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# ELECTION RIGGING AND HOW TO FIGHT IT

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In some countries, the deceased seem to cast ballots from the grave. Children too are on the electoral rolls. Ballot boxes disappear into thin air. Candidates are arrested, poisoned, even murdered. Although elections are now held in most countries around the globe, in many cases they are anything but free and fair. Up to sixty regimes in the world today can be classified as “electoral authoritarian”: They restrict the exercise of democratic freedoms, yet allow periodic multiparty elections in an attempt to bolster their domestic and international legitimacy. The rulers of these regimes are unwilling to risk losing elections, however, and so they manipulate elections to ensure that they remain in power. Electoral authoritarian regimes are the most common political system in Central Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>1</sup>

The electoral fraud and manipulation employed by these regimes take a variety of forms. They are aimed at every step of the electoral process, ranging from altered voter-registration lists, to disrupted campaigns, to rigged vote tabulations. Some are brazen, while others are subtle. In recent years, authoritarian regimes have become increasingly adept at keeping up the appearance of meeting democratic norms while subverting the integrity of the electoral process.

The growing sophistication of electoral fraud and manipulation has been matched by improvements in the skills and methods of election observers. Domestic and international monitoring organizations have been adopting a more comprehensive approach to election observation. They assess a country’s election laws and regulations, which may tilt the playing field in the regime’s favor, and they monitor the electoral

process from start to finish. Even when their access is restricted, they are often able to detect and to document electoral malpractice. Election observers' judgments carry significant weight, especially since many countries have repeatedly made international commitments to hold free and fair elections and to accept election observation.<sup>2</sup>

Authoritarian regimes often succeed in retaining power, even when their resort to electoral fraud and manipulation is exposed, by relying on state resources and the use of force. Nonetheless, exposing fraud and manipulation can help to erode the legitimacy that such regimes seek to gain through elections. In a few cases, authoritarian regimes were ultimately brought down by their citizens' indignation over acts of electoral fraud that were documented by observers. The exposure of electoral manipulation helped to oust authoritarian rulers in Serbia in 2000, in Georgia's "Rose Revolution" of 2003, in Ukraine's "Orange Revolution" of 2004, and in Kyrgyzstan's "Tulip Revolution" of 2005.

Knowing how authoritarian regimes have manipulated past elections can help both their citizens and international actors to watch for and deter similar abuses in future elections. With this goal in mind, I assess common methods used to cheat at four different stages of the electoral process: voter registration, electoral campaigning, election-day procedures, and the final vote count and tabulation.

## Voter Registration

Voter registration determines who is able to cast a ballot and who is not; it is therefore fundamental to the integrity of elections. Election observers have found the names of the dead and of children on voter-registration lists. Such inflated voter rolls may result from direct manipulation or from simple neglect, but in either case they increase the risk that fraudulent ballots will be cast. Voters are sometimes registered twice, allowing the voter who was double-entered to collude with polling-station officials and cast multiple ballots. In some cases, ineligible and even nonexistent "phantom" voters are on voter-registration lists, and certain eligible voters—often those likely to support the opposition—are obstructed from registering to vote or are removed from the rolls altogether. Observers have documented the practice of such tactics in a number of elections worldwide. In Malaysia, the nongovernmental organization Malaysians for Free and Fair Elections conducted a study before the country's 2004 general elections and found numerous inaccuracies in the electoral rolls. In one instance, a total of 142 voters were registered at a single address—at which stood a wooden shack selling knick-knacks—and in another, 156 voters were registered at a nonexistent "phantom" address.<sup>3</sup>

A surge in voter registration is another probable indication of deliberate manipulation. In Georgia, there was a surge of registration in some districts before the fraudulent 2003 parliamentary elections. In half of

Tbilisi's districts, for example, the number of registered voters increased by more than 50 percent.<sup>4</sup> In Ukraine's presidential elections of 2004, inexplicably large numbers of voters were added to voter lists in some places between the first round and the runoff.<sup>5</sup>

Agents of the ruling regime may also remove, misspell, or leave off names of voters who are members of certain demographic groups, such as first-time voters or those concentrated in geographic areas where support for opposition candidates is strongest. In Ukraine, election observers reported a case where all voters living in one apartment building were missing from the voter list.

The voter-registration process may raise deliberate or inadvertent obstacles for pro-opposition voters. Before Cambodia's 2003 parliamentary elections, for example, first-time voters—a group that disproportionately favored the opposition—were discouraged or prevented from registering and thus from voting. Some registration centers were closed during part of the required opening hours; others lacked critical forms or materials (such as cameras needed to take photos for voter cards). Officials at other centers made it difficult for citizens to obtain documents required for registration (such as residency papers).<sup>6</sup>

## **Electoral Competition**

Ruling parties skew electoral competition to their advantage through many methods, some more crude than others. They may obstruct the opposition and its supporters, pressure ordinary citizens, use state resources to support incumbents, stack electoral commissions with their stalwarts, or control the media.

The regime may directly attack opposition candidates, sending police forces to detain them or thugs to assault or even kill them. A brazen example of violence directed against opposition candidates took place in 2004, when Ukraine's main presidential challenger, Viktor Yushchenko, was poisoned with dioxin in an apparent assassination attempt. Pressure on opposition candidates, however, is usually more subtle. In Azerbaijan's 2005 parliamentary elections, authorities threatened to launch tax investigations against candidates, close candidates' or their families' businesses, and criminally prosecute them.<sup>7</sup>

Authoritarian regimes may also keep opposition candidates off the ballot. This is a blunt method of rigging elections, but it effectively preempts competition. In Iran, the Guardian Council thwarted the opposition in the 2004 parliamentary elections by disqualifying about 2,400 candidates. In Russia, disqualification of candidates is rare but still occurs. When former vice-president Alexander Rutskoi was running for reelection as regional governor of Kursk in 2000, he was removed from the ballot one day before the election because of technical violations on his candidate-filing forms.

A more subtle way to manipulate electoral competition is to register unknown candidates with the same name as the candidate whom the ruling regime seeks to defeat; this confuses voters and draws votes away from that candidate. The ballot in a 1998 race for a city assembly seat in St. Petersburg, Russia, featured three candidates named Oleg Sergeyev. One candidate was the reformist incumbent, while the other two—a retiree and an unemployed laborer—never once made a public appearance or used their allotment of free campaign television time.<sup>8</sup>

Authoritarian regimes also restrict or undermine opposition candidates' electoral campaigns. They may deny permission for opposition candidates to hold campaign rallies, stop buses of opposition supporters from reaching the rallies, or even break up the rallies by force. In Kazakhstan's 2005 presidential election, the main challenger complained that only five of his fifty-one requests for open meetings with voters were approved, and of those five meetings, four were allowed to take place only at some distance from the town center.<sup>9</sup>

Pressure can also be put on opposition-party activists in a number of ways: Local officials may deny them services or benefits to which they are entitled; they may be detained or arrested by police; and they may be beaten up or even murdered by thugs organized by ruling-party officials. Murders of opposition activists, even if they are rare, can have a profound effect. They send a chilling message to other opposition activists and create a climate of fear.

Supporters of the opposition often feel the pressing weight of the regime. In the campaign for Cambodia's 2003 parliamentary elections, local organizers of the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) used a combination of gifts and threats to influence members of the royalist party Funcinpec. At village public ceremonies, Funcinpec members were given gifts and then told to swear an oath of allegiance to the CPP. The ceremonies sometimes were held in pagodas or in the presence of Buddhist monks, giving participants the impression that breaking their oath would be comparable to violating religious tenets. In some cases, participants were instructed to confirm their oath with a thumbprint on a written document. They were later told that they had in fact signed a loan agreement—but that if the CPP won the vote in the village, they would not have to repay the loan. At times they were told that the CPP would find out if they voted for Funcinpec.<sup>10</sup> The combination of gifts and threats was a powerful way to make Funcinpec members feel beholden to the CPP for their livelihood and to intimidate them into supporting the CPP.

Even ordinary citizens who are not aligned with any particular party may feel the regime's pressure, especially if they rely on the state for their livelihood. The director of a state-owned factory, for example, might tell employees to sign a declaration of support for the ruling party or else risk losing their jobs. In Ethiopia's 2005 parliamentary

elections, election observers reported that public officials threatened to dispossess peasants of their land and to dismiss students who refused to sign a commitment to vote for the ruling party.<sup>11</sup>

Ruling-party incumbents may gain unfair advantages through the illegal use of state resources. The ruling party may mobilize state employees, use government-owned vehicles to travel to rallies, or pay for expenses with diverted public funds. In addition, incumbents can gain significant advantage through their dominance of election commissions.

A dominant presence of ruling-party members or supporters on election commissions, from the national level down to the polling-station level, can seriously skew the election process. During the campaign period, election officials can boost the ruling party's chances by failing to enforce compliance with election law and regulations. In rigged elections, when opposition candidates raise complaints about ruling party violations, election officials often dismiss the violations on technical or other grounds. The failure of election officials to rectify violations of election law and regulations allows the ruling party to get away with restrictions on opposition campaigns and with illegal uses of state resources.

Election commissions can also undermine fair competition by making significant decisions in the final days of the election campaign. A last-minute change in election-day procedures, for instance, may sow confusion among provincial and local election officials and undercut any improvement that the change was intended to achieve. Unless it is approved by all major political parties, a last-minute rule change is inherently suspect. Election commissions also have enormous influence over the transparency of the electoral process. They can close off critical parts of the process to scrutiny by the opposition and the public. Moreover, large-scale election fraud, particularly at the vote-tabulation stage, can take place only with the collusion of senior election officials.

The regime may also use its control over the media to weaken the opposition. Journalists who provide sympathetic coverage for opposition candidates may be detained, arrested, threatened, or physically attacked. Pro-opposition television networks, radio stations, or newspapers may be subjected to a tax investigation, with the intent to harass them or to find a pretext to shut them down. Transmission of television or radio broadcasts may be blocked. Newspapers may have their print run confiscated, or find out that their printing house has run out of paper or refuses to do their printing. Laws to protect the president's honor or to prohibit defamation of candidates can provide a pretext for authorities to impose fines on newspapers and restrict free speech during election campaigns, as has been the case in Kazakhstan.

Government censorship can be structured and systematic. In Ukraine, former president Leonid Kuchma's administration issued *temnyky* (themes or guidelines) on how the media should report on certain issues. Among these *temnyky* were instructions for the media to emphasize

infighting among opposition leaders and to portray opposition leaders as advocates of extremist ethnic demands.<sup>12</sup> In Ukraine's 2004 presidential campaign, anonymously authored materials were distributed in an effort to discredit major candidates—particularly, opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko. These materials—whose target audience was Ukraine's substantial ethnic-Russian minority—misrepresented his policy positions and portrayed him as a hardline Ukrainian nationalist.

Under authoritarian regimes, major media companies are often owned by individuals closely aligned with the ruling party. These individuals sometimes allow ruling-party candidates to gain preferential access to advertising space or charge them lower rates than the opposition. In Kazakhstan's 2005 presidential election, opposition candidates were informed that there was no space available for their billboards, even though there was plenty of space for billboards of President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Ruling parties often benefit from unbalanced coverage on television and radio, particularly from national television stations, which are the principal source of news for many voters. Election laws and regulations may call for balanced media coverage during the election campaign, but they are often inadequate or poorly enforced. For example, they may require the state media to provide candidates with equal allotments of free-air time but exempt private media from that requirement. Election commissions often neglect to monitor, let alone enforce, requirements for balanced media coverage; as a result, primetime news and other television broadcasts often favor the ruling party, as incumbents receive more extensive and more positive coverage than opposition candidates. Television news programs sometimes provide far more extensive and positive coverage for the incumbent leader than for opposition candidates on the pretext that they are reporting on the incumbent in his capacity as a state official, not as a candidate for reelection.

## Election Day

On the day of voting, electoral-authoritarian regimes have used a variety of methods to boost their candidates' vote totals. Methods range from crude maneuvers to ingenious schemes that are difficult to detect. Domestic and international attention to the electoral process reaches its height on election day, and yet some instances of manipulation may go undetected by observers. Fraud and manipulation cannot be uncovered when observers are denied access to polling stations or are blocked from viewing the vote-counting process.

Ruling regimes were guilty of blatant electoral fraud in Egypt's 2005 presidential elections and Nigeria's 2003 national and state elections. In Egypt, security officials went so far as to destroy ballots cast for opposition candidates.<sup>13</sup> In Nigeria, ballot boxes were stuffed on elec-

tion day—in full view of election observers. At one polling station, European Union (EU) observers witnessed the presiding officer marking ballots for Nigeria's ruling People's Democratic Party. At another station, EU observers found that, though the ballot box was full by around midday, only 85 names on the list of 743 registered voters were ticked. At a third polling station, 50 cast ballots were suspiciously folded in the same way, and the first 50 names on the voter list were ticked in alphabetical order. Elsewhere, the EU observers actually saw people snatching ballot boxes.<sup>14</sup>

Multiple voting is yet another method of vote fraud. Sometimes, a listed voter may find ways to cast more than one ballot. At other times, an unknown individual may simply appear at the polling station to vote in the name of a deceased voter or to cast a ballot without marking his or her name on the voter list. In past decades in Mexico, such individuals were called *paracaidistas* (parachutists), because they seemed to drop out of the sky and into polling stations to cast ballots.<sup>15</sup>

Ukraine had its fair share of *paracaidistas* in its 2004 presidential election. Busloads of people simply appeared at polling stations, many bearing absentee-voting certificates that allowed them to cast ballots at polling stations other than the ones at which they were officially registered. Some people reportedly were being bussed from one polling station to another in order to use these absentee-voting certificates at multiple polling stations.

Vote-buying is another well-known tactic. Agents of the authoritarian government cannot, however, always rely on bribes, because voters may take the money or gifts but then vote for opposition candidates. In Thailand, when a ruling party distributed rice in return for votes, the opposition would tell voters to take the rice but vote their conscience. Vote-buying usually works as the briber intends only when the secrecy of the ballot is compromised or when it is combined with pressure exerted on those bribed. In Egypt's 2005 presidential election, agents of the ruling National Democratic Party reportedly gave voters money and then accompanied them inside the polling station to ensure that they voted for President Hosni Mubarak. In Serbia during the 1990s, agents of then-president Slobodan Milošević concocted a less heavy-handed scheme to ensure that those bribed would vote for Milošević. As later reported by opposition activists, Milošević's agents would target groups of voters, such as workers from a state-owned factory. The first voter was given a ballot that was already marked for Milošević, and was then instructed to enter the polling station and cast that marked ballot. That voter would then exit the station and give the agent his or her blank ballot in return for cash. The agent then marked the blank ballot for Milošević and gave it to the second voter in the group, who was instructed to do the same as the first voter. Through this scheme, the agents ensured that all of the group's voters cast their ballots for



Milošević; there was no way to detect this fraud, unless one of the voters reported it. Similar schemes were also used in past decades in Mexico, where they were called *carruseles* (carousels).

Subtle or overt pressure may also sway voters to cast ballots for ruling-party candidates. Ruling-party agents may post their campaign materials inside polling stations; polling-station officials may explain the voting procedures in a way that favors ruling-party candidates; unauthorized persons, often security officials, may interfere in or direct the voting process; and marked ballots may be placed unfolded in a transparent ballot box, where they are visible to polling-station officials or political-party agents.

Election-day fraud is often carried out as part of an organized effort. In Ukraine, agents of Viktor Yanukovich attempted to rig the 2004 presidential election on a grand scale. Subsequently released recordings of Yanukovich's campaign workers' remarks convey how the government tried to make plans for Yanukovich to win by about 3 percent (a margin which they felt would secure victory but also make it appear as if the competition was not rigged). An elaborate plan was created to fulfill the goal: Targets were set for the share of the vote that would go to Yanukovich in different districts and cities, agents were provided with precise instructions on how to steal votes, and election officials were promised a substantial payment if they complied with the government's directives.<sup>16</sup>

The risk of electoral fraud is even greater when voters cast ballots outside the polling station, as these ballots are easily vulnerable to manipulation. In many countries, a mobile ballot box is sent to the homes of voters who are ill, elderly, or otherwise unable to get to the polling station, and election officials may pressure these voters to vote for the ruling party or even tamper with their ballots. Unless mobile ballot boxes are accompanied by opposition-party agents, they become easy targets for ruling-party agents who are looking for an opportunity to stuff them with illegal ballots. In Ukraine, there were a few cases in which more than 30 percent of the polling station's votes were cast in the mobile ballot box, and cases where the signatures of voters who used the mobile ballot box all looked alike, raising observers' suspicions. Voting by mail, which is fairly common in advanced democracies, is also susceptible to abuse unless proper safeguards are in place. In Birmingham, England, a court threw out the results of two local-council elections in 2005 after reviewing many instances of fraud and manipulation, casting England's postal-ballot system into doubt.<sup>17</sup>

## Vote Count and Vote Tabulation

After the polls have closed, the vote count provides further opportunities for agents of the ruling party to steal votes. Polling-station officials

may favor the ruling party as they apply the rules on what constitutes a valid ballot; when a ballot is marked incorrectly but the voter's intention is clear, they may decide it is invalid if it is marked for an opposition candidate but accept it as valid if it is marked for a ruling-party candidate. In countries where election procedures state that a ballot is invalid if it contains any stray marks, polling-station officials may put stray marks on ballots cast for opposition candidates. When officials fill out the station's record of the vote count (often referred to as the "protocol"), they may inflate the results for ruling-party candidates or take votes away from opposition candidates. Officials connected to the ruling party are most likely to tamper with results at stations where no opposition-party agents or independent election observers are present.

The introduction of electronic voting machines can create new opportunities for fraud. These machines can be programmed to alter the vote count—for example, to record votes for a ruling-party candidate when the votes are cast for an opposition candidate. There is no firm evidence to date of such abuses, but electronic-voting-machine fraud may go undetected unless the machines are subject to regular audits and produce a paper record of each vote that the voter can verify.<sup>18</sup>

At the polling-station level, a "retail" version of vote theft may occur as the ballots are counted. The possibility of "wholesale" vote theft occurs when the votes are aggregated and tabulated at the provincial and national levels. During the vote tabulation, ruling-party agents may convert a defeat into a victory. In Mexico, such agents were known as *alquimistas* (alchemists).

Vote tabulation can be rigged in manifold ways. For one, the ruling party may tamper with ballot boxes as they are transported from polling stations to provincial counting centers. In Egypt's 2005 parliamentary elections, some ballot boxes were stolen during transport and destroyed, with their remnants left strewn about in the streets. Agents may also stuff ballot boxes that are being transported to provincial counting centers. Counting-center officials may falsify official records as they aggregate polling stations' election results.

When opposition-party representatives and independent election observers are denied access or are unable to adequately monitor the vote-tabulation process, official records of election results are often falsified. At vote-count centers in Egypt during the 2005 parliamentary elections, poll-watchers were unable to monitor the entire vote tabulation as no more than two poll-watchers were permitted per candidate, even though scores of ballot boxes were being counted simultaneously. Sometimes, officials from provincial and national election commissions refuse to announce the breakdown of election results by polling station and by province, thereby obstructing scrutiny of the vote tabulation. Without such a breakdown, opposition-party representatives and election monitors cannot verify whether or not individual station results

were accurately added into the vote totals at the provincial and national levels. Officials from the national election commission may also refuse to tell the opposition and the public how many ballots were printed and how many blank ballots were distributed to each province before election day, making it difficult to verify aggregate vote totals. Election monitors need to know the number of blank ballots distributed in order to compare it to the number of votes cast, as well as to invalid, spoiled, and unused ballots.

The announcement of implausible election results usually indicates that vote tabulations were falsified. In Nigeria's 2003 presidential election, which took place on the same day as the gubernatorial elections, there was a large discrepancy in some regions between the total number of votes cast for president and for governor. Moreover, implausibly high voter-turnout rates of over 90 percent were officially announced in some states.<sup>19</sup>

## Detection and Prevention

Since every stage in the electoral process is vulnerable, electoral manipulation is difficult to prevent. Election observation nonetheless has proven effective time and again in detecting and documenting deficiencies, manipulation, and fraud, thereby challenging the legitimacy of rulers who seek to stay in power through rigged elections. To deter fraud and manipulation, election observers need to promote transparency in the entire electoral process, to call for substantial representation of opposition parties or independents on election commissions, to monitor every stage of the electoral process effectively, and to document and publicize any abuses that take place.<sup>20</sup>

Appropriate and well-enforced election laws and regulations are critical for ensuring the transparency of the electoral process. They can promote transparency by guaranteeing access for political party agents and independent observers to monitor the entire electoral process; by requiring polling-station officials to make public and to provide to candidate representatives official copies of the results protocols; and by instructing the national election commission to provide details on the numbers of blank ballots printed and distributed and on the breakdown of election results by polling station.

Representation on election commissions gives the opposition access to decision making on the procedures and conduct of elections. This access can be used to introduce procedures for deterring fraud, such as requiring polling-station officials to seal ballot boxes until the vote count begins and to stain the fingers of voters with indelible ink after they have cast their ballots. The opposition's participation in election commissions also helps to promote enforcement of election laws and regulations. Unless independent or pro-opposition election commis-

sioners press for enforcement, violations of election laws and regulations are likely to go unpunished. In addition, representation on election commissions is essential for the opposition to prevent official collusion in large-scale electoral fraud and manipulation.

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*In response to the proven effectiveness of observers in exposing electoral abuses, authoritarian regimes have begun to manipulate election observation itself.*

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Transparency will do little to help opposition parties unless they use it to monitor the entire electoral process effectively, from the registration of voters to the vote tabulation. Assessment of voter registration lists is straightforward, though rather labor-intensive. It requires contacting a random sample of voters selected from the voter rolls and checking the accuracy of their listed information. Voters who cannot be located at their registered address probably are ineligible. Election monitors may also conduct a separate assessment to find out whether the voter list is complete. To do so, they visit a random sample of residences, identify the adult citizens, and then look for their names on the voter list. Adult citizens omitted from the voter list probably are eligible voters who have been disenfranchised.

During the campaign period, observers need to monitor media coverage of candidates and to identify any abuse of state resources for campaign purposes.<sup>21</sup> By reporting their findings while the campaign is still underway, observers can draw attention to unfair competition and can generate pressure on election officials to correct any media imbalance or abuse of state resources.

To monitor election day effectively, opposition parties and nonpartisan organizations need to deploy trained observers to every polling station and every vote-counting center in the country. These observers will be effective only if they are trained to separate rumor from fact—rumors of electoral fraud are common in hotly contested elections—and properly to document and report observed instances of electoral fraud. Opposition parties and nonpartisan monitors also need to communicate their findings to international observers and media in order to draw worldwide attention to any electoral fraud or manipulation.

By calling attention to the types of fraud that are anticipated on election day, election monitors can make the public aware of likely threats to fair elections. They may also help to deter fraud by reminding election officials and ruling-party agents of the legal penalties for violations of the election law and by pledging to do their utmost to ensure prosecution of any such violations.

Sometimes effective election observation can even compensate for a lack of transparency in the electoral process. A parallel vote tabulation,

for example, can serve to check the accuracy of officially announced election results. In President Slobodan Milošević's bid for reelection in 2000, Yugoslavia's Federal Election Commission falsified the election results. The opposition, however, had conducted a parallel vote tabulation and thus was able to announce accurate election results before the official falsified results came out. Furthermore, the opposition was able to prove that the results it announced were accurate because it had collected official copies of protocols from virtually all the polling stations in Serbia.

In response to the proven effectiveness of observers in exposing electoral abuses, authoritarian regimes have begun to manipulate election observation itself. They have invited little-known groups, often with clear sympathies for the regime, to send observers who will issue positive assessments of rigged elections. In Azerbaijan, for example, an ad hoc group of U.S. observers praised the 2005 parliamentary elections, even though the official International Election Observation Mission, led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, concluded that the elections fell short of democratic standards. The ad hoc group was sponsored by Azerbaijan's Central Election Commission and thus was in no position to offer a credible independent judgment on the electoral process.

In October 2005, at a ceremony hosted by United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan, established international election observation organizations, including both intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, signed a Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. This Declaration sets out the principles for impartial election observation and thus helps to distinguish legitimate monitoring missions from those that lack credibility.

This tug-of-war between authoritarian regimes seeking to bolster their legitimacy through rigged elections and observer groups trying to deter or bring to light electoral manipulation is sure to continue. In a few notable cases—Serbia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, and Ukraine in 2004—the exposure of electoral fraud has sparked popular uprisings that led to the demise of authoritarian rulers. Nonetheless, in recent years most flawed elections have left the ruling party still in power. Yet even in these cases—including the latest elections in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Belarus—observers who document the unfair victories of electoral authoritarian regimes are able to deny authoritarian rulers the democratic legitimacy that they vainly seek.

## NOTES

The author would like to thank Robert Pastor for his comments on an earlier draft.

1. Andreas Schedler, "Elections Without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (April 2002): 47–48. Schedler distinguishes

electoral-authoritarian regimes from liberal democracies, electoral democracies, and closed authoritarian regimes.

2. See the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections, 26 March 1994; Organization of American States commitments discussed in Robert A. Pastor, "'A Community of Democracies in the Americas': Instilling Substance into a Wondrous Phrase," *Canadian Foreign Policy* 10 (Spring 2003): 16–19; OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), *OSCE Human Dimension Commitments*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2005), 75–80; and the Assembly of the African Union's "Decision 18," in Maputo, Mozambique, 10–12 July 2003, which endorses the conference statement of the Africa Conference on Elections, Democracy and Governance, 7–10 April 2003.

3. The report by Malaysians for Free and Fair Elections is cited in the online independent news source Malaysiakini, Yoon Szu-Mae, "Election watchdog: Electoral roll tainted, postpone polls," 8 March 2004, [www.malaysiakini.com](http://www.malaysiakini.com).

4. Other regions of Georgia saw dramatic declines in voter registration, with about one quarter of the voters "lost." See "OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report, Part 1" (Georgia parliamentary election) 28 January 2004, at [www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org).

5. Information on Ukraine's 2004 elections, unless otherwise indicated, comes from "OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report" (Ukraine presidential election), 11 May 2005, at [www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org).

6. National Democratic Institute, Preelection Assessment Delegation to Cambodia, 4 February 2003, and International Republican Institute, Cambodia Voter Registration Report, 14 February 2003.

7. "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions," OSCE/ODIHR International Election Observation Mission to Azerbaijan, 6 November 2005, 6.

8. Daniel Williams, "Dirty Tricks in St. Petersburg; Many Fear Tone Set for Other Votes," *Washington Post*, 7 December 1998.

9. Documentation of electoral manipulation in Kazakhstan is provided in the "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions," OSCE/ODIHR International Election Observation Mission for the presidential election in Kazakhstan, 4 December 2005.

10. "Don't Bite the Hand That Feeds You: Coercion, Threats, and Vote-Buying in Cambodia's National Elections," Human Rights Watch briefing paper, July 2003, 10–14, at [www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/cambodia/elections.htm](http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/cambodia/elections.htm).

11. Preliminary Statement of the European Union Election Observation Mission to Ethiopia, 17 May 2005.

12. Lucan A. Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 16 (April 2005): 132.

13. Documentation of electoral fraud and manipulation in Egypt's presidential and parliamentary elections of 2005 is contained in a series of reports by the Independent Committee for Election Monitoring, available at the Web site of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies, [www.eicds.org](http://www.eicds.org), and at the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, [www.eohr.org](http://www.eohr.org).

14. See "Final Report" of the European Union Election Observation Mission to Nigeria, 2003, on the National Assembly elections, presidential and gubernatorial elections, and the State Houses of Assembly elections, pp. 33–34, at <http://>

[europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/eidhr/pdf/elections-reports-nigeria-03\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/eidhr/pdf/elections-reports-nigeria-03_en.pdf).

15. Information on election fraud in Mexico is described in George W. Grayson, "Registering and Identifying Voters: What the United States Can Learn from Mexico," *Election Law Journal* 3 (July 2004): 513; George Grayson also provided information directly.

16. Lucan A. Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," 134–36.

17. In one incident, police actually caught three councilors in a warehouse in the middle of the night, surrounded by hundreds of postal ballots; although they denied any wrongdoing, one of their lawyers admitted that they might have looked suspicious. In another incident, a postman was offered a bribe to hand over a bag of blank ballots, and when he refused, the perpetrators threatened to cut his throat. Also, some voters arrived at their polling stations only to find that postal ballots had already been cast in their names, and some signatures on returned postal ballots differed from the signatures on the postal-ballot applications. See Barnaby Mason, "Voting Scandal Mars UK Election," BBC News, 5 April 2005.

18. For discussion of electronic voting machines, see "Building Confidence in U.S. Elections: The Report of the Commission on Federal Election Reform," September 2005, 25–28, at [www.american.edu/ia/cfer](http://www.american.edu/ia/cfer).

19. See "Final Report," EU Election Observation Mission to Nigeria, 36.

20. For discussion of the methods of international election observation and the standards for judging elections, see Thomas Carothers, "The Observers Observed," and Jørgen Elklit and Palle Svensson, "What Makes Elections Free and Fair?" in *Journal of Democracy* 8 (July 1997): 32–46; and Robert A. Pastor, "Mediating Elections," *Journal of Democracy* 9 (January 1998) 154–63.

21. The Voter Education Center in Mongolia, for example, documented the misuse of government vehicles and office buildings and the mobilization of government employees for campaign purposes in the 2004 parliamentary elections.