold of the relatively fluid handles of power produced during state formation. The ANM supported the candidacy of Ter-Pertrossian, who was elected president in 1991 and reelected in 1996. Once ANM had control of the executive, they were able to develop a solid hold on power (and state resources) while the other opposition parties were still splintered and

disorganized. This lasted for approximately the first eight years of Armenian independence, until Ter-Petrossian stepped down amid wide public dissatisfaction with his inability to increase the standard of living and his willingness to negotiate with Azerbaijan over the territorial conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (Bremmer and Welt 1997).

The parties do not have ethnic affiliations. Unlike a number of other post-Soviet states, ethnic divisions play little role in internal Armenian politics. The Armenian population is ethnically homogenous, with 96% of the approximately three million residents being ethnic Armenian. The next section describes the prominent issues and candidates in the 2003 presidential election.

### **Campaign Issues and 2003 Presidential Candidates**

Are there any other campaign issues that could be used to predict a pattern of the likely vote share for the incumbent? The only issue on the ballot during the 2003 elections was the presidential race. Therefore, in the absence of elections for other offices or other issues on the ballot, the political landscape is more easily simplified than a multi-race election. Economic development is persistently a central issue in Armenian politics, the 2003 elections being no exception. Armenia experienced the highest economic growth rate of any former Soviet state, and by many accounts represents a model of success. However, more than 50% of the Armenian population lives below the poverty line (World Bank WDI 2003). The poorest Armenians have not rallied around one particular political party or movement. They are split between those that look fondly back on Soviet stability and those that benefit from the



liberalization of Armenia's economy.<sup>72</sup> Although all of the presidential candidates discussed economic development as an important campaign issue, their positions were nearly indistinguishable.

Armenian politics are also characterized by violence. Most notably, in 1999, the parliament was attacked by gunmen, and eight politicians were assassinated including Prime Minister Vasken Sarkissian and Speaker of Parliament Karin Demirchian. The 2003 presidential elections were the first national elections to be held after the attack on parliament. A number of other political, government and media officials have been attacked and several have been killed since 1990.

Despite the apparent risks of holding political office in Armenia, fifteen presidential candidates applied to participate in the 2003 elections. Eleven were registered by the Central Election Commission. Two of these candidates withdrew from the race, leaving nine candidates on the ballot. The incumbent president Robert Kocharian was the front runner, and was seriously challenged by Stepan Demirchian, the son of the late Speaker Karin Demirchian who was killed in the 1999 attacks. The other notable challenger was the last Soviet-era mayor of the capital city of Yeveran, Artashes Geghamian.

The conflict with Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region stands as the most prominent issue in Armenian politics. The two countries have a violent history of confrontation in the region, which is part of Azerbaijan but is composed of primarily ethnic Armenians. Between 1988 and 1994, 35,000 people died in the conflict and almost one million became refugees. The territory is still disputed, with Armenia

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<sup>72</sup> *The New York Times*, February 19, 2003. "Rich Armenia vs. Poor Armenia in Presidential Election."

declaring control over it (via military occupation) and Azerbaijan disputing the legitimacy of this claim. Kocharian is a native to the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Prior to serving as the Prime Minister from 1997 to 1998, Kocharian was president of Nagorno-Karabakh. Because he is from the disputed territory, Kocharian is technically a citizen of Azerbaijan.

In 1998, Ter-Petrossian's willingness to negotiate with Azerbaijan over the territory is partly responsible for his resignation from the presidency and Kocharian's succession to his post through the 1999 special presidential elections. Kocharian, as the former president of Nagorno-Karabakh, was seen as a resolute supporter of the independence of the region from Azerbaijan in the 1998 election, and this was again considered the top issue in the 2003 elections.

Kocharian did not have his own political party, and officially ran as an independent. He has been supported by a shifting coalition, which in 2003 included the ruling Republican Party of Armenia and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (also known as "Dashnak" or as the Socialist party). He was also strongly supported by the military, and as a signal of this support, during the 2003 elections, he appointed the Defense Minister as his campaign manager. Prior to the election, Kocharian also enjoyed the support of Vladimir Putin in Russia and George W. Bush in the United States. Although his tough stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is his most defining characteristic, he also campaigned in 2003 on the promise of economic stability, as did all of the candidates.

Demirchian's candidacy was supported by the Unity bloc (*Miasnutian*), which consisted mainly of communist-associated parties led by the People's Party of

Armenia. The Unity bloc previously included the Republican Party of Armenia, but this coalition collapsed after the 1999 attack on parliament when the leaders of the two main coalition members were killed. Demirchian's father was defeated by Kocharian in the 1998 second round runoff. The younger Demirchian's political success is largely credited with his physical resemblance to his father, as he is considered to lack his father's political instincts.<sup>73</sup>

Geghamian was the leader of the National Unity Party at the time of the 2003 elections, which was one of the more prominent opposition parties. He had not held any official post in government since his term as mayor of Yeveran, and this status of an 'untainted' politician increased his popularity among Armenian voters.<sup>74</sup> However, critics highlighted Demirchian and Geghamian's failure to lead the opposition to unite around one candidate in order to challenge Kocharian. The two rivals were also criticized for overtly attempting to link Kocharian to the 1999 attack on parliament. No evidence of this link had been produced, but the opposition candidates persisted in using this strategy in an attempt to discredit Kocharian, even after it failed to resonate with voters.

### **The 2003 Presidential Elections in Armenia**

The first round of the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia took place on February 19 followed by a runoff on March 5. As mentioned, the incumbent president, Robert Kocharian, ran against eight challengers in the first round. The Armenian constitution requires a second round runoff if no presidential candidate garners more

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<sup>73</sup> *Financial Times*, Dec. 11, 2002

<sup>74</sup> *Financial Times*, Dec. 11, 2002

than 50% of the vote in the first round in the single-district national election. The official first round vote share for Kocharian was 49.48%, thus triggering a run-off election.

Several months prior to the election, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) to send an international election observation mission. The delegation from the OSCE included members of the Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe. The OSCE had previous experience monitoring the 1999 parliamentary elections and the 1996 and 1998 presidential elections.

In the first round of the election, the OSCE deployed 233 observers from 35 OSCE member countries. The second round was observed by 193 short term observers from 21 participating states.

There are three features of the Armenian election process that allow a test of whether the presence of international observers deters electoral fraud at the local level. First, widespread fraud occurred on election day. As stated earlier, fraud (and therefore fraud deterrence) can take place at many points in the electoral process. However, it would be difficult to test for an election day deterrent effect if election day fraud did not occur. The Armenia case is ideal because the incumbent invited international observers and still orchestrated widespread electoral fraud, thus making it possible to test for an election day deterrent effect at the local level. The individuals who committed election day fraud on behalf of Kocharian were inventive, although

not very discrete. As the Economist described it, the 2003 election was “one of the dirtiest even Armenians can remember.”<sup>75</sup>

There were eyewitness reports from international observers, domestic observers, and journalists of many types of election day fraud. The OSCE/ODIHR observed “significant irregularities” in more than 10% of the polling stations that they visited, the most blatant of which were ballot-box stuffing, “carousel” voting,<sup>76</sup> direct vote buying, individuals voting more than once, the intimidation of political party witnesses, the presence of government officials inside polling stations who attempted to intimidate officials and voters, and one isolated incident of the removal of more than 50 passports by a policeman from a polling station. During the counting process there were numerous attempts at changing the vote totals by the polling station officials, and observers recorded additional evidence of blatant ballot box stuffing. In some cases the international observers were restricted from observing the counting process.

Therefore, during the 2003 elections, it is possible to test the hypothesis that the presence of a team of international observers in a polling station caused polling station officials to slow down their rate of ballot box stuffing, vote buying, and intimidation of voters inside the polling station, at least while the international observers were present.

The second characteristic of the 2003 presidential elections that makes a test of election day fraud possible is that the Armenian Central Election Commission made

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<sup>75</sup> The Economist, Feb 22, 2003, US Edition.

<sup>76</sup> “Carousel voting,” as referred to by the OSCE report, was originally termed the “Tasmanian Dodge.”

disaggregated election results available. The process of recording and making public polling station level election results requires a certain level of sophistication on the part of the election administration that is not always present in developing democracies. A number of developed democracies do not provide this information in a centralized and coordinated manner, and in countries which experience significant amounts of electoral fraud, these data are often intentionally “lost” or kept private. The Armenian election data, disaggregated to the polling station level, are made public by the government on their website (<[www.elections.am](http://www.elections.am)>). Without the availability of polling station level official election results, this natural experiment would not be possible.

The third and most important favorable feature of the Armenian elections is that the international observers were assigned in such a way that is very close to random. This makes the use of natural experimental design possible. The OSCE/ODIHR mission did not deliberately assign their observers randomly, but their method approximates randomization. They assigned each observer team a specific list of polling stations, selected each team’s assignment of polling stations arbitrarily from a complete list of polling stations, and did not possess information about polling station attributes that would have allowed them to choose polling stations on criteria that would have predicted voting patterns. Based on conversations I have had with staff and participants in the OSCE observation mission to Armenia, the method used to assign observers to polling stations is functionally equivalent to random assignment. Most importantly, it is highly unlikely that the method used by the OSCE to choose polling stations is correlated with any of the variables of interest.

Since the validity of this natural experiment rests upon this point, I will take some time to support it. In this particular election, the delegation leaders gave each team of short term observers a pre-assigned list of polling stations to visit during election day. These lists were made with two objectives in mind: 1) to spread the observers out over the entire country (including rural and urban areas) and 2) to give each observer team a list of polling stations that did not overlap with other teams. Observers were heavily encouraged to stick to these lists, and travel between polling stations in a way that minimized travel time over the course of election day and still ensured coverage in both urban and rural areas. Importantly for the validity of the natural experiment, their travel routes would not have been predictable by external observers, in particular by government officials.

The individuals that made these lists had no other knowledge of polling station characteristics other than their geographic location. This is crucial to the validity of the natural experiment. If the assignment of observers had been done with consideration to other variables that might be correlated with performance of the incumbent candidate, then the assignment cannot be considered random. In addition, the preceding discussion of Armenian politics showed few observable characteristics of the population that might be correlated with the incumbent's popularity. The staff of the delegation to Armenia from the OSCE who made the lists did not have access to disaggregated data on the demographic characteristics of Armenian politics. OSCE/ODIHR staff members have assured me that they had no desire to (and did not) choose polling stations on any basis other than the two criteria above. In addition, even if this was not true, it is highly unlikely that the mission's office had the

capability to choose polling stations that were more or less likely to favor the incumbent or the opposition candidates, or more likely to experience fraud. The fact that Armenian politics are not clearly divided along demographic lines underscores that this type of selection bias in the assignment of international observers would have required enormous effort, access to data that does not exist, and foresight about the trajectory of Armenian politics that would be very unusual for a foreigner to possess.

As mentioned, each observer team was given a list of specific polling stations to visit during the course of election day. The justification for this polling station level assignment was ostensibly to prevent overlap between observer teams, but it had another important side effect. Assigning specific polling stations to each team cut out much of the agency on the part of individual observer teams who, in the absence of a directive, could choose to visit polling sites based on their own selection criteria within a more general geographic area. When observers are given leeway in choosing polling stations, the two most common alternative selection criteria (based on other observation missions outside of Armenia) are to choose polling stations that are either “convenient” or “interesting.” Each of these decision criteria may create significant observation bias. This has been pointed out as a problem by several critics of election observation (Geisler 1993, Carothers 1997). Observer teams that select “interesting” polling stations typically go to areas in which problems are expected, and teams using this decision rule may disproportionately observe and report irregularities. This is a common strategy among the more ambitious and enthusiastic international observers, but was discouraged in this particular case.



Observer teams that go to “convenient” areas are hotly criticized for being electoral tourists. This was more common in early election observation, although it seems to have continued as a favorite point to criticize in other observer groups. For example, one particular group of international observers in Indonesia was accused of spending a disproportionate amount of observation-time near the vacation hot-spot beaches of Bali rather than covering the nearby inland towns. Other “convenient” selection methods may be walking around the hotel in the most comfortable areas of a major urban area, or going to polling stations that are near the observers’ favorite restaurants or tourist destinations. Clearly, these selection criteria are non-random, and could lead to considerable bias in both the observers’ reported observations as well as in the natural experiment proposed in this chapter, particularly because a clever incumbent could recognize the tendency of observers to stick to certain areas and focus their electoral manipulation in places that observers were unlikely to go. For these reasons it was particularly important for this natural experiment that this type of observer agency was explicitly discouraged.

Given the lists of polling stations for each team, and the encouragement by the OSCE to stick to these lists, there is still one possible reason that observers would not have followed instructions. Even if observers stuck to their lists of arbitrarily selected polling stations, it is likely that there were some polling stations that were difficult to locate. If this was the case, then it is possible that there was a bias in the application of the intended treatment against polling stations that were difficult to find. This would lead to a biased test if and only if polling stations that were difficult for foreign observers to find were systematically related to support for a particular candidate.

Since observers were assigned the task of finding specific polling stations, it is unlikely that they dismissed polling stations based on any other systematic criteria such as urban or rural location. It is more likely that difficulty in locating polling stations was stochastic, although it is difficult to demonstrate this with the available information.

In sum, the assignment of international observers to polling stations for both rounds of the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia is very close to random assignment. The selection was made with only geographic logistics in mind, and the assignment was completed with no knowledge of variables that might be correlated with the incumbent's likely vote share.

Ideally, in any experimental research design the assignment of the treatment could be examined in relation to a background covariate in order to check for balance between the treatment and control groups. In this case, the ideal covariate would be an independent measure of each candidate's likely vote share, such as public opinion polling. These data are not available for Armenia. The closest to a check on this claim of near-random assignment is to examine the distribution of observers by population and geographic area. Table 1 shows the distribution of observers by region. Coverage varies by region from a low of 28% of polling stations monitored in Aragatsotn to 69.59% of polling stations monitored in the capitol of Yerevan. Table 1 also shows the voting population and voting density of each region (voters/ km<sup>2</sup>). The last column of Table 1 shows that there is relative balance in the monitored polling stations per voter in each region, also suggesting balance in the treatment and control groups on the urban-rural dimension.

Syunik and Vayots Dzor are the most sparsely populated regions in Armenia, and also border the Karabakh conflict region with Azerbaijan. Not surprisingly, this is Kocharian's highest region of support. Both of these regions were well covered by international observers, and neither appears to be an outlier in the distribution of observers.

As some election observation missions have been criticized for only observing in urban areas, the OSCE paid close attention to this pitfall. Not only did the OSCE mission observe in all regions of Armenia, including the most rural, they also had relatively good coverage in rural areas within those regions. To demonstrate this point, I define an urban polling station in Armenia as one that is in the region of Yerevan, is a capitol city of one of the regions, or is one of the seven biggest cities (population > 40,000). All other polling stations are non-urban, which includes rural and peri-urban polling stations. Using these criteria, 55% of all polling stations are urban. In the first round of the election, international observers visited 62% urban polling stations, and 65% urban in the second round. Given that there are more voters in each urban polling station, observers covered non-urban polling extensively.

**Table 7.1: Round 1 Observer Coverage by Region**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Total Polling stations</b>	<b>Percent Monitored</b>	<b>Mean Voters/ Polling Station</b>	<b>Monitored PS/Voter</b>
Aragatsotn	133	27.82%	701	0.00040
Ararat	137	53.28%	1355	0.00039
Armavir	153	38.56%	1219	0.00029
Gegharkunik	148	32.43%	1140	0.00028
Kotayk	132	43.18%	1429	0.00027
Lori	226	33.63%	1059	0.00032
Shirak	273	25.64%	907	0.00034
Syunik	54	37.04%	859	0.00016
Tavush	80	28.75%	1152	0.00025
Vayots Dzor	40	37.50%	1017	0.00040
Yerevan	388	69.59%	1751	0.00036

There are a few other points about election observation methodology that are not unique to Armenia, but are still important components of the validity of this natural experimental design. First, international observers never pre-announce where they will observe on election day. This is standard practice for all reputable international observer groups, and is intended to increase the safety of the observers by making it difficult for potential attackers to anticipate the location of their targets. It also makes it difficult for the contestants to simply cheat in polling stations where international observers will not observe, or anticipate the arrival of observers.

Second, international observers are mobile, moving from polling station to polling station throughout election day. During the course of one day, an observer team may visit ten to twenty-five polling stations based on the length of the election day and the distance between polling stations. Critics of election observation are fond of pointing out that it would be very difficult to catch any irregularities in twenty

minutes of observation. This argument is convincing on the surface, but to experienced international election observers it carries little weight. If there are ongoing problems or “red-flags” that indicate there might be problems, observer teams are instructed to stay for as long as they think is useful, which in some cases is several hours (although they are not permitted to interfere in the electoral process in any way). Second, the partisan witnesses in each polling station<sup>77</sup> are stationary, remaining in the same polling station throughout the day, and are often eager to report any irregularities to the international observers. Third, the questionnaires filled out by international observers include a number of observations related to the structure of the polling station, the available staff, and the order of voting procedures, which are immediately obvious. If the seal on the ballot box has been broken, international observers are most likely to see this, and other evidence of fraud, immediately upon walking into a polling station. Finally, spending more than thirty minutes in a polling station in which things are running smoothly can be, in the words of one experience international observer, “like watching paint dry.”

### **The Natural Experiment Research Design in Armenia**

In the 2003 elections, voters and observers expected Kocharian to commit electoral fraud because he had done so in the 1998 elections, as had his predecessor, Ter-Petrossian, in the 1990 and 1996 elections. Widespread incumbent-sponsored election day fraud was already something of a tradition in Armenian politics. Yet, as a condition of membership in the OSCE, the incumbent was required to invite and permit the operation of a full sized delegation of OSCE observers.

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<sup>77</sup> The presence of which is relatively standard practice in developing democracies.

The potential deterrent effect of international observers was unknown, and it is likely that neither the incumbent nor the observers were certain regarding whether, or to what degree, international observers would deter fraud on election day. The 2003 elections in Armenia set up the conditions for a natural experiment which tests for local fraud deterrence. The central measurable effect of observers on election day fraud is to decrease the vote share for the incumbent. Holding all else constant, if international observers did in fact deter fraud at the polling stations they visited, then the incumbent should perform worse in observed polling stations. Random assignment (or “as-if” random assignment) of the treatment of international observers is equivalent to holding all else constant, and is preferred to traditional regression analysis that is the norm in political science (Green and Gerber 2002). It is also necessary in this case because the data do not exist for traditional regression. The covariates that would normally be associated with the regional distribution of an incumbent’s vote total, such as polling station level public opinion polling or demographic data, are not available for the case of Armenia. Therefore, because fraud increases the incumbent’s vote share, the dependent variable used throughout this natural experiment is the share of the vote for Kocharian.

Because the international observers can be considered randomly assigned to polling stations, and there were two rounds of the presidential election, the natural experimental design involves two rounds of treatment and two observations of Kocharian’s performance (vote share). The international observers went to different polling stations in each round of the election, but had some overlap between rounds. This divides the sample of polling station level election results into four experimental

groups based on the treatment of international observation during the course of election day: one group of polling stations was never monitored, one group was monitored only in the first round, one only in the second round, and one group was monitored in both rounds. For a summary of the number of polling stations in each group, see Table 7.2.

Groups of polling stations received all possible combinations of the international observer treatment, including no treatment in either round. Therefore the natural experiment also allows a test of whether first round treatment has any lasting effect in the second round. The following section tests two specific questions. Did international observers deter fraud in either round of the 2003 Armenian presidential elections? If so, how large was the effect?

**Table 7.2: Number of Polling Stations in Each Experimental Group**

	International Observers NOT Present in Round One	International Observers Present in Round One	Total
International Observers NOT Present in Round Two	755 Never Observed	385 Observed only in Round One	1140
International Observers Present in Round Two	260 Observed only in Round Two	363 Observed in Both Rounds	623
Total	1015	748	1763

Table 7.2 shows that a large number of polling stations fall into each of the four categories relative to the total number of polling stations in Armenia.

Approximately 43% of polling stations were not observed in either round of the

election, and about 21% were observed in both rounds. Polling stations were not equally likely to be visited in both rounds. Outside of the Yerevan region (where polling stations were equally likely to be visited in both rounds) polling stations that were visited in Round One were twice as likely to be visited again in Round Two.<sup>78</sup> This is likely due to the previously mentioned problem that some polling stations are simply more difficult to find.

All experimental designs contain an experimental unit, factors, and levels of the factor. In this case, the experimental units are polling stations. The factors are the presence of international observers during voting in the first and second rounds of the 2004 presidential election in Armenia. The dependent variable is the vote share for the incumbent presidential candidate, Kocharian. Depending on the comparison that is being made, as dictated by the experimental design, three different forms of Kocharian's vote share are used. If the test compares groups separated by first round treatment, the dependent variable is the mean vote share for Kocharian in the first round. If the test is between groups separated by second round treatment, the dependent variable is the mean vote share for Kocharian in the second round. If the test is between groups separated by a combination of first and second round treatments, the dependent variable is the average combined vote share for Kocharian in both rounds.

For clarity, the dependent variable used in each difference of means test is reported along with the results. Table 7.3 outlines the natural experimental design. The "R" in the first column indicates that each group was randomly assigned. An "X" in

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<sup>78</sup> I am grateful to Alan Gerber for making this point.



the second or fourth columns indicates that the group received the treatment of international observers in either the first or second rounds of the election. The third and fifth columns indicate a group-wide observation, which in this case is the average vote share for Kocharian across the sub-group of polling stations.

**Table 7.3: Setup of Natural Experimental Design**

	Monitored Jan-03 Round 1	Kocharian Vote Share Jan-03	Monitored Mar-03 Round 2	Kocharian Vote Share Mar-03
R		O <sub>1</sub>		O <sub>5</sub>
R	X	O <sub>2</sub>		O <sub>6</sub>
R		O <sub>3</sub>	X	O <sub>7</sub>
R	X	O <sub>4</sub>	X	O <sub>8</sub>

A series of two-sample difference of means tests will show whether international observers deter fraud, and if so, to what degree. A difference of means test, or t-test, compares two groups of observations and tests the hypothesis that the mean of the two groups is identical. The test assumes equal variances between the two groups, and computes the result in terms of a specific confidence interval (in this case 95%), and provides a test of the following hypothesis.

**H1: If international observers reduce election day fraud, the mean vote share for Kocharian will be greater in polling stations that were not monitored than in those that were monitored.**

**H1<sub>0</sub>: If international observers do not reduce election day fraud, the mean vote share for Kocharian will be equal between polling stations that were not monitored and those that were monitored.**

Kocharian is widely thought to be the only candidate with the resources to significantly manipulate the election. Also, reports surrounding the election only point

to electoral manipulation on his part. There are no reports that any of the other eight candidates were committing significant election day fraud. The data presented in Table 7.4 supports this claim with the election results. Kocharian is the only candidate to do significantly better in polling stations where monitors were not present. In polling stations where international observers were absent, Kocharian received 5.9% more of the vote than in monitored polling stations. The only other candidate to do better in unmonitored polling stations was Sargsian, who received only .04% more of the vote in unmonitored polling stations. The size of the difference between monitored and unmonitored polling stations is significantly greater for Kocharian than for all other candidates.

**Table 7.4. Vote Share by Candidate**

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Average % of Vote Share with monitors</b>	<b>Average % of Vote Share Without monitors</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Total Average % Vote</b>
Avagian	0.40	0.39	0.01	0.40
Geghamian	17.95	14.91	3.04	16.34
Demirchian	28.95	26.60	2.34	27.71
Karapetian	3.08	2.70	0.38	2.88
Harutyunian	0.09	0.07	0.02	0.08
Manukian	0.93	0.72	0.21	0.82
Margarian	0.06	0.05	0.01	0.05
Sargsian	0.23	0.27	-0.04	0.25
Kocharian (INC)	48.30	54.20	<b>-5.88</b>	51.43

In addition, Table 7.4 shows that the additional vote share in favor of Kocharian reduced Geghamian's vote share disproportionately more than Demirchian's. Although Table 7.4 shows initial evidence of fraud on the part of Kocharian (and conversely demonstrates election day deterrence of this fraud on the part of the international observers), it does not provide any measure of statistical

significance. The results in Table 7.5 provide the results from the difference of means tests, and show how international observers influenced electoral manipulation in the polling stations that they observed.

To illustrate, the first comparison shown in Table 7.5 is the average Round 1 vote share received by Kocharian across all un-observed polling stations compared with the average vote share for Kocharian in all observed polling stations in R1. The parenthetical in columns 2 and 4 refer to whether the percentage is in terms of Kocharian's Round 1 vote share, his Round 2 vote share, or an average across both rounds. For quick comparison, the last column presents the difference between the two groups (again in terms of Kocharian's vote share), along with indicators of statistical significance.

**Table 7.5: Difference of Means Tests Comparing Pairs of Groups**

	<b>Average incumbent vote share among polling stations that were...</b>	<b>vs.</b>	<b>Average incumbent vote share among polling stations that were...</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1.	Not observed in R1 <b>54.2%</b> (R1 vote share)	vs.	Observed in R1 <b>48.3%</b> (R1 vote share)	<b>5.9%</b> $t(1761)=5.92$ $P> t =0.00$
2.	Not observed in R2 <b>69.3%</b> (R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed in R2 <b>67.3%</b> (R2 vote share)	<b>1.98%</b> $t(1763)=2.47$ $P> t =0.014$
3.	Never observed <b>70.7%</b> (R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed in both R1 and R2 <b>66.2%</b> (R2 vote share)	<b>4.5%</b> $t(1116)=4.48$ $P> t =0.00$
4.	Never observed <b>62.8%</b> (Average of R1 and R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed in both R1 and R2 <b>57%</b> (Average of R1 and R2 vote share)	<b>5.8%</b> $t(1116)=4.48$ $P> t =0.00$
5.	Never observed <b>62.7%</b> (Average of R1 and R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed in one or both rounds <b>58.1%</b> (Average of R1 and R2 vote share)	<b>4.6%</b> $t(1761)=5.65$ $P> t =0.00$
6.	Never observed <b>70.7%</b> (R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed only in R1 <b>66.3%</b> (R2 vote share)	<b>4.4%</b> $t(1138)=4.40$ $P> t =0.00$
7.	Never observed <b>70.7%</b> (R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed only in R2 <b>68.7%</b> (R2 vote share)	<b>2.01%</b> $t(1013)=1.73$ $P> t =0.084$
8.	Observed only in R2 <b>68.7%</b> (R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed in both R1 and R2 <b>66.2%</b> (R2 vote share)	<b>2.5%</b> $t(621)=1.93$ $P> t =0.054$
9.	Observed in both R1 and R2 <b>66.3%</b> (R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed only in R1 <b>66.2%</b> (R2 vote share)	<b>.11%</b> $t(746)=0.094$ $P> t =0.93$
10.	Observed only in R1 <b>68.7%</b> (R2 vote share)	vs.	Observed only in R2 <b>66.3%</b> (R2 vote share)	<b>2.4%</b> $t(643)=1.83$ $P> t =0.067$

**Note: Reported results reflect two-sample t-tests with assumed equal variance.**

### **Difference of Means Tests**

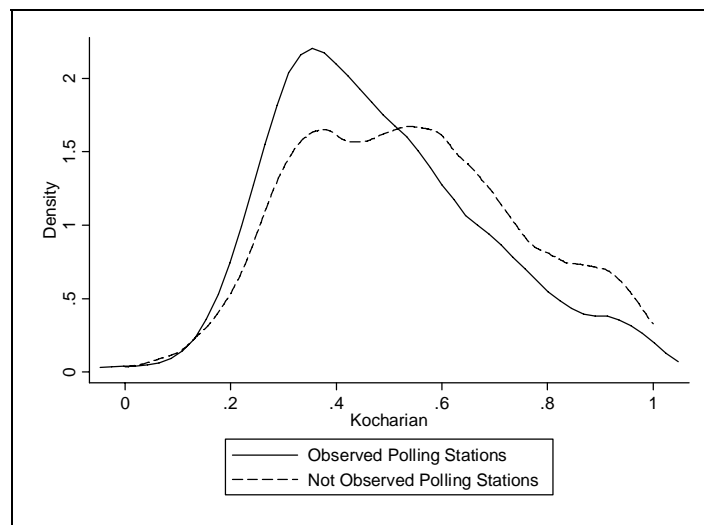
The results presented in Table 7.5 show clear evidence that during the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia, the presence of international observers reduced the share of the vote for the incumbent politician by at least 5.9% in the first round, and by more than 2% in the second round. This allows a rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no difference between observed and unobserved polling stations.

In addition to testing whether international observers deterred election day fraud (and to what degree there is an effect) the difference of means tests also show whether the presence of international observers had a transitory or persistent effect. A transitory effect is similar to the effect of a pain killer on a headache. The treatment only affects one headache, and has no effect on subsequent headaches. A persistent treatment has a more lasting effect, such as an injection to relieve persistent migraines. In the case presented here in which there were two rounds of the election, it appears that a visit by monitors in the first round is a substitute for observation in the second round. First round observation had a persistent effect on second round election-day fraud, and the Round 2 incumbent vote share is approximately equal between those polling stations that were only monitored in Round 1 and those that were only monitored in Round 2, and both of these groups are significantly different from those that were never monitored. As the following discussion demonstrates, international observers had both transitory and persistent effects.

### **Transitory Effects**

Tests 1 and 2 from Table 7.5 examine whether international observers have a direct effect on election fraud. In the language of experiments, the first two tests let us

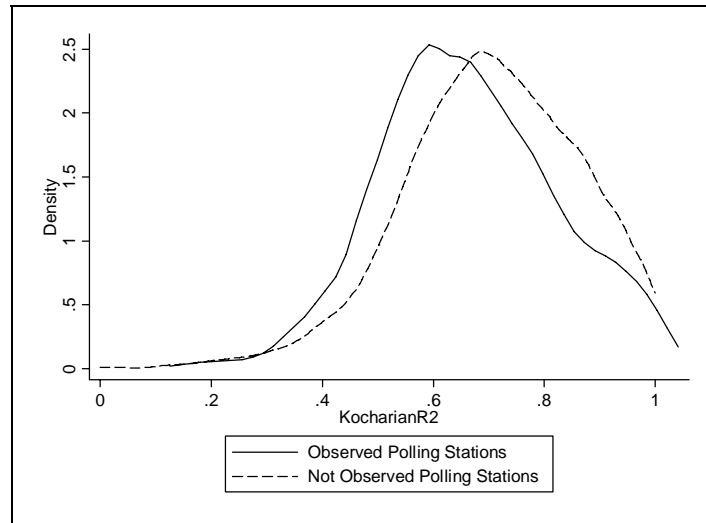
know whether the treatment of international observers has a transitory effect on the rate of electoral fraud. The first difference of means test compares the incumbent's performance in the first round between unmonitored and monitored polling stations. The incumbent did about 6% better in polling stations without international observers, suggesting that the presence of international observers in Round 1 deterred fraud by 6%, plus or minus 2%. This difference is presented graphically in Figure 7.2. The level of statistical significance is high, lending strong support to the hypothesis that international observers deterred local election-day fraud. In the second round, Test 2 shows that the deterrent effect of observers continued, but was less pronounced. The incumbent performed about 2% better in polling stations where observers were not present. However, Test 2 does not control for any persistent effects that first round observation may have had.



**Figure 7.2: Kernel Density Plot Comparing Round One Incumbent Vote Share**

Tests 3 and 4 compare the two groups of polling stations that received the same treatment in both rounds (never monitored vs. monitored in both rounds). Test 3 compares the Round 2 incumbent vote share between polling stations that were never

monitored and polling stations that were monitored in both rounds. In this comparison, the incumbent received 4.5% more of the vote in unobserved polling stations, plus or minus 1.6%. Figure 7.3 presents a kernel density plot of this comparison.



**Figure 7.3: Kernel Density Plot Comparing Round Two Vote Share**  
**Note: Solid lines are polling stations that are always observed, dashed line are polling stations that are never observed.**

Similarly, Test 4 makes the same comparison using the two round average vote share, and shows a similar result. There is a 5.8% difference in average vote share for the incumbent. In other words, averaging the vote shares of both rounds, the incumbent did 5.8% better in polling stations that were never monitored relative to those that were monitored in both rounds of the election. Together, Tests 3 and 4 provide more nuanced empirical support that international observers had a strong deterrent effect on the incidence of election day fraud.

Test 5 adds one additional piece of support for the hypothesis that observers deterred election day fraud. Test 5 uses the average vote share for both rounds, and shows that over the course of the election, the incumbent received 4.6% more of the

vote in polling stations that were not monitored in either round compared to the average of all other polling stations.

### **Persistent Effects**

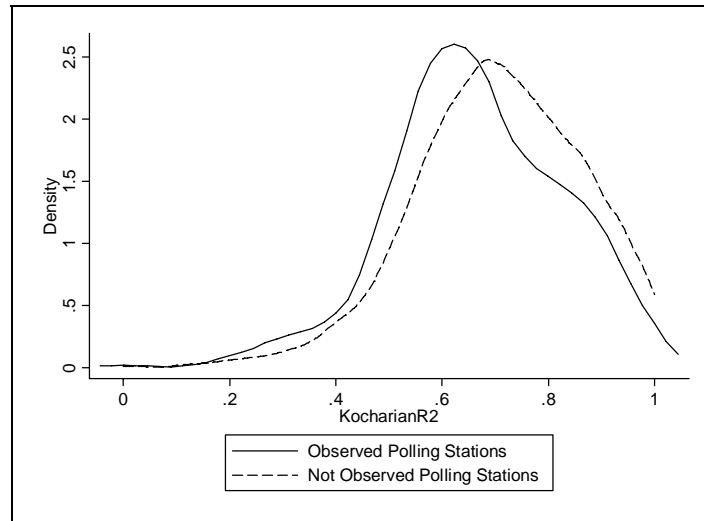
The second set of tests examines the possibility that the presence of international observers in the first round had a persistent effect in the second round. If the effect of international observers was persistent, or had lasting effects on fraudulent behavior, the polling stations that were monitored in the first round should be less likely to experience fraud in the second round.

The information provided by looking at Tests 2 and 3 strongly suggests that monitoring had a persistent effect on local election fraud. If first round observation had no effect on second round fraud, then the difference in the incumbent vote share should be about the same in the two tests. When polling stations that were monitored in Round 1 but not in Round 2 are included in the non-monitored group, as in Test 2, the observed deterrent effect shrinks by more than half, from 4.5% to 1.98%.

In order to test whether the treatment of first round monitoring had a persistent deterrent effect on fraud in the second round of the election, Test 6 compares the Round 2 vote share between two groups that were not monitored in the second round. One group was monitored only in the first round; the other group was not monitored in either round. The result of this test shows considerable support for the hypothesis that the presence of international observers had a persistent deterrent effect on electoral fraud. The presence of international observers in the first round is associated with a decrease in the incumbent's second round vote share by 4.4% (see Figure 7.4). This



implies that polling station officials who were visited by international observers in the first round were less likely to commit fraud in the second round.



**Figure 7.4: Kernel Density Plot Comparing Round Two Vote Share for Polling Stations Not Observed in Round Two**

**Note: All polling stations in this comparison were not observed in Round 2. The solid line represents the group of polling stations that observed in Round 1.**

Is the second round deterrent effect driven by the persistent effect of first round treatment? By comparing the Round 2 vote share from the group of polling stations that were only monitored in the second round with the group of polling stations that were only monitored in the first round, this question can be tested. If there is a deterrent effect of monitors on fraud in the second round that is independent of the effect of first round observation, one would expect that the incumbent would do worse in monitored polling stations. In Test 7, the incumbent does perform about two percent worse in monitored polling stations, but the difference is not statistically significant. The Round 2 deterrent effect is not completely driven by the Round 1 treatment, but the Round 1 treatment does influence the rate of fraud in the second round.

Test 8 compares the Round 2 vote between polling stations that were monitored in both rounds with those that were only monitored in Round 2. The difference of means test shows a slight difference between the two groups that does not achieve statistical significance. If it was significant, it would suggest that even within second round monitored polling stations, those that were monitored in the first round experience less fraud. The incumbent did 2.5% better in second round vote share in the polling stations that were only monitored in the second round. This result suggests that if first round monitoring took place then second round monitoring only has a marginal additional deterrent effect.

Within first round monitored polling stations Test 9, like Test 8, shows additional support that if international observers were present in Round 1, Round 2 monitoring makes little difference. Is there a difference in second round results between those monitored only in the first round and those monitored only in the second round? Test 10 shows a small difference (2.4%) that is not statistically significant. This test indicates that there is little difference between the two groups that were only monitored once, regardless of whether the monitoring took place in the first round or the second round.

### **Potential Covariates**

Even though international observers were assigned as though they were random, and in theory random assignment controls for possible covariates, it is still preferable to test whether other variables that could influence the incumbent's vote share drive the results. The two most likely alternative explanations for which data are available are the urban-rural split, and whether a given polling station is located in one

of the regions which border Nagorno-Karabakh. If Kocharian performed disproportionately well in rural areas, and the selection of polling stations included a disproportionate number of urban polling stations, then it is possible that Kocharian's support in rural areas could be driving the difference between monitored and unmonitored polling stations. Alternatively, because Kocharian is a native of Nagorno-Karabakh and he is enormously popular there, the results could be driven by disproportionately high support in Nagorno-Karabakh and observer bias away from this region.

Table 7.6 presents the results of difference of means tests between the groups. For space-saving, the only results presented are for the dependent variable of the first round vote share for Kocharian. The other dependent variables (Round 2 vote share and average vote share between rounds) are consistent with the results presented below.

**Table 7.6: Difference of Means Tests of Round One Kocharian Vote Share**

	<b>Monitored (N)</b>	<b>Not Monitored (N)</b>	<b>Difference (Std. Err.)*</b>
<b>Urban</b>	<b>46.5% (463)</b>	<b>54.3% (516)</b>	<b>7.8%</b> t=6.46 P> t  =0.00
<b>Non-Urban</b>	51.2% (285)	54.0% (500)	2.8% t=1.67 P> t  =0.095
<b>Adjacent to Nagorno- Karabakh</b>	74.4% (35)	71.0% (59)	-3.4% t=-0.09 P> t  =0.37
<b>Not Adjacent to Nagorno- Karabakh</b>	<b>47.0% (713)</b>	<b>53.2% (957)</b>	<b>6.1%</b> t=6.14 P> t  =0.00

**Note: Reported results reflect two-sample t-tests with equal variances. If the null hypothesis can be rejected, that the difference between groups is not significantly different from zero, the difference is reported in bold.**

Table 7.6 shows that the reported differences in average Kocharian vote share between monitored and unmonitored polling stations are not driven by urban-rural bias or by voters in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The first two rows of Table 7.6 show that the observed deterrent effect of observers is not a byproduct of the differences in Kocharian's vote share between urban and non-urban areas. If Kocharian's high performance in rural areas were driving the main results, then the difference in Kocharian's performance between monitored and unmonitored polling stations should disappear when rural areas are excluded. In fact, it appears that the deterrent effect is stronger in urban areas than in non-urban areas. This disproves the alternative hypothesis that the incumbent simply did better in rural areas, and international observers disproportionately observed in urban areas.

Similarly, the second two rows of Table 7.6 show that the observed deterrent effect of observers is not driven by unusually high support in the regions most affected by the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. If assignment was biased away from the Kocharian stronghold of Nagorno-Karabakh, the nationwide results could be biased. Table 7.6 shows that the results hold in the regions outside of the region of Kocharian's highest support. Row 3 does show a somewhat puzzling finding. Kocharian does about 3% better in precincts that were visited by observers in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, but the difference between these two groups is not statistically significant and is likely the result of the small sample and several outliers. In the two regions adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh, there were seven polling stations where Kocharian received more than 90% of the vote, and in two of these he was reported to have received more than 95%.<sup>79</sup> Out of the 35 observed polling stations in the two districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh, these outliers are the most likely explanation for the initially puzzling finding.

Most importantly, Table 7.6 shows that the two most plausible alternative explanations do not hold. First, international observers deterred election day fraud in urban areas at an even higher rate than anticipated. Second, Kocharian's highest region of support, although exhibiting a rather odd pattern, is not driving the results.

In summary, the first round deterrent effect is consistently present in comparisons between monitored and unmonitored groups. International observation in

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<sup>79</sup> Another way to present the test is to use ANOVA and include regional dummies. This test is similar to the t-test, but allows more than one independent variable. Unfortunately, the significance test of the difference between groups does not provide a sign, and therefore provides no information about the direction of the difference between the two groups. However, because it allows more control variables it is therefore the appropriate means to look at regional controls. The test shows that R1 monitored still has a significant effect on Kocharian's vote share (F of 2.73), even with regional controls.

the second round shows a less pronounced deterrent effect, and appears to be somewhat affected by first round observation. Why might there be a persistent effect? One characteristic of the Armenian elections that has not yet been noted is that the commission charged with administering the election had recently undergone significant restructuring. The restructuring was such that most of the polling station administrators were selected just before the 2003 presidential elections, making them relatively inexperienced with international observers. There were numerous allegations in the OSCE/ODIHR report of attempts by local leaders and supporters of the incumbent president to intimidate and manipulate the opposition polling station administrators.

Unfortunately, data identifying the political loyalties of each polling station chairperson are not available, but the available evidence suggests that approximately 90% of polling station chairs were loyal to Kocharian. The 2002 OSCE reports following the restructuring of the election administration suggest that the new rules governing the appointment of polling station officials heavily favored the incumbent during the 2003 elections. The percentage of the officials that favored the incumbent is not known for the presidential election, but in the May 2003 parliamentary election the OSCE/ODIHR reported that 90% of the polling stations visited by international observers were chaired by an individual who was local to Kocharian, and the report also suggests that there was little change since the presidential election three months prior.

## Discussion

This natural experimental design has provided a unique test of whether international observers can reduce election day fraud. The evidence presented above shows that the presence of international observers depressed the incumbent's Round 1 average vote percentage by 6% in polling stations that were observed. Since the incumbent was only 0.52% away from avoiding a Round 2 runoff, and the average vote for the incumbent in the areas that were not observed was 54%, international observers may have been responsible for triggering a second round of competition. This claim requires careful consideration. Newspapers on the day of the election predicted that Kocharian would pull off a victory, and would avoid a runoff. Accusations of Kocharian's electoral manipulation ahead of election day were already widely reported. Amidst the already charged atmosphere surrounding the election, and Kocharian's desire to play the election game (if not obey all the rules), it is possible that Kocharian engineered a last minute reduction in his vote share in order to look more like a democrat. This possibility doesn't detract from the demonstrated deterrent effect of international observers on fraud, it simply moderates the possible claim that international observers caused the second round runoff election.

The evidence does not suggest that international observers deterred fraud to the point that they could not observe it. As already detailed, observer teams witnessed a significant number of electoral irregularities, including evidence of ballot box stuffing, political violence, and intimidation of polling officials. The official OSCE/ODIHR report lists 22 polling stations where ballot box stuffing was witnessed in the first round, and more than 70 polling stations in the second round. Detection of ballot box

stuffing was possible in part because of the use of transparent ballot boxes which were purchased by the OSCE.

In the case of Armenia, election day fraud deterrence meant that the international observers slowed down the rate of fraud in the polling stations that they visited. The precise mechanisms regarding how this took place are unknown, but the most plausible explanation is that the presence of international observers intimidated the polling station officials enough to reduce the rate of direct election day fraud. It is unknown whether these Armenian officials were instructed to stop fraudulent activities in front of international observers, or whether many were simply worried about being caught.

The results show that in the second round the rate of locally targeted fraud reduction lessened, and polling stations that were monitored in the first round also experienced a persistent deterrent effect. Why might this be? It is possible that in the first round of the election, the polling station employees were uncertain regarding the reach and quality of the international observers. After being observed in the first round and witnessing the mission's negative assessment of the election, those poll workers that were monitored in the first round may have updated their beliefs regarding the quality and reach of international observers and decided they were unlikely to get away with election day fraud. Those that were not observed in the first round were less likely to update their beliefs on the reach of international observers, but may have still been somewhat deterred in the second round by the OSCE's negative assessment of the first round of elections.



Since the methodology used in this natural experiment is modeled after medical and epidemiological research, an analogy to this subject may be insightful to explain the reason for the persistent effect of monitoring on election day fraud. Suppose a cold virus circulates among a population and everyone catches the cold. Half of these individuals receive a treatment that also serves as a partially effective vaccination. Later in the year, the same cold circulates among the same population, but it spread much less rapidly, even among those individuals that did not receive the treatment. Those individuals that received the treatment were even less likely to get the cold.

First round election observation can be compared to the cold treatment. The first round treatment acted to reduce election fraud in the first round, and also served as a partially effective vaccination against second round fraud. Election observation in the first round decreased fraud in the first round, and to a lesser degree, also decreased fraud in the second round. The second round reduction in fraud likely occurred in three ways. First, those that were monitored in the first round committed less Round 2 fraud. Second, those that were monitored in the second round committed less fraud in the second round. Finally, because the observers demonstrated that they were likely to give a negative evaluation and were capable of catching fraudulent activities; all polling stations were less likely to experience second round fraud.

### **Conclusion**

Reducing electoral fraud on election day is one way that international observers can influence politics in democratizing countries. This chapter has measured the magnitude and the persistence of this effect in one case, the 2003 presidential

elections in Armenia. However, this chapter says nothing about whether the results of this analysis can be extended to other countries. This requires that the same experiment be repeated across countries and across time. Do international observers always deter election day fraud when it exists? Can international observers also deter fraud prior to election day by making it less likely that election day fraud will be attempted? Are elections in which no election day fraud was witnessed cases of fraud deterrence or of elections that would have been free and fair regardless of international observers? Alternatively, could fraud-free election days simply be cases in which a candidate was able to manipulate the election before election day? It is likely that a wide spectrum of cases have occurred, although to date, none of these questions have been answered with systematic empirical evidence.

Observer groups should be wary of the fact that they may be less likely to observe electoral fraud when they enter a polling station because they may be reducing fraud directly. This has the possibility to bias their observations away from observing fraud. With random assignment of international observers and the availability of polling station level polling data, it is possible to measure the magnitude of this deterrent effect.

Finally, deterring fraud is not the only effect that international observers can have on domestic politics. Their presence may also provide the incentive for electoral autocrats to find new ways of cheating that are unlikely to be detected by international observers. At the minimum, this study has shown that the effects of international election observation and international democracy promotion programs more generally warrant careful attention and further analysis.

## **Chapter 8**

# **International Election Observation and Opposition Party Behavior<sup>80</sup>**

How do international observers influence domestic politics in the countries in which they observe elections? The previous chapter has shown that international observers can reduce election day fraud. Fraud reduction is one of several possible domestic level effects of the global spread of international election monitoring. As argued in the theory and formal model in Chapter 3, international observers are more likely to be invited as the probability that a pseudo-democrat will get away with cheating increases, and as the cost of hiding electoral manipulation decreases. Both of these variations could be produced by an improvement in the ability of incumbents to conceal electoral manipulation. This chapter has two objectives: to show evidence of an increase in well concealed electoral manipulation, and to explore the relationship between international observers and opposition political party election boycotts. In order to jointly accomplish these goals, this chapter demonstrates that opposition party boycotts are more likely when international observers are present, and that this counter-intuitive finding is due to an increase in the skill with which incumbents manipulate the election in front of international observers.

Why might opposition parties be more likely to boycott when international observers are present? Observers and foreign aid donors are often constrained by

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<sup>80</sup> This chapter was originally coauthored with Emily Beaulieu as “Cheating Incumbents, International Observers, and Election Boycotts: Evidence of the Second Image Reversed after the Cold War,” presented at the 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL; and at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL. It has been submitted for review under the same title. Some of the information contained in the chapter is repeated elsewhere in the dissertation.

political and diplomatic considerations when reacting to various forms of electoral manipulation, but opposition parties are not. If they believe the incumbent will rig the election in a way that observers are unlikely to catch, the benefits of boycotting the election increase dramatically. Subtle or indirect forms of electoral manipulation in the presence of international observers make it less likely that opposition parties will win, and *more* likely that an election will be viewed as legitimate, stripping validity from post-election opposition complaints of election rigging. Thus, the hypothesized wave of concealed electoral manipulation stimulated by international democracy promotion has increased the rate of observed elections, and also carried with it an increase in opposition party election boycotts.

### **Prudent Manipulation**

Attempting to cheat in a way that is less likely to be caught by international observers is described in this chapter as “prudent manipulation.” The prudent nature of this electoral manipulation should be understood in the Machiavellian sense. For Machiavelli, a prudent ruler is one who knows when to be good and when not to be good, while maintaining at all times a superficial appearance of goodness.<sup>81</sup> Similar to *The Prince*, incumbents who are prudent in their compliance with (and manipulation of) current democratic electoral norms have developed a number of tactics to ensure their success while attempting to maintain the appearance of fair electoral competition for the benefit of international observers and the international community. The central argument of this chapter is that evidence of an increase in prudent manipulation can be provided by examining how opposition parties respond to the presence of international

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<sup>81</sup> Machiavelli, 48 & 54 (1994 translation by Wooton).

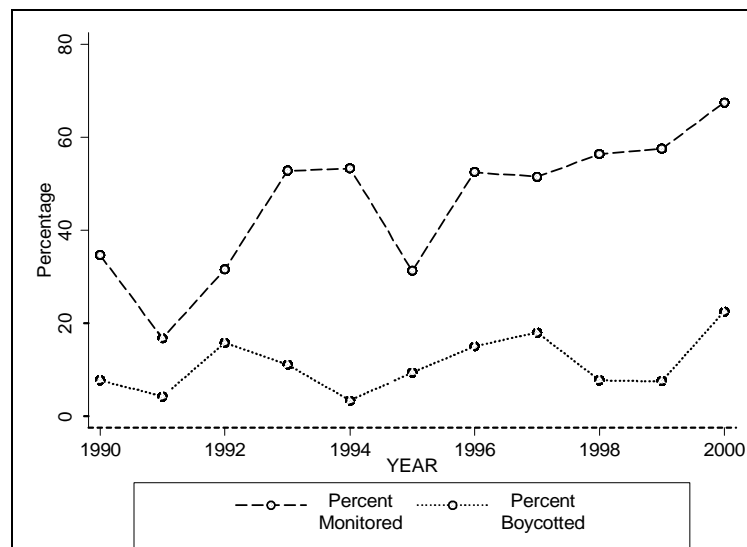
election observers. Figure 8.1 shows a concurrent increase in the rate of monitored and boycotted elections. Figure 8.2 shows that the general trend over the decade was for more election boycotts to occur in the presence of international election observers. In 2000, for example, 77% of election boycotts happened when monitors were present. Compare this ratio to 1992 where only 37% of all boycotted elections took place where observers were invited. Why does the rate of election boycotts increase with the rate of international observers?

This chapter argues that the concurrent increase can be explained because prudent manipulation increases the probability of a boycott in the following two ways. First, the expected benefit of participation for opposition parties is reduced if they are placed at a competitive disadvantage through prudent manipulation on the part of an incumbent. Not only are they less likely to win representation in a biased election, but also, if the incumbent secures victory and is legitimized by the international observers, opposition participation will have furthered the appearance of democratic legitimacy. When opposition parties are presented with such a “lose-lose” situation, there is an increased incentive to boycott.

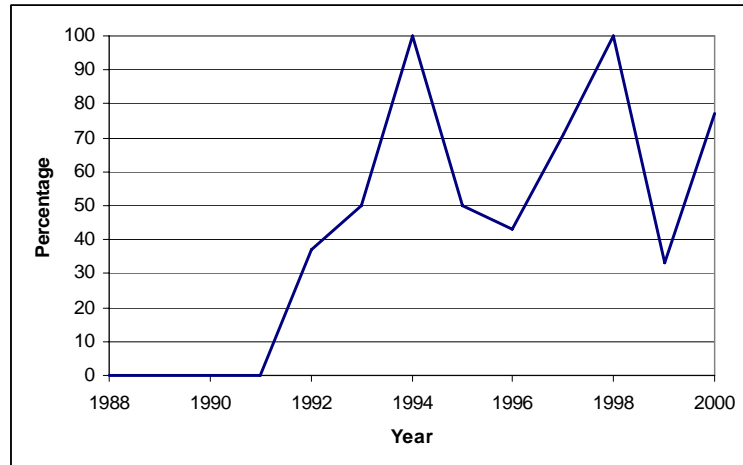
Second, since the option of prudent manipulation increases the chances that electoral autocrats will invite observers, it also increases the expected benefit of boycotting in absolute terms. International observers provide an attentive and primed global audience for an opposition party wishing to expose the incumbent regime as fraudulent. Although a party voicing its complaints and participating in the election might cause monitors to take note, this could be perceived as cheap talk and standard political finger pointing. Opposition complaints, particularly from a major party, are

likely to receive even more attention if they are accompanied by the costly action of a refusal to participate in the election. So, not only does the expectation of prudent manipulation provide the opposition with less to gain from participating in an election, the presence of an objective third party also provides opposition parties with a greater opportunity to have their objections heard by international actors.

The next section turns to existing explanations for opposition party boycotts, and then provides anecdotal evidence of an increase in prudent manipulation in the 1990s. The remainder of this chapter formalizes prudent manipulation, presents five premises that should hold if the argument here is correct, and provides empirical evidence that an increase in prudent manipulation explains the relationship between international monitors and opposition boycotts.



**Figure 8. 1: Percentage of all elections in non-consolidated democracies that were boycotted (dotted line) and percentage of all elections that were internationally observed (dashed line), 1990-2000**



**Figure 8.2. Percentage of Boycotted Elections that were Internationally Observed (1988-2000)**

### Why do Boycotts Occur?

Over the course of the 1990s, election boycotts occurred throughout all regions of the developing world.<sup>82</sup> When opposition parties boycott an election, they refuse to participate as a signal of protest. Though the specific character and timing of the election boycott may vary, they are always initiated after elections have been announced, and culminate with conspicuous non-participation on election day.<sup>83</sup>

Boycotting political parties do not simply drop out as sore losers. Witnesses of election boycotts report that there are typically quite active campaigns in support of boycotting in which parties invest significant resources in encouraging the boycott. In Zambia in 1996, for example, the UNIP engaged in a boycott campaign that included buying vote cards to prevent their use by registered voters on election day, and the

<sup>82</sup> The only boycotts to occur in consolidated democracies were two elections boycotted by Basque separatist party Herri Batasuna in Spain, and two elections boycotted by extremist Arab parties in Israel.

<sup>83</sup> Opposition leaders in Azerbaijan called for an election boycott of the October 1998 election in August. During the Jordan elections of 1997, a total of 10 opposition parties decided to boycott the election just days before polling took place. Sometimes opposition parties will threaten to boycott and later participate, but such threats are not the subject of study in this essay.

mobilization of youth wings to intimidate voters and discourage their participation in the election.<sup>84</sup>

There are several explanations for why opposition parties boycott elections. For the most part, opposition parties justify boycotts by highlighting the unfairness of the current system and the need for fundamental reform. Opposition parties in Mauritanian elections of 1997 attributed their boycott to the government's refusal to establish an independent electoral commission. By contrast, when facing an opposition boycott of an election, the party in power frequently tries to frame opposition parties as sore and certain losers. In the 1995 Haitian election, senior government officials explained the opposition boycott in the following way: "They have no popular support; they boycott because they know they will lose."<sup>85</sup> Academic explanations have considered these and other factors in trying to theorize why opposition parties boycott elections.

Consistent across all academic explanations of boycotts, and consistent across the explanations that opposition parties themselves offer, is that unfair electoral conditions increase the chances of a boycott (Beaulieu 2004; Bratton 1998; Lindberg 2004). According to Lindberg, opposition parties in Africa are less likely to boycott when elections are free and fair. So far, no systematic research has borne out the claim that opposition parties boycott because they know they are unpopular and will lose the election. Academic explanations of election boycotts have focused exclusively on the domestic factors that influence the decisions of opposition parties to boycott. In

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<sup>84</sup> First-hand account from Michael Bratton 4/2/04.

<sup>85</sup> Pastor 1998, 160.



addition to these domestic considerations, this chapter argues that the presence of international observers also influences the decision to boycott.

### **Anecdotal Evidence of Prudent Manipulation in the 1990s: Increase and Effects**

The global spread of international election observation has triggered an evolving game of strategy between incumbent politicians and international election observers. Although most forms of election manipulation are not new, an increase in prudent manipulation means that incumbents became better at choosing the form of manipulation that was less likely to provoke negative reports from international observers. The “menu of manipulation” (Schedler 2002b) includes the use of political appointments to replace elected positions, the exclusion of other candidates or parties from the election, control or limitations of media and other means to disseminate information, informal disenfranchisement, the use of external pressure to influence voter’s decisions, direct electoral fraud, and the refusal to accept the results of an election. Over time, each form of electoral manipulation has had a different probability of drawing international attention. Overt forms of manipulation were sufficient when election observation began, and were unlikely to be punished.

Generally speaking, electoral manipulation is more likely to go undetected by international observers if it takes place well in advance of election day. Popular opposition candidates may be arbitrarily excluded from running for office, or “screened” for reasons that may or may not be legitimate. In Haiti in 1995, candidates could be excluded if they were members of the ruling party during the Duvalier era, but determining which candidates fit this description was subjective, and the criterion was applied selectively. Opposition parties boycotted the Indonesian election of 1997

because, they claimed, another opposition candidate had been unfairly excluded from competing in the election, even though the government claimed these exclusions were within the scope of the law.

Even more extreme than banning certain candidates from competition is committing violence against them. As Schedler (2002b) points out, “the attempted or actual murder of opponents, as in Togo in 1991 and in Armenia in 1994, is the most extreme form of candidate screening.” Robert Mugabe’s frequently reported violence against his political opponents is another well known example. Although candidate exclusion via violence is clearly not part of a democratic political process, it is not often immediately clear who is behind the nefarious behavior, and it is not considered the role of international observers to thoroughly investigate violent crimes that may or may not be election related.

Incumbents can also substantially weaken would-be competitors through a variety of non-violent means. In some cases, incumbents can pass legislation that, although enacted through legitimate processes, works to disadvantage the political opposition. In other instances, incumbents can use their control of state monies and media to increase their own electoral advantage, or use their influence in the administrative processes of government to enact bureaucratic discrimination without giving the appearance of impropriety.

Southwest Asia provides examples of incumbents using legislation as a kind of prudent manipulation. Azerbaijan has experienced two election boycotts (1998 and 2000), both of which centered on controversial legislation. In the first election, electoral legislation had been passed which was seen as disadvantaging the opposition.

In 2000, the same legislation was still an issue, but since then the government had also attempted to gain control of the central election commission. Even though it may be enacted through legal measures, government control of the central election commission (as opposed to a more independent source of control) is believed to confer an advantage to the incumbent.

Often, an incumbent can manipulate the election simply by tolerating bureaucratic inefficiency, or not encouraging particular duties of the bureaucracy. Maintaining current voter registration is a major source of contention for opposition parties. Boycotts have occurred in Jamaica (1983), Comoros (1996), Kuwait (1990), and Gabon (2001) where the opposition accused the government of operating with out-of-date voter rolls that put the opposition at a disadvantage. If outdated voter registration lists favor the incumbent, then it is an effective form of prudent manipulation to underemphasize the importance of voter registration, or divert bureaucratic energies elsewhere, and blame the out-of-date rolls on a lack of time and money. These types of election manipulation are less likely to be used by international election observers as a reason to delegitimize the election because it is more difficult to prove that they are intentional manipulation rather than administrative incompetence.

The above description should illustrate the expansive menu of prudent manipulation available to electoral autocrats. In some measure, the overwhelming increase in monitored elections is the result of electoral autocrats adopting these various forms of prudent manipulation. As incumbents realized that they could secure

victory while inviting monitors and maintaining the pretense of free and fair elections, they were even more likely to invite monitors.

Advancements in prudent manipulation, and the ways in which this option might embolden electoral autocrats, did not escape the attention of international observers and opposition parties. By the end of the 1990s, as the following excerpt shows, many observation organizations were actively cautioning their observers and donors to be on alert for prudent manipulation. The following excerpt is from an EU election observation policy manual, and demonstrates observer weariness of what this chapter terms prudent manipulation.

Sometimes politicians in power may be tempted to organise manipulated elections in order to obtain international legitimacy (Togo 1998, Kazakhstan 1999). Care should be taken if ... an EU observation mission could contribute to legitimising an illegitimate process. (Commission of the European Communities, 2000, 5)

As the prevalence of prudent manipulation led observers to increased vigilance, it also triggered change in opposition party behavior. Opposition political parties in electoral autocracies are motivated to find flaws in the incumbent government's campaign or administration of the election, because they understand that the purpose of the election is to generate external approval, not fair competition. In most cases, opposition parties are better equipped than observers to predict the incumbent's behavior, and thus are in a good position to expose cheating which might otherwise go uncriticized by observers.

How do opposition parties benefit from boycotting in front of international observers? An examination of election observer statements following boycotted elections shows that boycotting parties in the late 1990s could, at the minimum, expect

to show up in international print.<sup>86</sup> In some cases, boycotting opposition parties get explicit support from international observers, such as the 2000 election in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In this case, opposition political parties and international election observers worked together to ensure that the election was de-legitimized.

Similarly, following a major opposition boycott during the 2000 presidential election in Belarus, the OSCE report condemned the election and the treatment of opposition groups. The report stated that because the Belarusian government had not made enough progress in the areas identified by the EU, the OSCE, and its member states, the seven boycotting parties were justified in their non-participation. In addition, they took pains to document the treatment of the participants during the boycott:

While the Freedom Marches of 1 and 8 October organized by those advocating the boycott passed off without serious incident, a number of activists were charged with various offenses, often several days after the marches in question. In total, more than 100 advocates of the election boycott were charged under the provision of Article 167(3) of the Administrative Code and other boycott and unauthorized picket-related offenses. This could only have a chilling effect on the campaign environment as a whole. (OSCE 2001 Belarus Post-Election Report)

The OSCE report shows that the government was actively discriminating against opposition members throughout the pre-election period, and the observers' attention

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<sup>86</sup> In the early year of election observation, the reports focused on election day. The primary objective of the observers was to determine whether the election result was consistent with the "will of the people," and their reports tended to gloss over dissent if they believed that the election was a step in the right direction. The following demonstrates this tendency: "In 1992, The Carter Center sent an election-monitoring team to Ghana's first democratic presidential election in more than 30 years. Jerry Rawlings, in power since 1981, won with 58 percent of the vote. Election monitors in Ghana observed ballot counting, the installation of voting booths and ballot boxes, the numbering of ballot packs, and post election activities to assess the transparency of the election. Four hundred Ghanaians were recruited and trained as local monitors. Although opposition parties protested the results, the observers declared the election free and fair." (Carter Center description of activities in Ghana)

was drawn to these incumbent sponsored acts at least in part because the opposition called for a boycott.

Even though some attempts at prudent manipulation are so egregious that opposition complaints are taken at face value, a boycotting opposition party is by no means guaranteed favorable treatment by international observers. If the observers do not find evidence justifying the boycott, or suspect that the boycotting parties are simply sore losers at the fringe of the political space, they are liable to ignore the boycott in the report or discredit it. Therefore, opposition parties must be confident that the conditions are bad enough to justify non-participation.

### **Formalizing Prudent Manipulation**

In order to draw out the causal mechanism in this argument more precisely, a formal model is provided. Using basic probability theory, it outlines the logic of possible alternative explanations for the concurrent rise in monitored elections and opposition boycotts, and eliminates some alternative explanations as illogical.

For simplicity, suppose that the international benefits sought by incumbent leaders consist primarily of foreign aid, and that all polities fall into one of two categories: aid-hungry or aid-indifferent. Suppose also that a fraction,  $W$ , of aid-hungry polities believe that the West would prefer to observe their election. For now we set  $W = 1$ , and focus exclusively on aid-seeking polities.

Suppose, as in Chapter 3, that the incumbent leaders of these polities are divided into two types: true-democrats and pseudo-democrats. Let the proportion of true democrats at time  $t$  be denoted by  $T_t$ . Assume, like in Chapter 3, that true-democrats always invite observers, and that observers always come if they are invited.

The proportion of pseudo-democrats is represented by  $1-T_t$ . Pseudo-democrats can “bluff” the signal of their type by inviting monitors and employing prudent manipulation. By attempting to hide their manipulation of the election in front of international observers, pseudo-democrats who invite observers are attempting to pose as true-democrats. Let the fraction of pseudo-democrats who invite observers at time  $t$  be  $\alpha_t$ .<sup>87</sup> The fraction of elections in aid-hungry polities that are observed by international election monitors<sup>88</sup> is then:

$$M_t = T_t + (1 - T_t)\alpha_t \quad (1)$$

Relative to international observers, opposition political parties have better information about the incumbent’s type (true-democrat or pseudo-democrat). Suppose that the opposition always knows the incumbent’s type, but cannot easily communicate this information in a credible manner to the Western international community. In general, opposition parties boycott at a rate of  $\beta_t$  for reasons unrelated to the incumbent’s type. Such reasons may include the opposition parties’ own electoral strength, or particular costs they may incur by boycotting.<sup>89</sup> Even incumbents who are true-democrats experience a boycott rate  $\beta_t$ , which is termed the base rate of boycott.

Suppose also that if the opposition faces a pseudo-democrat who has bluffed by inviting observers, then the opposition always boycotts in an attempt to expose the

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<sup>87</sup> The sum of all elections can be represented in terms of true democrats, pseudo-democrats, and autocrats:

$$E_t = T_t + (1-T_t)\alpha_t + (1-T_t)(1-\alpha_t)$$

<sup>88</sup> Correspondingly, the fraction of unmonitored elections is denoted by:  $U_t = (1 - T_t)(1 - \alpha_t)$

<sup>89</sup> The presence of public party finance, conditional on electoral participation, is one such example of a cost that may not be related to an incumbent’s type.

pseudo-democrat. Finally, if the opposition faces a pseudo-democrat who does not bluff, then the rate of opposition boycott is  $\gamma_i$ . This rate is determined by factors related to the incumbent's type but that are not intended to expose an autocrat's bluff to observers. For example, a boycott may occur to rally domestic support against the autocrat.

Thus, the fraction of all elections that experience an opposition party boycott is:

$$B_t = T_t\beta_t + (1 - T_t)[\beta_t + (1 - \beta_t)\alpha_t + (1 - \beta_t)(1 - \alpha_t)\gamma_t] \quad (2a)$$

Simplifying:

$$B_t = \beta_t + (1 - T_t)(1 - \beta_t)[\alpha_t + (1 - \alpha_t)\gamma_t] \quad (2b)$$

Note that the following partial derivatives can be signed:

$$(a) \frac{\partial M_t}{\partial T_t} > 0 \text{ and } \frac{\partial B_t}{\partial T_t} < 0.$$

$$(b) \frac{\partial M_t}{\partial \alpha_t} > 0 \text{ and } \frac{\partial B_t}{\partial \alpha_t} > 0.$$

$$(c) \frac{\partial M_t}{\partial \beta_t} = 0 \text{ and } \frac{\partial B_t}{\partial \beta_t} > 0.$$

$$(d) \frac{\partial M_t}{\partial \gamma_t} = 0 \text{ and } \frac{\partial B_t}{\partial \gamma_t} > 0.$$

Remember that the empirically observed trend is an overtime increase in monitored elections and boycotts. The above partial derivatives provide additional logical support for our argument that, out of the factors that are related to international observation and boycotting, only an increase in the rate of bluffing pseudo-democrats predicts the observed pattern. This is shown in (b), where a concurrent increase in the



rate of observing and boycotting can be explained by  $\alpha_t$ , or the fraction of pseudo-democrats who invite observers.

The other three comparisons shown in (a), (c), and (d), suggest explanations that are inconsistent with the observed phenomenon. Holding all else constant, (a) indicates that the rate of change in the fraction of observed elections is increasing with respect to change in the proportion of true-democrats. However, the rate of change in the fraction of elections that are boycotted is decreasing with respect to change in the proportion of true-democrats. Therefore, an increase in the proportion of true-democrats cannot explain the concurrent increase in monitoring and boycotting.

Again, holding all else constant, (c) shows that change in the proportion of monitored elections is unrelated to change in the base rate of boycotts. This result eliminates the alternative explanation that a change in the rate of boycotting for reasons unrelated to the incumbent's type is driving the concurrent increase in monitored and boycotted elections.

Finally, (d) shows that opposition boycotts motivated by the fact that the incumbent is an autocrat, but not intended to expose a bluff in front of the observers, cannot logically cause a concurrent increase in monitoring and boycotting. Therefore, an increase in pseudo-democrats who invite international observers and engage in prudent manipulation is the only remaining logical explanation for the concurrent increase in monitoring and boycotting.

Given the model, what is the fraction of elections boycotted *and* monitored? Let the fraction of boycotted and monitored elections be denoted by  $D_t$ .

$$D_t = T_t \beta_t + (1 - T_t) \alpha_t \tag{3}$$

Using Bayes' Rule, the fraction of elections boycotted, given that the election is observed is:

$$B_t^M = \frac{[D_t]}{[M_t]} = \frac{[T_t\beta_t + (1 - T_t)\alpha_t]}{[T_t + (1 - T_t)\alpha_t]} \quad (4)$$

The following partial derivatives follow from Equation (4).

- (e)  $\frac{\partial B_t^M}{\partial \alpha_t} > 0$
- (f)  $\frac{\partial B_t^M}{\partial T_t} > 0$  if  $\beta_t > \alpha_t$  and  $\frac{\partial B_t^M}{\partial T_t} < 0$  if  $\beta_t < \alpha_t$
- (g)  $\frac{\partial B_t^M}{\partial \beta_t} > 0$

In the above inequalities designated by (e), (f), and (g), note that change in the fraction of boycotted elections within monitored elections increases with respect to the rate of bluffing pseudo-democrats. In other words, more prudent manipulation causes more boycotts in monitored elections. Note also in (f) that an increase in the proportion of true-democrats increases  $B_t^M$  only when the rate of bluffing autocrats is less than the base rate of boycotts. Therefore, as the proportion of pseudo-democrats grows larger, an increase in true-democrats should be associated with a decrease in the proportion of monitored elections that are boycotted.

In (f) there is also a conditional relationship between  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . Given the difficulty in definitively separating true-democrats from pseudo-democrats, the relative size of  $\alpha$  is unknown. However, the empirical increase in the fraction of elections that are monitored ( $M$ ), along with the increase in the fraction of monitored elections that are boycotted, provides strong evidence that  $\alpha$  is increasing (shown in

Figures 8.1 and 8.2). By contrast, the constant rate of boycott observed in unmonitored elections suggests that  $\beta$  is not increasing (Figure 3).<sup>90</sup> Given these relationships it is likely that  $\alpha$  is greater than  $\beta$ , which means that an increase in true-democrats would be associated with a decrease in the fraction of monitored elections that were boycotted, as with inequality (a). The inequality in (g) simply indicates that if the base rate of boycott ( $\beta$ ) were to increase, the rate of boycotts in monitored elections would also increase.<sup>91</sup>

The fraction of boycotted, unmonitored elections, denoted by  $H_t$ , can also be calculated.

$$H_t = (1 - T_t)(1 - \alpha)[\beta + (1 - \beta)\gamma] \quad (5)$$

Using Bayes' Rule again, the fraction of elections boycotted, given that the election is not observed by international monitors, is:

$$B_t^U = \frac{[H_t]}{[U_t]} = \frac{[(1 - T_t)(1 - \alpha)(\beta + (1 - \beta)\gamma)]}{(1 - T_t)(1 - \alpha)}$$

(6a) Which simplifies to

$$B_t^U = (\beta + (1 - \beta)\gamma) \quad (6b)$$

Based on the conditional probability expressed in (6b), the following partial

derivatives can be signed:

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<sup>90</sup> Although election boycotts occur in unmonitored elections due to the incumbent's type ( $\gamma$ ) these elections are also subject to the base rate of boycott ( $\beta$ ). If  $\beta$  had increased over the time period in question, we would expect to see an increase in boycotts in unmonitored elections, which is not observed.

<sup>91</sup> If we relax the assumption that opposition parties always boycott when pseudo-democrats invite monitors, and introduce some parameter ( $\theta$ ) to represent the rate at which opposition parties boycott pseudo-democrats, then we would need  $\alpha\theta > \beta$  in order for an increase in true democrats to be associated with a decrease in boycotts in monitored elections. Essentially, reducing the rate at which opposition parties boycott pseudo-democrats to less than 1, makes it more likely that an increase in true democrats might be associated with an increase in boycotts in monitored elections, but ONLY if  $\beta > \alpha\theta$ .

$$(h) \frac{\partial B_t^U}{\partial T_t} = 0$$

$$(i) \frac{\partial B_t^U}{\partial \alpha} = 0$$

$$(j) \frac{\partial B_t^U}{\partial \beta_t} > 0$$

$$(k) \frac{\partial B_t^U}{\partial \gamma} > 0$$

The above partial derivatives show that the proportion of boycotted elections, given that the election was unmonitored, is unaffected by changes in the fraction of true-democrats (h), or pseudo-democrats (i). However, the proportion of boycotts in unmonitored elections should increase relative to the base rate of boycotts (j), and with the rate of boycotts for reasons related to an autocratic incumbent, but not intended to expose a boycott (k).

### **Evidence of Prudent Manipulation**

The previous section used logic and probability theory to formalize the relationship between prudent manipulation, incumbent behavior, and the decision by opposition parties to boycott. Because prudent manipulation cannot be systematically observed, it is not possible to conduct a true test of the theory that the rate of prudent manipulation increased. However, if prudent manipulation does, in fact, exist, and has increased over time, the following five premises should hold.

**P1. The rate of monitored elections should increase throughout the 1990s.**

**P2. The rate of boycotts in monitored elections should increase throughout the 1990s.**

**P3. The rate of boycotts in unmonitored elections should remain constant across the decade.**

**P4. The error terms for explanations of observed elections and election boycotts should be positively correlated.**

**P5. The presence of monitors should not affect the probability of a boycott in the early part of the decade but should have an effect later on.**

Evidence supporting these five premises will be provided after a brief discussion of the empirical relationship between election boycotts and the presence of election observers. Out of all elections in non-consolidated democracies from 1990-2000, 12% were boycotted by one or more opposition parties. Even though monitors are thought to encourage free and fair elections, a surprisingly non-trivial number of internationally observed elections in the decade were boycotted. Out of all internationally observed elections, 16% experienced an election boycott, compared with 11% of non-monitored elections. This five percent difference does not appear statistically significant in an uncontrolled comparison; however the results from a controlled logit regression explaining the occurrence of election boycotts indicate a strong positive relationship between boycotts and the presence of monitors (Model 1, Table 8.1). Given domestic factors that make boycotts more likely, the presence of international observers still increases the probability that a boycott will occur.<sup>92</sup>

The magnitude of the effect of monitors on boycotting is demonstrated with results generated using CLARIFY (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003). Using the

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<sup>92</sup> Summary statistics and further description of variable operationalization are available from the authors upon request.

same data and model presented in Model 1 (Table 8.1), the average probability of a boycott is 8% when all independent variables are set at their mean. All else held equal, adding the presence of international observers increases the probability of a boycott from 8% to 15% plus or minus 3.4%.<sup>93</sup> Put differently, in an average case the presence of observers nearly doubles the chances that a boycott will occur. However, because the probability of a boycott in an average election is still less than 50%, this simulation of an average scenario does not predict a boycott when observers are present.

What effect do international observers have when domestic factors make an election boycott more likely? In a hypothetical “most-likely” scenario, all independent variables are set at values that are associated with boycotts. In a country in Africa that has a low Polity score (indicating a low level of electoral fairness), a low per-capita GDP, and low levels of institutional competitiveness, the probability of a boycott is 30%.<sup>94</sup> If international observers are added to this scenario, the probability of a boycott increases by 24%, plus or minus about 10%.<sup>95</sup> This demonstrates that, at the macro level, if domestic conditions are ripe for a boycott, the presence of international observers can push the probability of an opposition party boycott over 50%.

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<sup>93</sup> With a 95% confidence interval, the presence of international observers increases the probability of a boycott by 5-11%.

<sup>94</sup> With a 95% confidence interval, the probability of a boycott in the “most-likely” scenario is between 14 and 51%.

<sup>95</sup> For all percentage values presented in the above paragraph, the 95% confidence interval around a simulated first difference did not contain zero, signifying statistical significance. The predicted probabilities are based on a logit model estimated in Stata 8.0, with first differences drawn from 1000 simulations performed by CLARIFY (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003).

**Table 8.1 Logit Regression Results**

<i>Dependent Variable = Boycott</i>	<b>Model 1</b> 1990-2000 Coefficient (Robust Standard Error)	<b>Model 2</b> 1990-1994 Coefficient (Robust Standard Error)	<b>Model 3</b> 1995-2000 Coefficient (Robust Standard Error)
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
Constant	-0.2676 (0.5481)	-0.5912 (0.7778)	-0.0108 (0.7722)
Internationally Observed Election Variable = 1	1.094 * (0.4334)	0.4312 (0.7430)	1.2319 * (0.5854)
Democracy Score (Polity) -10 to 10	-0.1536 * (0.0411)	-0.0740 (0.0663)	-0.1849 * (0.0513)
GDP per capita	-1.338e-4 * (6.3e-5)	-8.12e-5 (1.112e-4)	-0.0002 (0.0001)
Easy Conditional Party Finance	-0.3952 (0.5018)	-0.6561 (0.9955)	-0.3285 (0.6030)
% Share of seats for opposition party (lagged one year)	0.8820 (0.8784)	2.170 (2.259)	0.4912 (1.056)
N	338	103	200
Wald Chi2	(9) 64.87	(8) 21.05	(8) 38.35
p>Chi2	0.0000	0.0070	0.0000
Log pseudo-likelihood	-100.7459	-38.37	-64.18
Pseudo R2	0.2327	0.1374	0.2702

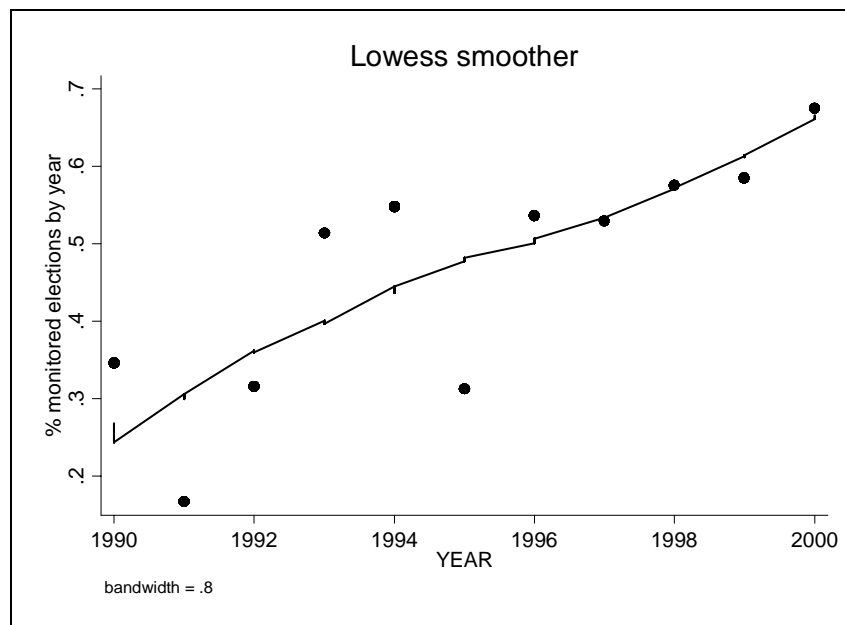
\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed  $z$  test

**Note: Robust standard errors adjusted for clustering by country. Regional control variables are included in all models, but not reported.**

Figures 8.3 through 8.5 create lowess lines to capture the uncontrolled trends of monitoring and boycotts over time.<sup>96</sup> Figure 8.3 shows the general trend of

<sup>96</sup> Lowess carries out a locally weighted regression of a dependent variable on one independent variable. The line fitted by lowess uses “nearby” observations. For all three figures, the independent variable is time.

increased election monitoring over time, while Figures 8.4 and 8.5 demonstrate the differences between the rate of boycotts in monitored and unmonitored elections.



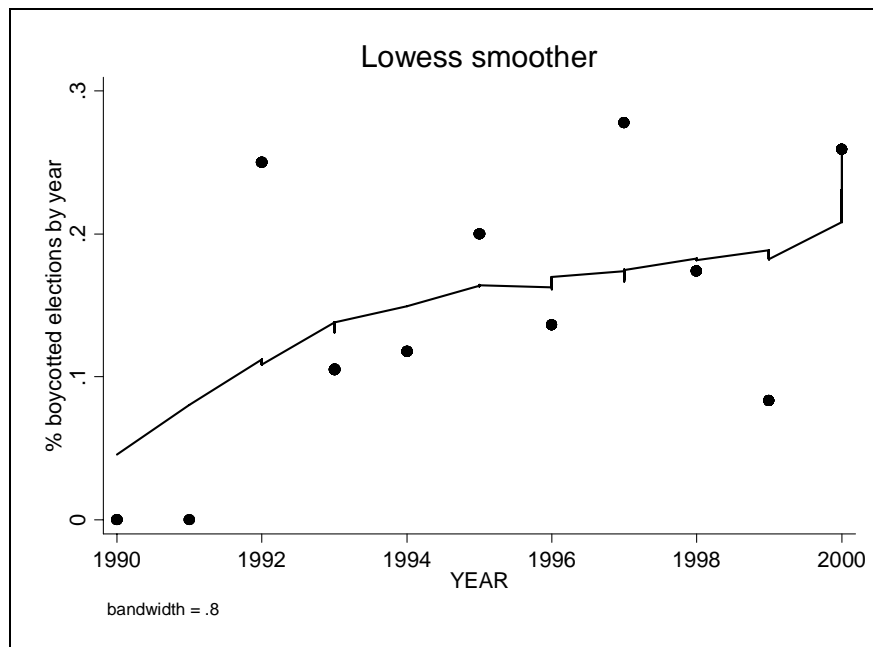
**Figure 8.3: Annual Rate of Monitored Elections (1990-2000)**

Figures 8.3 through 8.5 corroborate the argument. The rate of monitored elections increased over the 1990s to nearly 70% by the year 2000 (Figure 8.3). The rate of boycotts in monitored elections has also increased over the course of the decade, rising from zero in 1990 to approximately 20% of all monitored elections in 2000 (Figure 8.4). By contrast, the rate of boycotts in unmonitored elections has hovered near 10% for the entire decade (Figure 8.5). Clearly, the relatively static domestic factors cannot explain the increase in boycotted elections over the course of the 1990s.

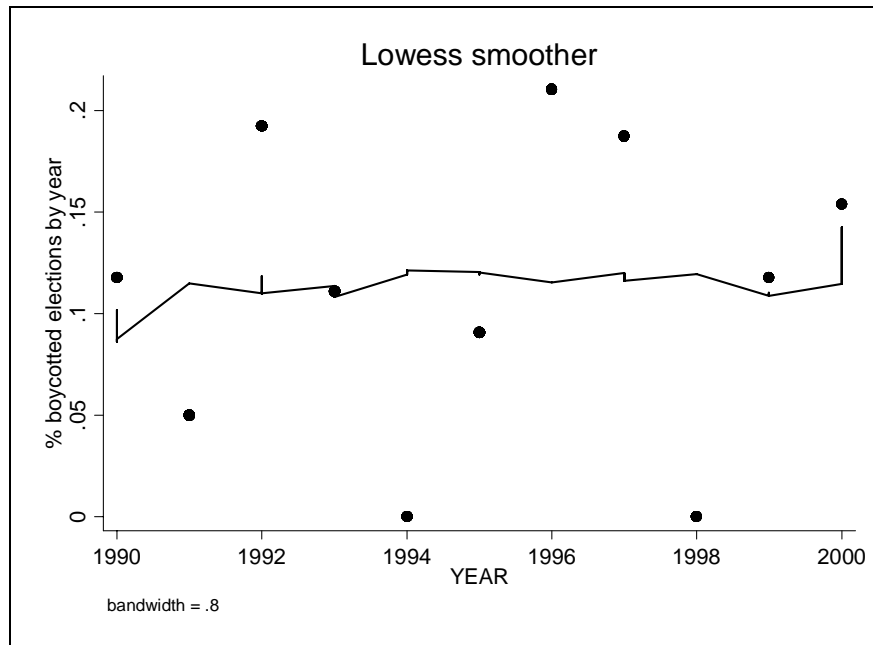
Thus, the first three premises regarding the existence and increase of prudent manipulation obtain. As incumbents have improved means of securing electoral victory without attracting the attention of monitors, their willingness to invite monitors



has increased. Faced with the increasingly unfair and unpunished behavior of incumbents, as well as the presence of an international audience, opposition parties are more likely to resort to an election boycott. The constant rate of boycott in unmonitored elections indicates elections where prudent manipulation is not at work. Under such circumstances, opposition parties need not consider the possibility that a fraudulent election will be internationally certified in their decision of whether or not to boycott.



**Figure 8.4: Annual Rate of Election Boycott for Monitored Elections (1990-2000)**



**Figure 8.5. Annual Rate of Election Boycotts for Unmonitored Elections (1990-2000)**

Explanatory variables that are not explicitly modeled in a regression equation are represented in the regression's residual, or error term. Since current explanations of election boycotts do not explicitly account for prudent manipulation, if the phenomenon is at work, it would appear as part of the error term of the regression model. The same follows for explanations of monitored elections. If prudent manipulation has an effect on both the rate of observed elections and election boycotts,<sup>97</sup> then the error terms from models that explain each of the phenomena should be correlated. Thus, the error terms in a model explaining the presence of election monitors should be correlated with the error terms from a model explaining election boycotts, given that neither of these models explicitly accounts for prudent

<sup>97</sup> The degree of the effects need not be identical, and indeed we suspect that prudent manipulation has a much stronger effect on boycotts than it does on monitors.

manipulation. Furthermore, the correlation should be positive, suggesting that prudent manipulation increases both the probability of inviting monitors and the probability of an election boycott.

To test this premise, we compare the regression residuals from two logit regressions, the linear components of which were specified as follows:<sup>98</sup>

$$1. P(\text{monitors}|x_i) = 1/(1+e^{-x_i\beta}) \text{ Where}$$

$$x_i\beta = \text{Constant} + \beta_1 \text{ lagged polity score} + \beta_2 \text{ regional rate of monitoring} + \beta_3 \text{ interaction term} + e$$

$$2. P(\text{boycott}|x_i) = 1/(1+e^{-x_i\beta}) \text{ Where}$$

$$x_i\beta = \text{Constant} + \beta_1 \text{ polity score} + \beta_2 \text{ conditional party finance} + \beta_3 \text{ per capita GDP} + \beta_4 \text{ opposition seat share} + e$$

Results from this comparison appear in Table 8.2.

**Table 8.2. Correlation between Errors from models explaining Monitors and Boycotts**

	<b>Monitor Residuals</b> ( $e_{\text{monitor}}$ )	<b>Boycott Residuals</b> ( $e_{\text{boycott}}$ )
<b>Monitor Residuals</b> ( $e_{\text{monitor}}$ )	R = 1.00	
<b>Boycott Residuals</b> ( $e_{\text{boycott}}$ )	R = .1774 *	R = 1.00

\*  $p < .05$

As Table 8.2 shows, a pair-wise comparison of the errors for the model explaining monitoring and the model explaining boycotts reveals a positive, statistically significant correlation. This suggests our current models are missing some

<sup>98</sup> Regression results available from the authors upon request.

common factor, which contributes to both an increase in the probability of monitors being invited, and the probability of an election boycott. We argue that this common factor is prudent manipulation.

The fifth and final premise pertains to the relationship between monitors and boycotts over time. If prudent manipulation has been increasing over time, as argued, the expectation is that the presence of monitors will have a greater effect on the probability of boycott later in the decade, when prudent manipulation is more prevalent. Table 1 compares two logit models (Models 2 & 3) of different time periods, using the same dependent and explanatory variables as in Model 1.

When the data are separated into two time periods the increasingly pronounced effects of prudent manipulation over time can be observed. From 1990-1994,<sup>99</sup> the presence of monitors does not have a statistically significant effect on the probability of a boycott. From 1995-2000, however, the presence of monitors has a positive, significant effect on the probability of an election boycott. All else held at its mean, from 1995 to 2000 the presence of international observers increases the probability of a boycott from 8% to 17%.<sup>100</sup> In the same hypothetical “most-likely” case described earlier in the chapter,<sup>101</sup> international observers increase the probability of a boycott by

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<sup>99</sup> This particular cut point of the data was chosen because it divides the observations into two equal time periods. Similar results obtain when 1995 is chosen as the upper bound for the first model.

<sup>100</sup> The 95% confidence interval for the 6% figure ranges from 2% to 17%. For the simulated first difference, the presence of observers increases the probability of a boycott by 9%, plus or minus about 8%.

<sup>101</sup> In the hypothetical “most-likely” case, the country is in Africa, the Polity score is -7, the GDP per capita income is \$2000, and the lagged institutional competitiveness measures are set at the low level of two. Again, for all percentage values presented in the above paragraph, the 95% confidence interval around a simulated first difference did not contain zero, signifying statistical significance. Based on a logit model estimated in Stata 8.0, with first differences drawn from 1000 simulations performed by CLARIFY (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King).

27%, from 29% to 56%.<sup>102</sup> This finding suggests that as the decade progressed, and prudent manipulation increased, opposition parties were more likely to boycott in an attempt to expose incumbent duplicity to international election observers, and avoid legitimizing what they predicted would be a biased process.

Thus, all five premises hold and support the argument that prudent manipulation explains the concurrent increase in monitoring and boycotts.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated one way in which international-level variables affect electoral politics at the domestic level. Since Peter Gourevitch's 1978 assertion that "second image reversed" causal arguments are neglected, and that academics should better understand how domestic politics may be a result of international politics (882), few scholars have empirically demonstrated this causal mechanism in relation to the global spread of democratization. As long as the international community continues to pour money into developing countries with the intention of improving their political institutions and conditions even greater rewards upon progress in reforming these institutions, there are likely to be side effects that are not intended.

This chapter has presented evidence of two unintended consequences of the international community's emphasis on internationally certified elections. First, for power and aid-hungry politicians, it has triggered a renaissance in electoral rigging artistry. Second, within non-consolidated democracies, opposition parties are increasingly likely to boycott when international observers are present. Because of the

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<sup>102</sup> The confidence intervals are larger in this example because of the smaller N. The 95% confidence interval still does not contain zero, indicating statistical significance. The predicted probability of a boycott ranges from 10% to 57%, and the 27% increase in the probability of a boycott is plus or minus 25%.

increase in prudent manipulation, opposition parties are more likely to feel that their time is better spent attempting to discredit the incumbent by boycotting instead of participating in the election.

Certainly, the consequences of prudent manipulation for democracy are debatable, but there should now be no doubt that international pressures are working to shape electoral politics in developing countries. Greater awareness of the domestic effects of international democracy promotion is an important first step in understanding how this type of foreign assistance should progress if it is to succeed in its goals.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Conclusion**

For the 2006 Belarusian election, President Aleksandr Lukashenko invited observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the National Democratic Institute, and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Reportedly a popular incumbent, he nevertheless engaged in many forms of electoral fraud including vote buying, intimidation, mass arrests, and monopolization of the media. The OSCE criticized the electoral process, saying that it was "severely flawed due to arbitrary use of state power and restrictions on basic rights." The United States responded to the fraudulent elections by declaring the results invalid, refusing to accept Lukashenko as the winner, and calling for a new election. The European Union barred President Lukashenko and thirty of the country's officials from entering EU member states, and vowed to support Belarus's opposition movement and the development of an independent press.<sup>103</sup> In contrast to the OSCE evaluation and the response by the EU and the US, the CIS election observers declared the election "free, open, and transparent."<sup>104</sup>

This international involvement in the Belarusian election is not unique. In fact, the elections are typical in that an incumbent who planned on manipulating the election willingly invited high-quality international observers. Predictably, the fraudulent elections were denounced by international observers. The international

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<sup>103</sup> New York Times April 22, 2006. "Europe Bars Its Doors to Belarus President and 30 Officials" and New York Times March 20, 2006; "Election in Belarus Did Not Meet Standards, Observers Say."

<sup>104</sup> ITAR-TASS News Agency. March 20, 2006. "Belarus polls open, free, transparent – CIS observers" and Xinhua News Agency, March 20, 2006, "CIS, OSCE observers differ on Belarus vote."

community responded by attempting to de-legitimize the government. In some cases, similar scenarios following fraudulent elections have resulted in massive domestic uprisings and the eventual removal of the incumbent government. In other cases, the parallel vote tabulations organized by international and domestic observers have prevented the incumbent government from falsifying the results during the tabulation process, also resulting in a transfer of power.

Outside of the long-term developed democracies, more than 80 percent of all elections are internationally observed. This dissertation has explained the development of this international trend, the empirical puzzle of why incumbent leaders invite international election observers and cheat in front of them, and provided several tests of whether international election observation influences domestic politics.

### **The Argument**

In Chapter 3, I argued that the premium for looking and acting like a democratic regime gave “true-democrats” an incentive to signal their commitment to democracy. These leaders invited international election observers as a costly signal to establish their commitment to democratizing. Other benefit-seeking leaders imitated the signal, regardless of whether or not they were committed to democracy. The behavior spread rapidly, and before long, inviting international election observers was an expected practice for all leaders of election-holding countries. Whereas the decision to invite observers was intended to be a signal that the country was democratizing, by the early 1990s, the lack of observers in the first election following a period of non-democratic rule had become a conspicuous signal that the election was not legitimate.



International election observers are more likely to be invited to a given election as the reward for holding internationally certified elections increases, and as the ease of getting away with election manipulation decreases. I also argue that as election observation spread and pseudo-democrats began inviting observers, the incentive structure created a dynamic game of strategy between incumbent leaders and international observers. As international observers improved their methods of catching election manipulation, pseudo-democrats had the incentive to find methods of electoral manipulation that were less likely to be caught by international election observers.

The formal model in Chapter 3 explains why international election observation was initiated and spread, but it does not by itself explain why the rate of observed elections has increased even as observers have gotten better at catching election manipulation and the international community has grown more likely to punish this behavior.

The reason that incumbent leaders have continued to invite international observers to their elections is that international actors now view inviting election observers as normal behavior for all incumbent leaders outside of the developed world. In the periods of initiation and rapid spread of election observation, the act of sending observers was still controversial as a potential violation of sovereignty. The repeated invitations from incumbent leaders and the growing value placed on democracy by the international community after the Cold War allowed international support for self-determination to outweigh concerns that sending observers violated sovereignty. No longer believing that sending international observers was a violation

of sovereignty, some actors (such as the EU) became willing to punish leaders who held elections but did not invite international observers. Similarly, international observers also grew more willing and able to call attention to fraudulent elections.

As election observation began to develop as an international “norm” or standard of behavior, incumbent pseudo-democrats faced an increasingly tough choice. They could invite observers, cheat, and be caught or they could not invite observers and send a clear signal that they are holding fraudulent elections. The empirical record shows that most leaders chose the former. The willingness of international actors to punish non-inviter explains why so many leaders continue to invite observers who are likely to criticize their elections.

### **The Findings**

To test the argument outlined above, and to test for domestic consequences of international election monitoring, I employed qualitative, quantitative, and experimental evidence. Chapter 4 provides a detailed explanation of why the signal of “true-democrats” was imitated by “pseudo-democrats” in terms of changes in international preference for democracy, increased willingness by international actors to support self-determination over sovereignty, and increased international investment in democracy promotion. I also examine the pattern of bilateral foreign aid to test whether fraudulent elections are systematically related to reductions in bilateral foreign aid. As partial evidence of the relationship between international benefits and clean elections, I show that bilateral foreign aid is more likely to be reduced following a fraudulent election than following clean elections. Interestingly, after 1997, the presence of international observers is actually associated with an increased probability of aid

withdrawal, which I interpret as a reflection of the reports of international observers becoming more accurate and willing to be overtly critical.

Determining whether international election observation has become an international norm or a convention is somewhat controversial. As tentative evidence that it is an international norm, albeit one that exists in a conflicting normative environment and that is not yet internalized, I document that in the late 1990s incumbent leaders who did not invite international observers began to justify their behavior publicly.

Using a large-N dataset of all elections since 1960,<sup>105</sup> Chapter 5 tests hypotheses derived from the theory in Chapter 3. I find that available international benefits are positively associated with an increase in the probability that an election is observed, as are higher levels of democracy, higher levels of observed elections in the region in the previous year, previous election observation in the country, and executive elections. When the sample is limited to elections after 1997, the level of democracy and the available international benefits are no longer statistically significant. Although certainly not definitive proof,<sup>106</sup> this evidence supports the argument that material considerations drove the spread of election observation, but that leaders continue to invite today for reasons that are more difficult to account for in an empirical analysis: namely that international expectations have changed and legitimate leaders are now expected to invite international observers to their elections.

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<sup>105</sup> This dataset excludes long-term developed democracies.

<sup>106</sup> This result is most likely due to a smaller sample size.

Chapter 5 also presents evidence of the escalating game of strategy between incumbent leaders and international election observers. As international actors invested more resources in improving international election observation, incumbent leaders employed a variety of strategies in order to increase the probability that they could invite observers and receive a positive report, namely by inviting observers from organizations that were unlikely to criticize. However, this escalating game of strategy resulted in fluctuations in the percent of all elections observed by “high-quality” observer missions, as well as fluctuations in the rate of negative reports issued by observers.

The final chapters of this dissertation focused on the domestic effects of international election observers. Chapter 6 presented the preliminary results from a field experiment conducted during the 2004 presidential election in Indonesia. In a relatively clean election process, observers are shown to have no effect on fraud, as election day fraud can only be reduced when fraud exists. Both candidates performed equally well, in terms of vote share and turnout, in monitored and unmonitored villages.

Using the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia as a case, Chapter 7 provides natural experimental evidence that international election observers can reduce election day fraud. This evidence shows that observers can be consequential for incumbent leaders attempting to manipulate an election, and adds to the empirical puzzle of why international observers are invited in the first place. Why would a cheating incumbent make it more difficult (or more expensive) to manipulate the election by inviting international observers?

Also focusing on domestic effects of international observers, Chapter 8 provides indirect evidence that over the course of the 1990s, incumbent leaders improved their methods of manipulating the election in front of international observers. Although well concealed election manipulation is impossible to document systematically, I assume in Chapter 8 that opposition parties have better information about the fairness of the election than international observers. Because opposition parties have the most to lose from well concealed election manipulation (they gain less representation and less ability to protest when a fraudulent election is declared internationally legitimate), from 1990-2000, opposition parties are more likely to boycott when international observers are present.

### **The Implications**

International monitoring of elections, within the broader work of democracy promotion, is a very clear case of international involvement in domestic politics. In an interdependent world, there are a number of domestic decisions that are partially influenced by international factors, yet this element of decision-making is often ignored in political science research. The study of election observation adds further material to the small, but growing, body of work on the international influences on democratization.

### **International Relations**

Within international relations theory, this study also lies at the intersection of several of the traditional paradigmatic divisions. The incentive based explanation of the development of an international norm does not contradict the leading constructivist explanation of norm development, and therefore the theory here can bridge some of

the theoretical divide between the constructivist and rationalist paradigms. By focusing on a potential norm that did not originate from a principled idea, election observation provides an example of a substantively different type of international norm, and articulates the relationship between the rationality of the actors and norm compliance. Although many state leaders are responding to a “logic of consequences” when choosing to invite international observers, the reason that consequences exist is that international actors are responding to a “logic of appropriateness” (March and Olsen 1998, Fearon and Wendt 2002).

The fact that international actors are now willing to punish leaders merely for refusing to allow international observers at their elections, an (in)action that was well within the bounds of internationally accepted behavior until the 1990s, is both a sign of the normalization of election observation and evidence that it can have consequences for incumbent leaders.

### **Democratization**

International attention to elections, and the link between international benefits and internationally certified elections, can also help explain why so many countries in the world appear to be “stuck” somewhere between democracy and dictatorship. As Carothers writes:

Leaders of the regimes in these countries pay enough deference to the forms of democracy and allow enough political space to hold onto some international credibility. Yet they maintain enough control over political life to ensure that their power is not seriously threatened. (1999, 109)

The pressure by the international community on state leaders to hold elections and invite international observers explain why some leaders who are unwilling to give up power go through the motions of holding relatively open elections. Unlike Carothers, I do not agree that sending observers to these elections is of negligible value. For leaders unwilling to give up power, holding elections, manipulating them, and inviting international observers are all actions filled with potential pitfalls. Overestimating his or her popularity, underestimating the amount of manipulation needed to ensure victory, or underestimating the ability of international observers to call attention to election fraud are all miscalculations that can result in a transfer of power.

### **Policy Implications**

By showing that international observers can reduce election fraud, and by demonstrating that the presence of international observers is associated with a higher probability of opposition boycotts, this dissertation has shown two ways that the actions of international observers influence domestic politics. These empirical findings also carry policy implications.

Opposition party election boycotts are not necessarily bad for democratization, and in fact, can be a healthy part of the democratization process (Beaulieu 2006). However, to the extent that observer organizations are not already aware, they should be cognizant of the possibility that opposition parties may be boycotting in order to draw the attention of international observers to perceived or actual biases in the electoral system. To the extent that it is possible, observers should carefully evaluate the validity of these claims in light of opposition party incentives. Opposition parties

can have better information than international observers about election manipulation, but they can also try, just as many incumbent parties do, to recast the reports from international observers in their favor. This finding underscores that potential opposition party boycotts should be examined carefully on a case by case basis before observers either support or condemn them.

The chapter on the 2003 elections in Armenia supports a claim that some observer organizations have been making for years: that observers can cause cleaner elections. If the primary goal of international elections observers is to encourage clean elections, this would suggest sending as many international observers as possible.<sup>107</sup>

Alternatively, if the primary goal of sending short-term election observers is to issue an accurate report, then observers should be randomized in all elections, as this provides missions with a random sample of polling stations from which to make generalizations. It also provides a method of uncovering well-concealed election day manipulation.<sup>108</sup> If observers are not randomly assigned to polling stations, then observers cannot judge the degree to which their observations are representative of the entire process, nor can they document evidence of manipulation that is concealed during the period that they visit each polling station.

### **Conclusion**

This dissertation was motivated by the empirical puzzle of why incumbent leaders invite international election observers and cheat in front of them, and in order

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<sup>107</sup> This is not to say that the mission should take place without a comprehensive long-term observation effort.

<sup>108</sup> This method would only uncover well-concealed election day manipulation if it was less likely to take place in front of observers. This is not an unreasonable possibility, but should not be assumed.



to explain the puzzle, examined the causes and consequences of international election observation.

During the period of research for this study, election observation continued to spread to elections in even more countries, including some developed democracies, and the reports of observers garnered increasing international attention. One of the contributions of this study has been simply to document the global trend of election observation since its inception in sovereign states. It is perhaps always something of a risk to study a new and rapidly changing phenomenon. International election observation in sovereign states grew from an unheard of activity fifty years ago to a nearly universal practice, and could just as easily disappear fifty years from now. For the time being, international observers have become an integral part of many elections and of some democratic transitions.

I have shown that the reasons why international observers are invited have changed over time, and that the decision by an incumbent leader to invite international observers is intimately tied to the availability of international benefits for countries that are perceived as democracies. Election observation began in countries with relatively uneventful elections. Today, a positive judgment from reputable international observers confers legitimacy to the elected leaders and to the country, and can bring increases in internationally allocated benefits. A negative report can lead to a reduction in foreign aid, suspension from international organizations, and in extreme cases, can contribute to the bringing down of an incumbent government. Similarly, not inviting observers can also lead to aid reduction and suspension from international organizations. I have also shown that international observers can, but do

not always, reduce election-day fraud, and that they can influence opposition party behavior.

Taken as a whole, this study has offered a theory of why international observers are invited, and in this context, provided empirical tests of the argument and of the domestic consequences it implies. In conclusion, one might ask whether election observation is “good” for democracy. In the past twenty years, international observers have been involved in a number of historically important elections, and by most accounts, have had both positive and negative effects. What I hope this study has contributed is a sense of the mechanics of how international observers can play a role in democratization. They are not inconsequential in the field of elections. More generally, the involvement of international actors in domestic politics, and the response by state leaders to international incentives, can have important domestic consequences.

Although this dissertation focused exclusively on the case of international election observation, there are parallels to monitoring state compliance in other issue areas. International actors monitor elements of within-state behavior in areas as diverse as child-labor practices, pollution, and compliance with international trade treaties. The theoretical issues surrounding international monitoring of other issue areas are similar in many ways to those surrounding international election monitoring, including questions of why states allow international actors access to judge their internal process, and even more interestingly, why states often seek various forms of international monitoring even when negative judgments can be very costly. Examining

how international monitoring of domestic processes in general relates to existing theories of international relations is a promising avenue of future research.

## Appendix A

### Lijphart's (1999) Thirty-Six Democracies, Aid Recipients

**Long-term developed democracies are excluded from the analysis.**

Excluded	Included
Long-term Developed Democracies	Democracies that Receive Foreign Aid (2003 bilateral development aid)
Australia	Bahamas
Austria	Barbados
Belgium	Botswana
Canada	Colombia
Denmark	Costa Rica
Finland	India
France	Israel
Germany	Jamaica
Greece	Malta
Iceland	Mauritius
Ireland	Papua New Guinea
Italy	Portugal
Japan	Trinidad and Tobago
Luxembourg	Venezuela
Netherlands	
New Zealand	
Norway	
Spain	
Sweden	
Switzerland	
United Kingdom	
United States	

## Appendix B

### Chapter 4 Variable Description

**Aid Withdrawal:** A dichotomous indication of whether or not bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) was at least 10% less than last year's ODA between each donor-recipient pair. The data are from the OECD's Development Assistance Committee available at [<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/50/16/5037775.htm>]. The first computation was current year dyadic aid as a percentage of previous year dyadic aid. If this number was less than 90%, the dependent variable =1, and =0 otherwise. If disbursements were not reported by the donor, then aid was replaced with reported commitments. The ten percent cutoff level is arbitrary. For all donors, the mean value of current year aid as a percentage of the previous years' aid is 104%. Similarly, the median value is 99.5%.

**Electoral Fraud:** The variable for electoral fraud equals one if the election was believed to be so biased that the outcome of the results was affected. It was taken directly from the World Bank's Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al 2001). They code fraud as one if there were extra-constitutional irregularities, such as vote fraud and candidate intimidation, that were serious enough to affect the outcome of the election.

**Security Interest (Dyadic Global "S" Score –Alliance Portfolio):** Theoretically, the variable ranges from –1 to 1, and is a measure of similarity of alliance portfolios. It is weighted by each country's military capabilities as described in Signorino and Ritter (1999).

**Economic Interest (Total Bilateral Trade/Donor GDP):** Constructed from measures of dyadic trade and GDP from Gleditsch (2002). The measure is exports from donor to recipient plus imports from donor to recipient divided by the donor's GDP.

**Colonial History:** Dichotomous variable indicating whether the donor has a former colonial relationship with the recipient. The source of this information is the ICOW Colonial History Dataset (Hensel 1999).

**Founding Election:** This variable was coded as one if the recipient country held its first competitive election, defined as the first election in which the losing parties received more than 15% of the vote. The information was coded from the Vanhannen (1999) manuscript, which lists the percentage of the vote received by the incumbent party for all elections.

**Recipient Need (Growth in GDP per capita).** GDP and population figures are from Gleditsch (2002), and the growth rate was computed by the author.

**International Observers:** Coded by the author. Variable =1 if an official delegation of international observers was present. Data described in detail in Chapter 5.

## Appendix C

### Chapter 5 Summary Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Observed	1407	0.312011	0.463479	0	1
Polity2 ( <i>t</i> -1)	1260	-0.35635	7.133305	-77	10
Regional Percent Observed ( <i>t</i> -1)	1407	0.276218	0.328871	0	1
Polity2*Percent Observed Regional Aid to Government and Civil Society (US \$000) Previous Observed Election	1260	0.715362	3.385127	-67.375	10
	1407	296115	443436.9	0	2618499
Executive Election	1407	0.324805	0.468468	0	1
US Aligned	1407	0.408671	0.491763	0	1
USSR Aligned	1407	0.334044	0.471823	0	1
Nonaligned	1407	0.21393	0.410224	0	1
Aid Dependence (Aid per capita)	1407	0.452026	0.49787	0	1
	1407	27.6255	46.34581	-7.85478	403.2344

## Appendix D

### Countries Included in Regression, Chapter 5.

Afghanistan	Comoros	Guinea-Bissau
Albania	Congo (Brazzaville)	Guyana
Algeria	Costa Rica	Haiti
Angola	Cote d'Ivoire	Honduras
Argentina	Croatia	Hungary
Armenia	Cuba	India
Azerbaijan	Cyprus	Indonesia
Bahrain	Czech Republic	Iran
Bangladesh	Czechoslovakia	Iraq
Belarus	Democratic Republic of Vietnam	Israel
Benin	Djibouti	Jamaica
Bolivia	Dominican Republic	Jordan
Botswana	Ecuador	Kazakhstan
Brazil	Egypt	Kenya
Bulgaria	El Salvador	Kuwait
Burkina Faso	Equatorial Guinea	Kyrgyzstan
Burundi	Estonia	Laos
Cambodia	Ethiopia	Latvia
Cameroon	Fiji	Lebanon
Central African Republic	Gabon	Lesotho
Chad	Georgia	Liberia
Chile	Ghana	Libya
China	Guatemala	Lithuania
Colombia	Guinea	Macedonia



Madagascar	Papua New Guinea	Swaziland
Malawi	Paraguay	Syria
Malaysia	Peru	Tajikistan
Mali	Philippines	Tanzania
Mauritania	Poland	Thailand
Mauritius	Republic of Vietnam	The Gambia
Mexico	Romania	Togo
Moldova	Russia	Trinidad and Tobago
Mongolia	Rwanda	Tunisia
Morocco	Senegal	Turkey
Mozambique	Sierra Leone	Turkmenistan
Myanmar	Singapore	Uganda
Namibia	Slovakia	Ukraine
Nepal	Slovenia	Uruguay
Nicaragua	Solomon Islands	Uzbekistan
Niger	Somalia	Venezuela
Nigeria	South Africa	Yemen
North Korea	South Korea	Yugoslavia
Oman	South Yemen	Zambia
Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Zimbabwe
Panama	Sudan	

## Dropped Countries, Chapter 5 Regression

### Excluded because of Size and/or Missing Polity Scores

Andorra	Kiribati	Samoa
Antigua and Barbuda	Maldives	San Marino
Bahamas	Malta	Sao Tome & Principe
Barbados	Federated States of Micronesia	Serbia
Belize	Nauru	Seychelles
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Palau	Tonga
Cape Verde	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Tuvalu
Eritrea	Saint Lucia	Vanuatu
Grenada	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	

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