



PROJECT MUSE®

## The Pseudo-Democrat's Dilemma

Hyde, Susan D.

Published by Cornell University Press

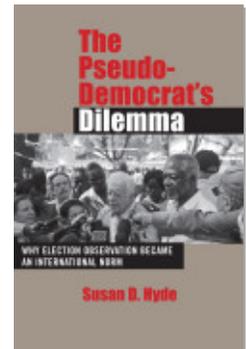
Hyde, Susan D.

The Pseudo-Democrat's Dilemma: Why Election Monitoring Became an International Norm.

1 ed. Cornell University Press, 2011.

Project MUSE., <a href="

<https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/26089>



---

## DEMOCRACY-CONTINGENT BENEFITS

As of January 2005, Ethiopia received nearly a third of its total budget from the United States and European Union member states. It was one of the leading aid recipients in Africa, and prior to parliamentary elections in 2005, the country was considered a darling of the donor community on the African continent, setting an example of relative stability, economic growth, and political liberalization. Although he had refused to invite international observers in 2000, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's government invited and accredited more than three hundred monitors for the May 2005 general elections, including delegations from the African Union, the Arab League, the Carter Center, and the European Union. As the *Economist* reported, the election was supposed to “mark the safe passage of Ethiopia from blood-soaked Marxist rule to multiparty democracy.”<sup>1</sup> Prior to the election, Meles was praised for allowing open debate, the relative lack of violence in campaigning, and overall movement toward democracy.

Instead of fulfilling expectations and holding democratic elections, however, the Meles government engaged in carefully orchestrated manipulation. Initially, international observers found the process to be relatively clean, without significant evidence of fraud on election day or in the pre-election period, and the election gained widespread international approval. The EU called it “the most genuinely competitive elections the country has experienced,” and the Carter Center reported that “Ethiopia has made tremendous strides toward democracy.”<sup>2</sup>

Almost immediately following the close of polls, however, concerns began to surface. The government announced election results before official

1. “Hoping That a Star Won’t Fizzle,” August 11, 2005, *Economist*.

2. “Ethiopia’s Governing Party Claims a Victory,” May 18, 2005, *New York Times*.

results were compiled, asserting a landslide victory for the government. Several hours after the election, Meles decreed a ban on all public protest and demonstrations. International observers began to issue warnings to the Meles government, citizens protested despite the ban, and thirty-six protesters were killed in the week after the election. Almost before the ink was dry on their statements praising the election, the European Union warned that the postelection behavior by the government was “seriously undermining the transparency and fairness of the elections” and that their actions “increase[d] the scope for manipulation . . . and put in doubt public confidence in the process.”<sup>3</sup> Dozens of additional deaths, thousands of arrests, and the intimidation of journalists continued in subsequent months, provoking further international condemnation. Continuing to play the part of a democratic leader, Meles attempted to distance himself from the government violence against protesters, expressing shock at the deaths and ordering an independent investigation. The Carter Center was more circumspect than the EU in their criticism of the election, a fact exploited by Meles’s government in an attempt to discredit EU criticism.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, because Ethiopia was a U.S. ally in the “war on terror,” the U.S. reaction was mixed.

Even in these ambiguous circumstances, international actors responded to the reports of fraud, criticism from international observers, and politically targeted postelection violence, seeking to punish the Meles government: the UK immediately froze more than \$30 million in aid, and other donors followed suit, particularly after opposition and journalist-targeted violence continued in November. By January 2006, donors had halted more than \$375 million in budgetary support initially intended for direct disbursement to the Ethiopian government. Pre-election recommendations by donors to double aid to Ethiopia vanished from discussion. The *New York Times* headline on the election was “Mr. Good Governance Goes Bad,” the paper’s editorial writers complained that “Mr. Meles is in favor of democracy only when people are voting for him” and recommended a series of actions aimed at punishing his government.<sup>5</sup> Concern about humanitarian conditions led those donors who did not suspend aid entirely to channel it through private organizations in an effort to sanction the government without causing further humanitarian suffering.

3. “Post-election Developments Undermining Confidence in Ethiopian Vote: EU,” May 25, 2005, Agence France Presse.

4. “Minister Points out Glaring Differences in EU-EOM, Carter Centre Reports. September 23, 2005, *The Ethiopian Herald*.

5. “Mr. Good Governance Goes Bad,” November 27, 2005, *New York Times*.

In short, Meles's attempts to hold internationally certified elections ultimately failed, provoking serious international consequences. His sterling reputation as a democratic leader was tarnished, democracy-promoting states reduced and rechanneled foreign aid, and the pre-election discussions by donors of debt relief for the country dissipated. Meles ultimately stayed in power, although one can imagine that he would have fared better if he had not been under international pressure to comply with the norm of election observation and if international observers had not criticized the election. Had he managed to invite international observers and evade their criticism, it is likely he and his government would have received the promised aid increases and other benefits that would have accompanied recognition as one of Africa's leading democracies.

By 2005, the norm of election monitoring was well established, and the leaders of Ethiopia and other similar countries were well aware of the links between democracy promotion, internationally certified elections, and international benefits. In the early period of election observation, democracy-promoting organizations played a crucial role in motivating governments to invite observers, but their role was not to advocate the practice of election observation. Rather, democracy promoters succeeded in making a greater share of international benefits conditioned on a government's regime type. Thus, the existence of democracy-contingent benefits gave some leaders the incentive to signal their commitment to democratization. When democracy promoters recognized election monitoring as a signal of a government's commitment to democracy, other leaders also had the incentive to invite election monitors, even in the absence of overt advocacy for election monitoring. Again, the norm of election monitoring was generated by the new belief among democracy promoters that all true democrats invite international observers to judge their elections, particularly if their "type" is not already well-established.

This change in the expectations of democracy promoters and their recognition that election monitoring signaled valuable information about a government's commitment to democracy was not inevitable. As discussed in previous chapters, the first invitations from governments in sovereign states to foreign observers were refused. Although the OAS began to provide observers in 1962, the UN continued to refuse such invitations from sovereign states until 1990, with debate playing out for years within the General Assembly.<sup>6</sup> Election monitoring was also a contentious issue

6. Kelley, "Assessing the Complex Evolution of Norms."

within other international organizations. Over time, however, as governments continued to invite election monitors, the practice became more widely accepted, and democracy-promoting actors developed the shared belief that all true democrats invite election monitors.

This chapter documents the indirect role that pro-democracy actors played in generating the norm of election monitoring. The dramatic increase in support for democracy across a diverse set of international actors underscores the idea that international benefits tied to democracy exist; that the relative importance of democracy promotion has fluctuated over time, growing considerably with the end of the Cold War; and that leaders of benefit-seeking states were aware of the existence of such benefits and their relative importance.

I first summarize changes in democracy promotion during the Cold War, including increases in democracy-contingent benefits available to a subset of states for which election monitoring was initiated. I also document the initial reluctance of international actors to provide election monitors and the reactions within international organizations to the first governments that attempted to invite observers. I show that observers do, in fact, issue negative reports and demonstrate that such reports influence perceptions of a country's commitment to democracy, including the most widely referenced indicators of a country's regime type. I then present evidence of increased post-Cold War democracy promotion by a growing number of international actors and document that democracy promoters used the reports of observers when allocating international benefits.

According to my argument, the strengthening of the link between international benefits and the reports of international observers generates several empirical implications (outlined in chapter 1), including the conditioning of international benefits on internationally certified elections and increases in internationally imposed costs for those governments exposed as pseudo-democrats. As more international actors grew willing to send election monitors, and as an invitation to international election monitors and their endorsement began to be recognized as a signal of a government's commitment to democracy, there should be evidence that democracy-promoting actors used the reports of election monitors to update their beliefs about governments' types. To the extent that their beliefs change regarding a government's commitment to democracy, the allocation of international benefits should also change.

The types of international benefits sought by states are diverse and fungible, creating a variety of challenges in measuring international benefits and evaluating my argument cross-nationally. Although my theory

suggests a strengthening link between election-monitoring reports and international benefits, I do not necessarily expect a positive cross-national relationship between international benefits and positive reports from international observers. If pseudo-democrats believe that democracy promoters will react to the reports of observers, they should adjust their behavior accordingly. The counterfactual—or what would have happened if each election-monitoring report were different—is unobservable, and the evidence provided so far should make clear that there is an obvious selection bias in the countries that are most likely to invite observers. Governments that are caught holding fraudulent elections or that refuse to invite observers at all may already be pariah states from the perspective of Western democracies and therefore have few international benefits that can be withdrawn if their reputation worsens. Similarly, many governments are already perceived as democratizing and continue to invite observers and receive positive reports. If a government with a reputation as an electoral autocrat held surprisingly good elections, the country would increase its share of international benefits. Likewise, if a government that was believed to be committed to democratization held surprisingly bad elections, such as the Meles government in Ethiopia, international benefits would decrease. However, most countries behave in a manner that is consistent with their existing reputation. In addition, governments that democratize typically also require less foreign aid, creating a complicated situation in which positive reports can be correlated with the perception that a government is a fully developed democracy no longer in need of democracy-contingent benefits. In cases of successful democratization, a country may decrease its share of easily measurable international benefits, such as foreign aid, while increasing intangible benefits, such as reputational benefits associated with joining the exclusive club of long-term stable democracies.

Nevertheless, democracy-contingent benefits should respond to the reports of election monitors, particularly when their reports are contrary to the pre-election perception of a given government's commitment to democracy. Reactions should include reduced benefits for states receiving (unanticipated) negative reports and increased benefits for those receiving (unanticipated) positive reports, as well as updated evaluations of a country's level of democracy. As the norm becomes widely shared, my theory also suggests that democracy promoters should begin to view governments that do not invite international observers as governments that are necessarily holding fraudulent elections. For clarity, these predicted changes in the behavior and beliefs of democracy-promoting actors are mapped on a timeline in figure 3.1.

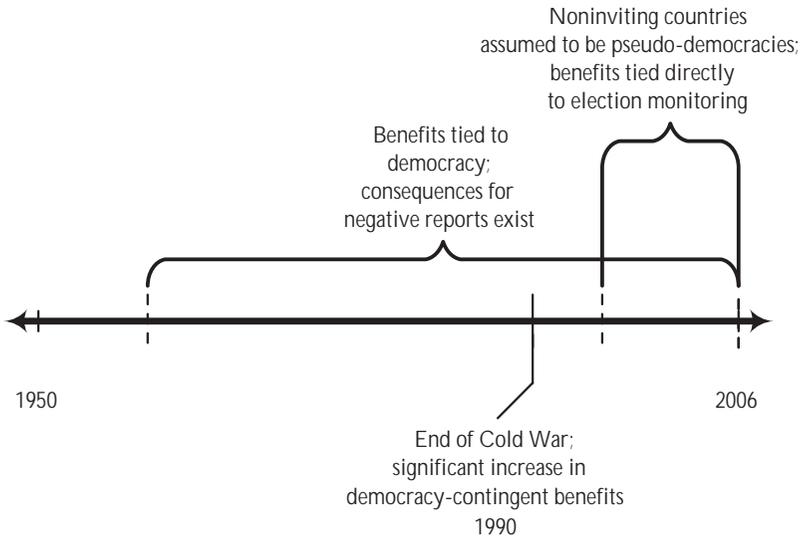


Figure 3.1. Changes in democracy-contingent benefits over time

In the remainder of this chapter, I document changes in democracy promotion and the supply of election monitoring over time. I also show that the initiation of election observation coincided with increases in democracy promotion before 1989 and that the rapid increase in election monitoring beginning in the late 1980s coincided with a dramatic increase in democracy-contingent benefits brought about by the end of the Cold War. I then present evidence from several detailed cases of elections in which reports from international observers were linked to international benefits. Finally, I document and explain cases in which governments refused observers after 2000, showing that democracy promoters perceive these governments as nondemocracies, despite the fact that they hold national elections.

### Democracy Promotion during the Cold War

Democracy promotion began long before the Cold War and includes efforts by the United States and the United Kingdom, support for German political party foundations (beginning in 1925), and, notably, efforts by Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations. Following World War II, the 1948 charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) proclaimed that the “solidarity of the American States and the high aims which are sought through it require the political organization of those

States on the basis of the effective exercise of representative democracy.”<sup>7</sup> The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains provisions for democracy, including Article 21, calling for “periodic and genuine elections . . . by universal and equal suffrage and . . . secret vote or . . . equivalent free voting procedures.”<sup>8</sup> The Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe specifically called for Britain, Russia, and the United States to help liberated nations “form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people; and to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections.”<sup>9</sup> The post–World War II Marshall Plan included provisions for fostering democracy in Europe and Japan.

By the late 1940s, support of these commitments through foreign policy was, in most cases, soon outweighed by Cold War politics. As historian Tony Smith writes, “with the tensions of the Cold War intensifying in 1947, American interest in gambling on democratic forces abroad steadily diminished.”<sup>10</sup> By the mid-1950s, foreign support for democracy was limited. Some partisan U.S. allies continued to receive covert aid channeled through the Central Intelligence Agency. Germany restarted a tradition of supporting political party foundations or *Stiftungen*, which gave aid directly to political parties during the Cold War, notably in Portugal, Spain, and several other countries that later started the “third wave” of democratization.<sup>11</sup> U.S. rhetoric about democracy continued, but anti-communism dominated U.S. foreign policy and the policies of its allies until the late 1950s, when democracy reemerged as an important variable in foreign policy debates, in part due to questions raised by Latin American leaders about whether repressive dictatorships created favorable conditions for communist revolution.

International monitoring of elections in sovereign states is rooted in this debate about how to best promote security and economic growth in the Americas while continuing to limit the spread of communism. The fall of the reliably anti-communist Cuban president Fulgencio Batista and the beginning of Fidel Castro’s presidency in 1959 raised the profile of this debate within the OAS and the United States regarding whether supporting anti-communist dictatorships was the best Cold War strategy. Throughout much

7. *Charter of the Organization of American States*, Chapter II, Article 3.

8. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 21, 3.

9. Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill, *Yalta (Crimea) Conference*, Section II.

10. Smith, *America’s Mission*, 182.

11. Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

of the Cold War, the United States had relied on support from dictators such as Cuba's Batista, Haiti's François Duvalier, and the Dominican Republic's Rafael Trujillo. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Batista's defeat and the Cuban revolution increased the influence of pro-democracy forces who argued that repressive dictators created conditions favorable to communist revolution. A coalition of pro-democracy states within the OAS began to argue for more explicit support of democratic governments, and the organization reaffirmed its commitment to supporting democracy and human rights in the Declaration of Santiago at the August 1959 OAS Meeting of Foreign Ministers. Among other commitments, the declaration stated that

harmony among the American republics can be effective only insofar as human rights and fundamental freedoms and the exercise of representative democracy are a reality within each one of them, since experience has demonstrated that the lack of respect for such principles is a source of widespread disturbance and gives rise to emigrations that cause frequent and grave political tensions between the state that they leave and the states that receive them.<sup>12</sup>

Several democratic governments were under more direct threats from other dictatorships in the region. Two of the most vocal pro-democracy leaders—President Figueres of Costa Rica and President Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela—had survived plotted or attempted assassinations and coups sponsored by their dictatorial neighbors. These leaders argued that the United States had “foolishly fostered extremism by supporting right-wing dictators” and advocated for a policy emphasizing support for democratically elected governments.<sup>13</sup>

Within the United States, although the Eisenhower administration had allied with many anti-communist regimes regardless of their commitment to democracy, policies toward the most repressive dictators were being questioned. In the first months of 1960, the United States suspended diplomatic relations and imposed economic sanctions on Cuba and the Dominican Republic. By the beginning of the Kennedy administration, providing support to democratic governments and pressuring anti-communist dictatorships had become an explicit part of U.S. foreign policy. Kennedy continued the policies of Eisenhower toward the Dominican Republic and increased pressure on François Duvalier, the Haitian dictator.<sup>14</sup> Although

12. Organization of American States, “Fifth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs,” 538.

13. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, 28.

14. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*.

it now stands as a brief experiment, at the time Kennedy's *Alliance for Progress* represented the most ambitious effort to promote democracy in Latin America, involving the distribution of \$22.3 billion between 1961 and 1965.<sup>15</sup>

The promises of aid for democratic states gave some Latin American leaders the impression that they could count on U.S. support as long as they were democratically elected. However, renewed support for democracy by the United States during the Cold War did not trump other foreign policy interests; preventing the spread of communism continued to be the central priority of the Kennedy administration, even if it meant denying support to democratically elected leaders who failed to be sufficiently anti-communist, such as President Arturo Frondizi of Argentina.<sup>16</sup> As Kennedy summarized this sentiment in describing his administration's policy on the possibility of continuing support for the Trujillo dictatorship,

there are three possibilities in descending order of preference: a decent democratic regime, a continuation of the Trujillo regime, or a Castro regime. We ought to aim for the first, but we really can't renounce the second until we are sure that we can avoid the third.<sup>17</sup>

Democracy reemerged on the U.S. foreign policy agenda of the early 1960s, and a coalition of states within the Americas continued to argue that the United States and the OAS should condition their foreign policy on democratic governance. At the January 1962 meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, the United States successfully pushed for Cuba's suspension from the OAS. At the same meeting, the council reaffirmed the OAS's commitment to democracy, proclaiming that member governments should "organize themselves on the basis of free elections that express, without restriction, the will of the people."<sup>18</sup> Detailing this policy, they "recommended that nondemocratic governments hold free elections 'as the most effective means of consulting the sovereign will of their peoples, to guarantee the restoration of a legal order based on the authority of the law and respect for the rights of the individual.'"<sup>19</sup>

Creating an opening for the provision of international election monitors when invited by member states, the council also came to agreement

15. Smith, *America's Mission*, 214.

16. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*.

17. *Ibid.*, 41.

18. Ball, *The OAS in Transition*, 495.

19. *Ibid.*

on a crucial question: how to reconcile respect for nonintervention with requests from member states to act on OAS commitments to support democracy within member states. In a resolution passed at the January 1962 meeting, after the organization had denied several requests to provide international election monitors, the member states agreed that “formation by free elections” is

the surest guarantee for the peace of the hemisphere and the security and political independence of each and every one of the nations that comprise it; and [f]reedom to contract obligations is an inseparable part of the principle of the self-determination of nations, and consequently a request by one or more countries that such obligations be complied with does not signify intervention.<sup>20</sup>

This statement endorsed the position that a government-requested “intervention” was acceptable if it supported the existing obligations of member states, including the commitments made by OAS members to support democracy.<sup>21</sup>

Before the 1962 meeting and the suspension of Cuba from the OAS, previous proposals within the organization that international monitoring be provided were rejected. Following the 1962 meeting, “[g]overnments began to take up the idea of technical assistance in electoral matters and observers at elections almost at once.”<sup>22</sup> Costa Rica again requested that the OAS send monitors to their 1962 elections, and the OAS secretary general decided to send a small delegation to observe the Costa Rican elections without asking for approval from the governing body. It was billed as a technical assistance mission, with the mission’s report on the elections first delivered directly to the Costa Rican government. The three-member delegation reported favorably on the election and on the practice of election monitoring more generally:

The Mission suggests that, to provide the nations of the hemisphere with adequate information, and to ensure honest, proper elections everywhere, other countries that so request should be given the opportunity to receive technical assistance by OAS observers as provided on this occasion.<sup>23</sup>

20. Organization of American States, “Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs,” 608.

21. Ball, *The OAS in Transition*, 494.

22. *Ibid.*, 495.

23. Pan American Union, *Report of the Technical Assistance Mission of the Organization of American States on the Presidential Elections in the Republic of Costa Rica*, 14.

This trend continued, and by 1980 the OAS had provided international observer missions to elections in Bolivia (1966), Costa Rica (1966, 1970), Dominican Republic (1962, 1966, 1970), Ecuador (1968), Guatemala (1970), and Nicaragua (1963, 1972).

As Jennifer McCoy writes, the OAS's purpose at these early missions was "less to monitor the electoral process per se than to show moral support for democratic elections."<sup>24</sup> Early OAS acceptance of election observation did not spread outside the hemisphere, and concerns about violations of sovereignty and unnecessary intervention in the domestic affairs of sovereign states continued to be an issue. Several international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), including the International Human Rights Law Group (established in 1978) and the Washington Office on Latin America (established in 1974), sent early election observation missions but initially did so in order to "take advantage of the openness provided by an election period to investigate specific cases involving allegations of human rights violations" rather than out of enthusiasm for the practice of election observation per se.<sup>25</sup> In the late 1970s, several governments that were reluctant to allow human rights monitors were actively seeking international election observers. Human rights INGOs realized they could exploit government interest in international election monitors in order to gather information about human rights abuses in countries or regions where they would not otherwise be allowed access.<sup>26</sup> The 1980 elections in Guyana, for example, were observed by the OAS and by the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group. Guyanese President Forbes Burnham announced on the radio that foreign observers would be welcome to observe the election, and the Guyana Human Rights Association then invited the British group directly. Notably, they condemned the elections, with the mission's leader arguing that it was "fraudulent in every possible respect."<sup>27</sup> It quickly became clear, however, that international observers were able to successfully observe elections only when they were invited and credentialed by the host government. Without some formal arrangement between the host government and international observers, governments could deny access, restrict which observers were allowed entry into the country, and otherwise undermine the work of foreign observers. Even

24. McCoy, "Monitoring and Mediating Elections during Latin American Democratization," 57.

25. Garber, *Guidelines for International Election Observing*, 6–7.

26. Garber, *Guidelines for International Election Observing*.

27. "Guyana Vote a Fraud, Foreign Observers Say," *Globe and Mail*, December 20, 1980.

with invitations from leaders of sovereign states, some international organizations continued to find the prospect of sending international election observers to be incompatible with their organization's other objectives.

Most notably, the UN began receiving invitations to observe elections from sovereign states as early as 1957, but they did not consent to send observers until thirty-three years later, for the 1990 Nicaraguan elections. Although they continued to receive requests to observe elections, the UN followed a general guideline of organizing observation missions only when self-determination of a nonindependent territory was at stake. In the post-World War II period, and during the early Cold War, the UN and its members were concerned with territorial sovereignty and were willing to send observers to occupied regions only when elections were held and only to elections or plebiscites concerning other territorial issues. This policy began to change in the late 1980s when pro-democracy member states argued for a change in policy.<sup>28</sup> In response to the successive UN resolutions between 1988 and 1992 on the principle of periodic and genuine elections, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali argued that UN policy in the area of electoral assistance “emerged in response to the rising tide of interest in democratization and requests for United Nations support.”<sup>29</sup> Yet at the end of the 1990s, the UN remained a reluctant and occasional player in election monitoring, offering technical assistance to support democratic elections far more frequently than the organization consented to provide election observers to sovereign states, even when they were invited.

### Democracy Promotion and International Benefits

The actions of democracy promoters during the Cold War, including their initial reluctance to send election monitors and the absence of evidence that norm entrepreneurs or powerful states pressured governments to invite observers, represents additional support for my argument. However, the work of advocates for democracy promotion (rather than advocates for election monitoring) provides a clear link between my theory and the leading theories of norm development outlined in previous chapters. Although I have argued that neither norm entrepreneurs nor powerful states were central in generating the norm of election monitoring,

28. Kelley, “Assessing the Complex Evolution of Norms.”

29. Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Democratization*, 15–16; Kelley, “Assessing the Complex Evolution of Norms,” 240.

advocates for democracy and the institutionalization of support for it within international organizations led to the development of democracy as an international norm and were central in increasing support for its promotion in the late 1980s.

Within Europe and the former Soviet sphere, election observation was virtually nonexistent before 1989 but became quickly institutionalized within the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, later the OSCE) and eventually within the European Community/European Union. The initial proposals within the CSCE focused on supporting democracy and democratic elections. Between 1989 and 1990, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other Western governments began to pressure for more overt forms of support for elections and democracy within the Soviet sphere of influence. At the 1989 meeting of the CSCE in Paris, the U.S. representatives introduced a proposal “calling for free elections and the establishment of multiple political parties within all the signatory countries,” which they said “represents a long-term Western goal for democracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.”<sup>30</sup> At the time, the proposal was not considered realistic. Just a year later, however, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the proposal was adopted by the organization in the 1990 Copenhagen agreement. In part based on the demand for observers from the CSCE for several elections in late 1989 and early 1990, this document also explicitly called for CSCE member states to invite international and domestic observation of their elections, setting the stage for the organization’s future provision of international election observers to member states.<sup>31</sup> Signatories to the 1990 Copenhagen Document agreed to abide by a variety of democratic commitments, invite international election observers, endorse the general principle that “the will of the people, freely and fairly expressed through periodic and genuine elections, is the basis of the authority and legitimacy of government.”<sup>32</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR now refers to the 1990–1994 period as the “free and fair years,” before the organization sought to make its observation more comprehensive and systematic.<sup>33</sup>

Also in the early 1990s, a number of organizations began sending observation missions to sub-Saharan Africa, including U.S.-based NGOs

30. CSCE, *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, 1–2.

31. OSCE, *Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE*.

32. *Ibid.*, Article 6.

33. OSCE/ODIHR, *A Decade of Monitoring Elections: The People and the Practice*.

such as the Carter Center, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI), as well as the Organization for African Unity, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the International Organization of La Francophonie.<sup>34</sup> The European Commission began by observing several high-profile elections, including Russia's first multi-party parliamentary elections in 1993 and the first postapartheid election in South Africa in 1994. Since 2000 the European Commission has officially considered election observation "part of the mandate of the EU, whose Treaty considers the protection and promotion of human rights as well as support for democratisation as cornerstones of EU foreign policy and EU development co-operation."<sup>35</sup>

A number of scholars recognized the post-Cold War strengthening of the link between democracy and international benefits. As Kristian Gleditsch and Michael Ward argue, "after the Cold War, when the strategic importance of allies in the developing world [had] declined... many long-standing autocratic rulers who had enjoyed international support found themselves increasingly isolated."<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Judith Kelley emphasizes the legitimacy of democratic governance after the Cold War, in that "running an illegitimate government became increasingly costly as international actors moved toward more democratic conditionality and exerted greater pressure on governments to be seen as legitimate."<sup>37</sup>

Since the end of the Cold War democracy has become more widely accepted by citizens, states, and political leaders than at any point in history. Strikingly, even among nondemocracies, there are few leaders willing to admit that their country is not moving toward democracy. As Michael McFaul points out, "they either claim that their regimes are already democratic even if they are not (Russia) or that their political leaders are moving their countries 'step by step' toward democracy (China)."<sup>38</sup> No institutional alternative to democracy has gained popularity, and for nearly all states in the international system since the 1990s, democratic institutions are already in place or democracy has been outlined as the stated goal. Francis Fukuyama articulated the most extreme form of this argument, arguing that Western liberal democracy would be the "final" form

34. Anglin, "International Election Monitoring"; Sives, "A Review of Commonwealth Election Observation."

35. European Commission, "Communication from the Commission on EU Election Assistance and Observation," 3.

36. Gleditsch and Ward, "Diffusion and the Spread of Democratic Institutions," 278.

37. Kelley, "Assessing the Complex Evolution of Norms," 246.

38. McFaul, "Democracy Promotion as a World Value," 148.

of government.<sup>39</sup> Although there are exceptions and other priorities that often trump democracy, it is clear that a large increase in international pressure for democracy took place during the 1990s.

Underscoring the magnitude of this change, the economist and Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen pointed to “the emergence of democracy as the preeminently acceptable form of governance” as “the single most important event of the twentieth century.”<sup>40</sup> John Ikenberry calls democracy promotion the “hidden grand strategy” of American foreign policy, representing a remarkably consistent yet not necessarily coordinated agreement among a variety of policy actors that promoting democracy is in the best interest of the United States.<sup>41</sup> Rhetorically, support for democracy and democracy promotion has become a mainstay of the U.S. presidency, and is relatively consistent across Democratic and Republican administrations. Many U.S. presidents since 1960, including John Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, incorporated democracy promotion explicitly into U.S. foreign policy priorities. In a March 1961 speech, Kennedy said that “democracy is the destiny of humanity” and it is the United States’ obligation is to “serve as the single largest counter to the adversaries of freedom.”<sup>42</sup> Carter, in 1977, said that “because we are free, we can never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere.”<sup>43</sup> Reagan, in a widely cited address to the British Parliament, said that “we must be staunch in our conviction that freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings,” and “it would be cultural condescension, or worse, to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy.”<sup>44</sup> Beginning with George H.W. Bush, the link between U.S. security and democracy promotion became more overt, with Bush arguing that “the community of democratic nations is more robust than ever, and it will gain strength as it grows . . . abandonment of the worldwide democratic revolution could be disastrous for American security.”<sup>45</sup> Clinton continued with this argument, in 1993 stating that the United States’ “overriding purpose must be to expand and strengthen the world’s community of market-based democracies.”<sup>46</sup> George W. Bush in 2005 said that “it is the policy of the

39. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 137.

40. Sen, “Democracy as a Universal Value,” 4.

41. Ikenberry, “Why Export Democracy?,” 56.

42. March 22, 1961. Quoted in Smith, *America’s Mission*, 214.

43. *Ibid.*, 241.

44. June 8, 1982. Address to British Parliament.

45. December 15, 1992. Quoted in Smith, *America’s Mission*, 311.

46. September 27, 1993, speech before the United Nations General Assembly.

United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.”<sup>47</sup> Addressing an audience in Cairo, Obama said that even the controversy over democracy promotion generated by the Iraq War “does not lessen my commitment . . . to governments that reflect the will of the people . . .” and that such governments are “ultimately more stable, more successful, and more secure.”<sup>48</sup>

As Mark Peceny argues in reference to U.S. decisions to promote democracy following military interventions, although “realist” security concerns sometimes override U.S. interest in democracy promotion, “the promotion of democracy is one of the most important tools American leaders use to transcend the potential contradictions involved in being a liberal great power.”<sup>49</sup> Although democracy promotion has consistently been part of U.S. foreign policy, it should not be mistaken for an entirely U.S.-driven mission. Many other states and international actors promote democracy, sometimes in spite of U.S. involvement. I have already mentioned democracy promotion by the German political party foundations, or *Stiftung*, and their role in some of the early “third-wave” democratic transitions.<sup>50</sup> Democracy promotion outside the United States increased with the end of the Cold War. French Presidents François Mitterrand (first in 1990) and Jacques Chirac (first in 1995) each laid out democracy promotion as part of their administrations’ foreign policies, with Chirac stating that “the requirement of democracy and the respect for human rights have to figure among the main criteria of our international action.”<sup>51</sup> In 1997, Tony Blair’s first foreign secretary, Robin Cook, pledged that the British government would “work through international forums and bilateral relationships to spread the values of human rights, civil liberties, and democracy, which we demand for ourselves.”<sup>52</sup>

The controversy surrounding the Iraq War caused some leaders to justify their support for democracy promotion in spite of growing domestic sentiment against the United States. Defending Danish democracy promotion efforts against domestic charges of U.S. imperialism, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen said that “In the fight between democracy

47. Bush, January 20, 2005, Second Inaugural Address.

48. Obama, June 4, 2009, “Remarks by the President on a New Beginning.”

49. Peceny, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets*, 4.

50. Pinto-Duschinsky, “Foreign Political Aid.”

51. Quoted in Daguzan, “France, Democratization and North Africa,” 136.

52. Quoted in Youngs, *The European Union and the Promotion of Democracy*, 210.

and dictatorship one cannot act neutrally. One must take a firm stand in favour of democracy, and against dictatorship.”<sup>53</sup>

Even in states in which the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and subsequent rhetoric about democracy promotion were highly unpopular among the voting public, the reaction of governments was not to reject democracy promotion out of hand but to object to the Bush administration’s methods of democracy promotion. Thus, following the 2004 Spanish election in which the winning party had committed to withdrawing Spanish troops from Iraq, democracy promotion policy was not eliminated. Instead, the Spanish turned to emphasizing an alternative “dialog-based” approach to democracy promotion, and the country’s efforts to promote democracy continued.<sup>54</sup>

Intergovernmental organizations that have made democracy a membership condition include the Organization of American States, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth, the African Union (formerly the OAS), the Pacific Islands Forum, La Francophonie, and the European Union.<sup>55</sup> In 2004, the UN commissioned a document detailing relevant policies and agreements published by intergovernmental organizations pertaining to the promotion of democracy, a document that totaled nearly five hundred pages and included agreements from IGOs throughout the world, many of them with relatively few Western democratic members. Additionally, dozens of prominent states and international organizations have detailed provisions for democracy promotion and standards for democratic elections, many of which have been compiled by the European Commission for ease of enforcement by their election-monitoring delegations.<sup>56</sup> Avery Davis-Roberts and David Carroll published an overview of existing international legal obligations that states have made to hold democratic elections.<sup>57</sup> Considerations for democracy are woven into other policy areas such as poverty alleviation, postconflict economic recovery, anticorruption campaigns, trading relationships, and even military assistance.<sup>58</sup>

53. Ibid., 33.

54. Ibid., 130–31.

55. Rich, “Bringing Democracy into International Law.”

56. European Union, *Compendium of International Standards for Elections*.

57. Davis-Roberts and Carroll, “Using International Law to Assess Elections.”

58. Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, “Focus: Democracy Forum 2000, Attacking poverty by supporting democracy”; Gillespie and Youngs, “Themes in European Democracy Promotion”; Committee on International Relations and Committee on Foreign Relations, “Legislation on Foreign Relations Through 2002”; Dimitrova and Pridham, “International Actors and Democracy Promotion in Central and Eastern Europe.”

Thus, the rhetorical record of increased support for democracy is difficult to dispute. For my argument to be supported, however, benefit-seeking states must believe that democracy-contingent benefits exist. Even without advocating for election observation per se, democracy promoters play an important role in my argument by increasing the “democracy premium” and therefore giving benefit-maximizing states the incentive to signal their commitment to democratic elections.

If it were not for growing international acceptance of democracy and increasing rewards attached to a country's status as a democratizing state, international election observation would not have become an international norm. In my argument, the decision to invite international observers is conditioned on leaders perceiving some level of international benefits tied to democracy. This argument does not specify why other actors tie international benefits to democracy, or whether democracy promoters are motivated by normative, self-interested, or other reasons. Democracy promoters' motivations are less important in this context. So long as democracy-contingent benefits (or autocracy-contingent costs) exist, they should affect the behavior of benefit-seeking states in a similar manner regardless of the motivations of pro-democracy actors. As European Union policy on the subject has been summarized,

democracy and protection of human rights are universal values to be pursued in their own right; they are also seen as integral to effective work on poverty alleviation... as vital tools for conflict prevention and resolution, and as the indispensable framework for combating terrorism. Democratic processes of accountability are also key to ensuring government transparency and combating corruption.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, from the perspective of benefit-seeking leaders, it is only necessary that some desired international benefits are tied to democracy or democratization. The composition of anticipated international benefits varies by recipient country. Links between democracy and international benefits may be implicit or explicit and include the following: direct democracy assistance, provisions within bilateral and multilateral agreements, membership conditionality in international organizations, articulation of preferences for trading with democracies, emphasis on democracy by foreign investors, diplomatic pressure, and normative or legal appeals, such as those articulated by Thomas Franck as the “emerging

59. European Commission, “Programming Guide for Strategy Papers: Democracy and Human Rights.”

right to democratic governance.”<sup>60</sup> Other scholars have explored this topic in much greater detail and point to demonstration or contagion effects stemming from developed democracies, in addition to more overt forms of pressure for democracy.<sup>61</sup>

In promoting democracy overtly, dozens of countries and international organizations fund democracy assistance, place democratic conditions on foreign aid, and even support intervention to restore democracy following the overthrow of democratically elected leaders. One of the remarkable features of the post-Cold War era is the fact that democracy promotion is a policy adopted by so many international actors other than the United States.<sup>62</sup>

Measuring the precise amount of benefits tied to democracy is difficult, for the reasons outlined above and in chapter 2. Nevertheless, measures of democracy assistance illustrate the over-time changes in international support for promoting democracy. Figure 3.2 shows the annual amount of bilateral foreign aid from OECD donors to government and civil society, a category that includes overt democracy assistance. Similarly, figure 3.3 shows the percentage of U.S. and foreign official development assistance devoted to democracy and governance, as reported by Finkel et al. and used as a variable in chapter 2’s empirical analysis.<sup>63</sup> Neither indicator presents comprehensive data on available democracy-contingent benefits, but both show that such benefits exist and that they have increased considerably over time in parallel with patterns in the global diffusion of election observation.

The diversity in support for democracy, both in terms of the number of states and international organizations that reward it and the great variety of methods of democracy promotion, combine to underscore the idea that international benefits tied to democracy exist, that leaders of benefit-seeking states are aware that they exist, and that the relative importance

60. Franck, “The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance.”

61. Beigbeder, *International Monitoring of Plebiscites, Referenda and National Elections*; Burnell, “From Evaluating Democracy Assistance to Appraising Democracy Promotion”; Carothers, *Critical Mission*; Ikenberry, “Why Export Democracy?”; Cox, Ikenberry, and Inoguchi, *American Democracy Promotion*; Knack, “Does Foreign Aid Promote Democracy?”; Levitsky and Way, “International Linkage and Democratization”; McFaul, “Democracy Promotion as a World Value”; Monten, “The Roots of the Bush Doctrine”; Schraeder, “The State of the Art in International Democracy Promotion”; Simmons and Elkins, “The Globalization of Liberalization”; Simmons, Dobbin, and Garrett, *The Global Diffusion of Markets and Democracy*; Youngs, *The European Union and the Promotion of Democracy*; Simmons and Elkins, “The Globalization of Liberalization”; Simmons, Dobbin, and Garrett, *The Global Diffusion of Markets and Democracy*; Whitehead, *The International Dimensions of Democratization*.

62. Kelley, “Assessing the Complex Evolution of Norms.”

63. Finkel et al., “Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building.”

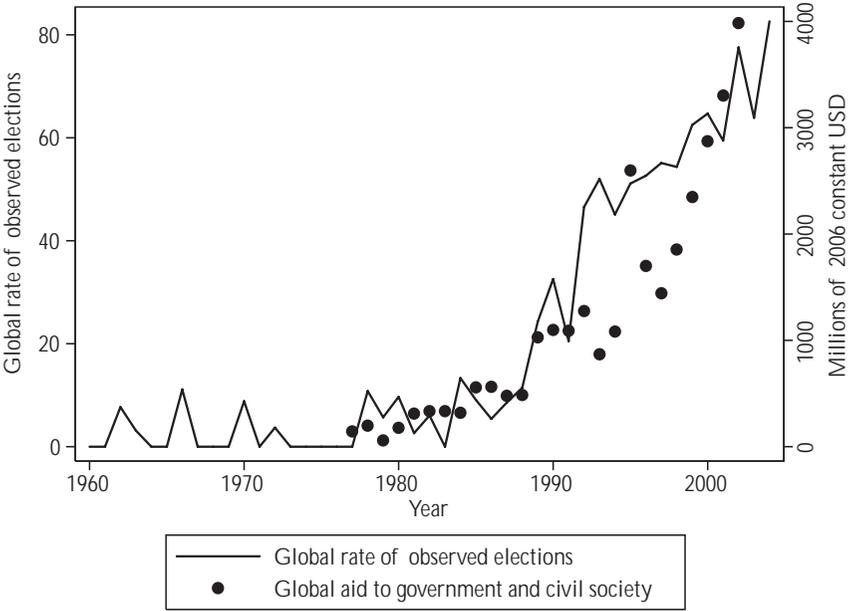


Figure 3.2. Trends in observed elections and foreign aid to government and civil society

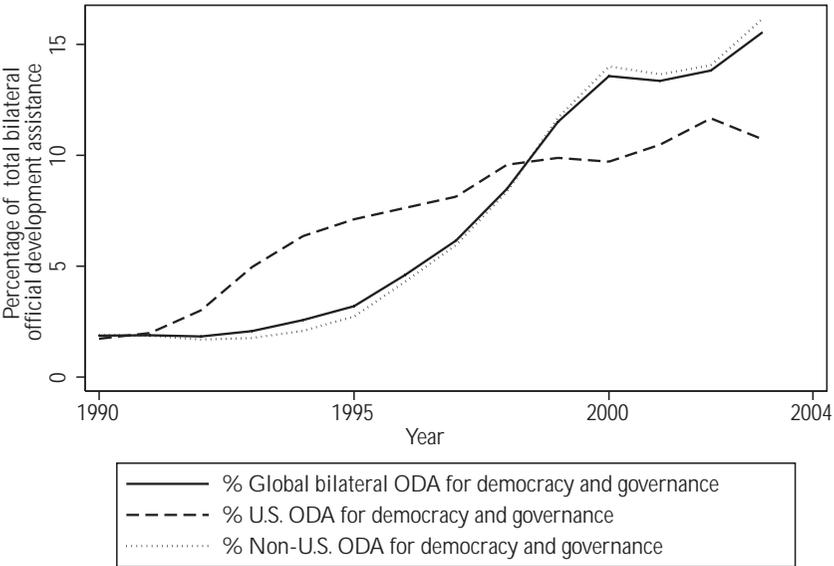


Figure 3.3. Percentage of bilateral official development assistance devoted to democracy assistance

Source: Calculated from Finkel et al. (2007) from two-year mean in millions of 2000 USD

of democracy promotion has fluctuated over time, growing considerably with the end of the Cold War.

In addition to supporting democracy more generally, democracy promoters accepted internationally certified elections as a meaningful signal that a government was committed to democratization. This dynamic created the belief among democracy promoters that governments that refuse to invite observers or that receive negative reports are pseudo-democrats. In the next sections, I examine how international actors react to negative reports from international observers, show that negative reports lead to reductions in several widely used measures of a country's level of democracy, and document and explain the few governments that refuse observers after the norm developed.

### Democracy Promoters vs. Pseudo-Democrats

It is surprising to many political scientists that leaders who invite international election observers are caught committing election fraud. Inviting observers, cheating, and getting caught is not an expected strategy for any type of leader, particularly before the norm of election monitoring developed. In the model presented in chapter 1, pseudo-democrats should attempt to manipulate the election enough to win while minimizing the risk that they will be caught. They are motivated to conceal election fraud from observers because they can gain international benefits if they are recognized as a democratizing country and because they will face consequences if they are caught stealing the election. The empirical record shows, however, that leaders do not always successfully employ such strategic manipulation. Democracy promoters have attempted to increase the quality of election monitoring (as I document further in chapter 5), and leaders are periodically caught and condemned for election manipulation.

Negative reports in the early period of election observation were rare because true democrats were driving the trend, and investment in the quality of observation missions was just beginning. As more pseudo-democrats had the incentive to invite observers, and as the quality of observation increased, negative reports became more likely. For example, following the fraudulent 1986 elections in the Philippines, internationally observed elections in Panama (1989) and Pakistan (1990) were also strongly criticized, as were the 1992 elections in Cameroon, Kenya, Romania, and Yugoslavia. All else held equal, the increased willingness of observers to criticize fraudulent elections could be expected to slow the spread of observed elections among pseudo-democrats. Yet the increased willingness of observers to criticize elections coincided with the dramatic increase in

democracy-contingent benefits at the end of the Cold War. Rather than avoid observers entirely, many pseudo-democrats instead had the incentive to invite observers and attempt to avoid being caught.

### Defining Negative Reports

It is an inherently subjective exercise to evaluate whether a given report from international observers is negative. In general, when I refer to negative reports, I mean that foreign observers seriously questioned the winner of the election or the legitimacy of the process. Some groups use diplomatic language, and other organizations are blunt. The more professionalized observer groups—including those most likely to criticize election manipulation where it exists—issue numerous interim statements throughout the election period, providing feedback to the election authorities and sometimes pressuring governments to remedy problems such as incomplete voter registration lists before election day. In these cases, high-quality election monitors may interact with the government during the pre-election period in a manner that actually prevents negative reports because observers pressure governments to improve election quality.

Nevertheless, most missions issue a postelection statement detailing preliminary findings, which the international news media cite most widely. Reputable organizations also issue a comprehensive final report several months after the election and include reports of their monitoring of the postelection period, certification of results, and resolution of any postelection disputes.

In order to gather a more systematic picture of negative reports over time, I collected the summary statements from the official final reports or from the widely cited postelection press releases. When neither of these was available, I also coded the evaluation of observers from news reports following the election. Comparing observer reports on an objective scale may not be possible, and judging whether an individual report is more or less negative than any other report is difficult. However, several features of statements from observers provide clear indications that an election was judged to be fraudulent or otherwise received serious condemnation from international observers.

The strongest possible international observer criticism of elections occurs when observers are invited but refuse to send a mission or withdraw an already deployed mission because they judge that credible elections are highly unlikely. This is a relatively rare occurrence, but when it does happen, it sends a strong message that pre-election conditions are so bad

that a democratic election is virtually impossible. When observers cancel a planned mission before election day, their decision and criticism of the election is widely reported in international news coverage of the election.

Many negative reports from international observers are strongly worded and are clearly intended to cast doubt upon the legitimacy of the process, but they stop short of arguing that the winner would have been different in a more democratic election. Thus, when observers do assert that the “wrong” party won, it is a strong condemnation and draws more negative attention to the election as being “stolen.” Reports that question the integrity or the legitimacy of the process are also interpreted as serious condemnation, even if they suggest that the outcome would have been the same in a free and fair process. This type of summary judgment is most likely when the margin of victory is quite large, yet the process is obviously flawed, as in Belarus.

Following the 2003 Georgian parliamentary elections, the head of the OSCE observer mission said that the observed irregularities caused the process to be “spectacularly flawed.” Following the 1995 elections in Niger, NDI condemned the elections, stating that the irregularities they observed “represent a willful effort to subvert the process in order to achieve predetermined results.”<sup>64</sup> In Zambia in 2001, the EU summary judgment was that “in view of the administrative failures on polling day, the serious flaws in the counting tabulation procedures, together with the close outcome of the elections, we are not confident that the declared results represent the wishes of the Zambian electors on polling day.”<sup>65</sup> Summary statements from the OSCE/ODIHR tend to focus on whether the elections met the country’s commitments as an OSCE member state. For example, the 1998 report on the Armenian elections concluded that they did not “meet the OSCE standards to which Armenia has committed itself in the Copenhagen Document of 1990.”<sup>66</sup>

Even when observer reports are critical, most are written in diplomatic language and emphasize positive components of even the worst elections, such as praising voters for their patience, enthusiasm, willingness to stand in long lines at polling stations, and their support for the democratic process. This praise, when it was presented along serious criticism, was not

64. National Democratic Institute, “Statement by the National Democratic Institute on the July 7 and 8 Presidential Election in Niger,” news release, July 19, 1996.

65. European Union Election Observation Mission, “Final Statement on the Zambia Elections 2001,” news release, May 2, 2002.

66. OSCE/ODIHR, “Republic of Armenia Presidential Election March 16 and 30, 1998, Final Report,” 3.

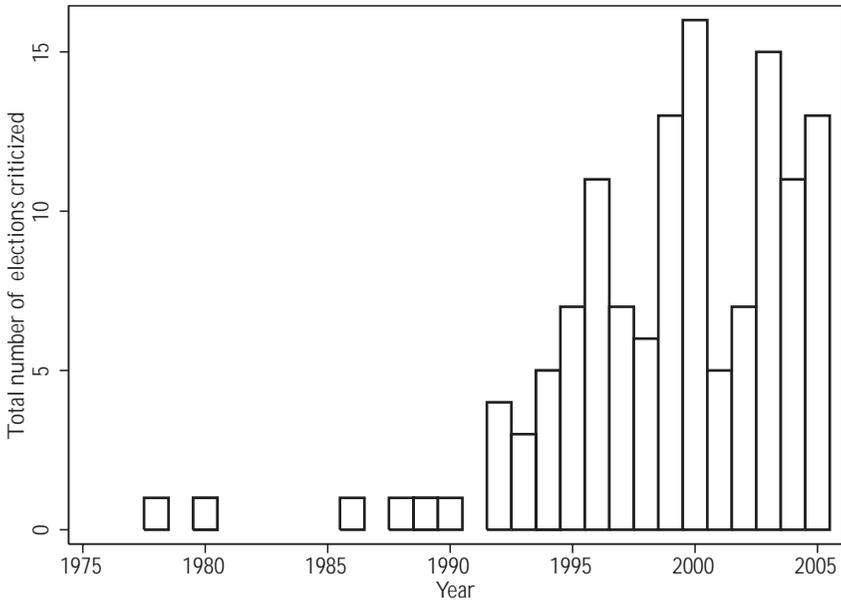


Figure 3.4. Negative reports, 1975–2005

interpreted as an endorsement of the election in my coding, because some positive comments are present in nearly all observer reports.

Figure 3.4 presents the frequency of negative reports over time. Election monitoring reports were coded as negative if they questioned the winner of the election or seriously questioned the legitimacy of the process.<sup>67</sup> If an election receives a negative report from more than one monitoring group, it is only counted once in figure 3.4. Out of all observed elections between 1995 and 2005, about 35% were criticized by one or more international observer groups.

Building on the theory outlined in chapter 1, if pseudo-democrats vary in their ability and willingness to conceal election manipulation, leaders are most likely to be caught stealing elections in two circumstances. Some pseudo-democrats have little to lose from international condemnation, or the risks of political liberalization may be too great to allow plausibly democratic elections. As electoral autocrats, they are willing to

67. Summary statements from observers were coded a second time by a research assistant in the absence of any identifying information about the elections, and the limited disagreements in coding were resolved by carefully rereading each case and considering how observer reports were interpreted in the international news media.

invite observers in order to avoid pariah status, as in the Armenian case described in chapter 4, but nevertheless engage in massive election fraud. Similarly, as I discuss below, if a leader is aware that their country's other characteristics outweigh any attention given to democracy, or if they do not need international benefits, they may be willing to refuse observers entirely, such as in Iran, Egypt, and Malaysia. In some countries, leaders may enjoy domestic support for taking anti-Western positions and therefore the domestically imposed "sovereignty costs" associated with inviting observers are greater.

A subset of pseudo-democrats are heavily dependent on international benefits, and when these leaders get caught manipulating the election, it is frequently because they lack the resources, skill, or support from other government officials to conceal their efforts at manipulation. It is these leaders that are most likely to face serious consequences when they are condemned for election fraud. Thus, my expectations about international responses to negative reports are nuanced. Leaders who have little to lose if they are caught stealing elections or who are unwilling to give up authoritarian control are less motivated to conceal election manipulation, correspondingly more likely to get caught and criticized, and may work to discredit the negative reports of international observers rather than prevent them. It is a sign of the norm's strength that these leaders continue to invite observers who condemn them, rather than simply refusing them entirely.

More interesting from a substantive perspective are those benefit-seeking leaders who lack the resources or skill to engage in successful strategic manipulation. These leaders tend to be more heavily dependent on international support and may have weaker domestic authority, making it difficult for them to marshal the resources to carry out covert election manipulation. Because of their reliance on international support, these leaders are unlikely to refuse international observers, particularly after election monitoring became an international norm.

#### International Consequences of Observer Criticism

When elections are criticized by international observers, what are the international consequences? This is a difficult empirical question for a variety of reasons: international benefits cannot be comprehensively measured, leaders are both rewarded and punished for their elections, and governments that successfully develop economically and democratize receive less foreign aid because they no longer need it, not because they are being penalized. Additionally, given my argument, if commitments by

democracy promoters to support democratizing states are credible, observable shifts in international support for countries based on whether they signal their commitment to democracy should follow changes in the postelection beliefs among democracy promoters about a government's commitment to democracy.

International reaction to the reports from observers should depend on previous perceptions of leaders' types and the levels of international support the government already receives. Following an election, pro-democracy actors update their belief about the incumbent's "type." There are many reasons why the perceptions of a government's commitment to democracy change, as well as why foreign support of a given government changes. Many foreign aid donors are particularly reluctant to withdraw aid from the poorest countries or from strategic allies, even if they hold relatively poor elections.

Nevertheless, several empirical implications are clear. Other scholars have demonstrated that relatively more democratic institutions—as measured by various indices of democracy and regime type—are correlated with a variety of other international benefits, such as foreign direct investment<sup>68</sup> and international trade.<sup>69</sup> When a government receives a negative report from international election observers, its perceived level of democracy should decrease. International actors turn to a variety of sources when evaluating a country's level of democratization. It is worth noting that several widely used measures, including the Freedom House measures of political rights and civil liberties (a source widely used in policy circles) and the Polity measure of regime type, now explicitly incorporate the reports of international observers into their coding. The coding checklist for political rights asks whether "established and reputable national and/or international election monitoring organizations judge the most recent elections for head of government to be free and fair?"<sup>70</sup> Similarly, several of Polity IV component variables explicitly code the reports of "international and domestic election observers" in determining the quality of the election and in turn, the country's level of democracy.<sup>71</sup> Given this information, it is unsurprising that both indices change systematically based on whether observers are invited and whether they issue a negative report.

68. Jensen, "Political Risk, Democratic Institutions, and Foreign Direct Investment"; Jensen, "Democratic Governance and Multinational Corporations."

69. Mansfield, Milner, and Rosendorff, "Free to Trade"; Milner and Kubota, "Why the Move to Free Trade?"

70. Freedom House, "Freedom House: Methodology."

71. Marshall and Jaggers, *Polity IV Project*, 58.

To demonstrate this correlation between the reports of observers and widely referenced annual measures of country's level of democracy, I estimate several statistical models with three measures of regime type as the dependent variables.<sup>72</sup> Inviting observers is associated with a statistically significant increase in a country's Polity2 score of 1.7 points, and inviting observers and receiving a negative report is associated with a reduction of almost 1 point.<sup>73</sup>

Freedom House data are arguably more widely used by policymakers. From 1973 to 2006 (all available data), inviting observers is associated with a statistically significant 0.4 point improvement in a country's political rights score, whereas receiving a negative report from observers is associated with a 0.5 point decline in the civil liberties score.<sup>74</sup> Other measures of democracy are similarly sensitive. Even the *International Country Risk Guide's* measure of political risk, an indicator marketed to foreign investors, is likely to increase when observers are invited.<sup>75</sup>

#### Overtime Variation in International Benefits within Countries

As stated previously, leaders already receiving some level of international benefits should experience reductions in international benefits following internationally criticized elections, and leaders without significant existing international support should not gain additional benefits. These consequences are in addition to any domestic costs caused by reported election fraud, such as increased support for postelection protests and the

72. The reported estimates are from the following model,  $y_{it} = y_{it-1} + \beta_1 Election_{it} + \beta_2 Observed_{it} + \beta_3 Negative_{it} + \alpha_i + \epsilon_{it}$ , where  $y$  is a variable representing country  $i$ 's democracy score at time  $t$ , and  $\alpha_i$  represents country fixed-effects.

73. The *Polity2* variable ranges from -10 to 10, with higher values representing more democratic political institutions. The coefficient on *Observed* is 1.70 with a standard error of 0.12. The coefficient on *Negative* is -0.87 with a standard error of 0.21. The coefficient on *Election* is 0.11 with a standard error of 0.06.

74. Freedom House political rights and civil liberties indices range from 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest levels of political rights and civil liberties. The coefficient on *Observed* is -0.40, with a standard error of 0.04. The coefficient on *Negative* is 0.50 with a standard error of 0.07. The coefficient on *Election* is -0.13 with a standard error of 0.02.

75. *Political Risk* theoretically ranges from 0 to 100. The coefficient on *Observed* is 1.12 with a standard error of 0.5. The reported estimates are from the following model,  $y_{it} = y_{it-1} + \beta_1 Election_{it-1} + \beta_2 Observed_{it-1} + \beta_3 Negative_{it-1} + \alpha_i + \epsilon_{it}$ , where  $y$  is a variable representing country  $i$ 's Political Risk score average over the current year  $t$ , and  $\alpha_i$  represents country fixed effects. Independent variables are lagged by one year to ensure that the monthly political risk score incorporates months following the election but excluding the developed democracies, *Observed* has a coefficient of 0.40 and a standard error of 0.12. *Negative* is not statistically significant.

increased potential for an electoral revolution, as in Yugoslavia, Georgia, and Ukraine. Empirical predictions about the consequences of negative reports must consider whether the country expects to gain new international benefits or avoid losing existing benefits by inviting observers. For countries already receiving low levels of international benefits, either because they have previously committed blatant anti-democratic actions and/or human rights abuses or because they have never been recognized as a democratizing country, internationally approved elections may be required for international benefits to increase or resume. If such states receive negative reports from election monitors, international benefits may not change, but the negative report causes these governments to forgo benefits that would have followed internationally certified elections.

When elections are criticized in countries that were previously perceived as democratizing, existing levels of international benefits should be noticeably reduced. However, for the poorest and most aid-dependent countries, donors cut off international support only reluctantly. International reaction to Haitian elections reveals both the reluctance of pro-democracy actors to punish very poor countries and their willingness to do so following blatant violations of democratic norms. The United States and other Western donors to Haiti had high hopes for Jean-Bertrand Aristide, first elected to the presidency in 1990 in what was widely regarded as the country's first democratic election. Aristide was soon deposed in a coup, but reinstated as president by the U.S. military in 1994. Aristide's government received massive but short-lived increases in aid, especially from the United States and the European Community, a condition of which was a promise to leave office at the end of his constitutionally allowed term.<sup>76</sup> Although he technically kept his promise, rather than allowing open competition for the presidency, he engineered the 1995 victory of his chosen successor, René Préval. Reportedly ruling from behind the scenes until he could run for reelection, Aristide's democratic luster began to fade. Rigged legislative by-elections in 1997 provoked further international condemnation and, combined with the 1999 disbandment of parliament and the lack of a legitimate government, led to the suspension of most foreign aid to the country.<sup>77</sup>

76. Marilyn Greene, "Haiti to Get Infusion of Cash/Nations Plan More Than \$1 Billion," *USA Today*, October 6, 1994.

77. Michael Norton, "United Nations Suspends Election Aid in Haiti," Associated Press, August 22, 1997; Ives Marie Chanel, "Haiti: Political Crisis Undermines Foreign Aid," Inter Press Service, December 27, 1999.

Aid resumption and other forms of international support were conditioned on new, democratic, and internationally certified legislative elections, which were postponed four times before they were held in May 2000. The elections were preceded by “a wave of murders of opposition leaders and candidates.”<sup>78</sup> Aristide was reelected president in November 2000 with 92% of the vote in an election boycotted by all major opposition parties. Observers judged the 2000 elections to be “fundamentally flawed,” and aid was suspended or channeled through private organizations. Aristide’s attempts to reassure donors and restore aid were not successful, and in February of 2004, he left office under disputed circumstances and was replaced by an interim leader.<sup>79</sup> His ouster and the country’s near-crisis conditions—exacerbated by a devastating hurricane in 2004—led major donors to begin releasing foreign aid and other forms of support in order to “help the country promote democracy and economic recovery.”<sup>80</sup> Figure 3.5 illustrates trends in bilateral aid from the country’s biggest donors over time, although note that foreign aid was not the only international benefit that was withdrawn from Haiti during this period. Aid is, however, more easily quantifiable than other international benefits.

When some governments invite observers, they do so because they have already developed reputations as pseudo-democracies or electoral authoritarian regimes. These countries may have experienced military coups, already held blatantly fraudulent elections, or have never held elections at all. For example, 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 these threats to Peruvian democracy, 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 about his authoritarian tendencies to rest. Failing to invite observers to the 2000 elections would have been a sure sign that they were blatantly fraudulent. Inviting observers allowed Fujimori some additional scope for manipulation but also increased the possibility that he would be caught and internationally condemned for election fraud.

78. “The Inevitable President,” *Economist*, November 16, 2000.

79. Whether or not Aristide was forced to resign or did so willingly is the subject of debate, but it is not disputed that he was escorted out of Haiti on a U.S. military jet to the Central African Republic on February 28, 2004.

80. Nicolas Brulliard, “Donors Pledge \$1 Billion in Aid to Haiti,” *United Press International*, July 20, 2004.

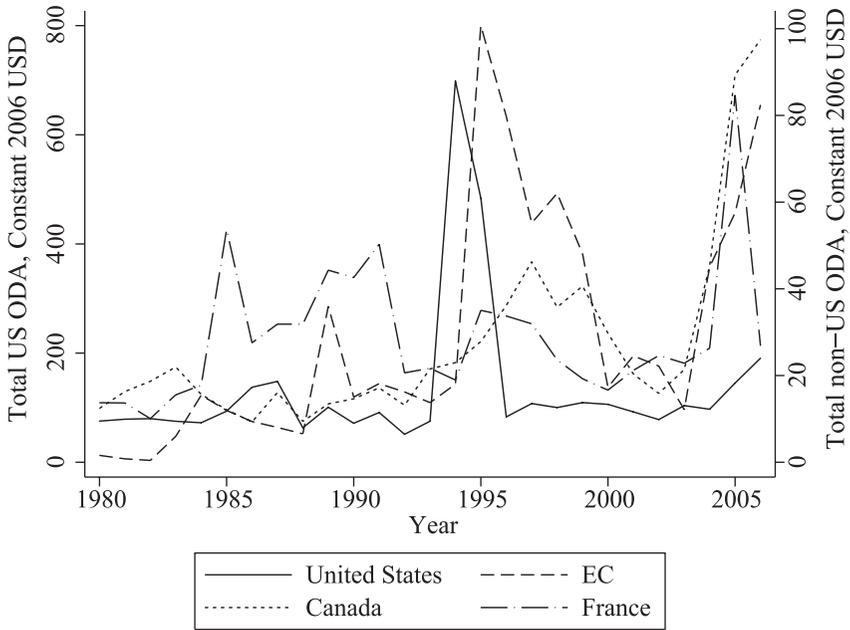


Figure 3.5. Bilateral foreign aid to Haiti

Following the first round of the 2000 elections in Peru, Fujimori was found to have engaged in widespread efforts to manipulate the election, and various observer organizations levied stinging criticism. The OAS head of mission said that “something sinister is happening here,” and the mission issued a statement that “the Peruvian electoral process is far from one that could be considered free and fair.”<sup>81</sup> The joint NDI/Carter Center report called the process “irreparably damaged,” and the final report similarly left little room for interpretation:

The 2000 election process in Peru failed dramatically to meet minimum international standards for a genuine, democratic election. As a result, the people of Peru were denied the opportunity to exercise their right to democratic elections, and the government that emerged from the elections lacks a legitimate mandate based on the will of the electorate.<sup>82</sup>

81. Clifford Krauss, “Peruvian’s Lead in Vote Prompts Charge of Fraud,” *New York Times*, April 10, 2000.

82. National Democratic Institute and The Carter Center, *Peru Elections 2000: Final Report of the National Democratic Institute/Carter Center Joint Election Monitoring Project*, 35.

After the clearly fraudulent first round, the Carter Center, NDI, the European Union, the OAS, and thousands of domestic observers withdrew their official delegations in protest. Announcing their withdrawal from the second round, the EU said that “the elections could not take place in a credible manner and in accordance with international standards.”<sup>83</sup> As evidence of the unquestionably 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.<sup>84</sup> Not surprisingly, the negative reports by election observers were enough to discredit Fujimori as a democratically elected leader, although the international reaction to the fraudulent elections was not fully realized; discovery of videotapes proved that his office had engaged in widespread bribery of government officials and he subsequently resigned.<sup>85</sup> As Arturo Santa-Cruz writes,

What was important in the Peruvian case was not just that the Andean country was perceived as undemocratic, but that this fact endowed the international community with the right to advance claims on Fujimori’s government, just as it also endowed the Peruvian people with the right to advance claims on the international community.<sup>86</sup>

By the 1990s it became common for states and international organizations to suspend support for regimes that had committed blatant violations of democracy or human rights.<sup>87</sup> Many pro-democracy states made overt commitments to support democratic states and made provisions for such support an explicit part of their foreign policy. For example, an amendment to the 1986 U.S. Foreign Assistance Act prohibited U.S. aid to “any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by decree or military coup.”<sup>88</sup> Following such a suspension, the resumption of bilateral foreign aid and normal diplomatic relations with many developed democracies became increasingly conditioned on the holding of free and fair elections.

The case of Togo clearly demonstrates this dynamic. Amid widespread pressure on African governments to hold multiparty elections in the early

83. European Union, “Peru Presidential and Congressional Elections—EU Observation,” news release, April 6, 2001.

84. Taylor, “Patterns of Electoral Corruption in Peru.”

85. Cooper and Legler, *Intervention Without Intervening?*

86. Santa-Cruz, “Monitoring Elections, Redefining Sovereignty,” 767.

87. Donno, “Defending Democratic Norms: Regional Intergovernmental Organizations, Domestic Opposition and Democratic Change.”

88. Committee on International Relations and Committee on Foreign Relations, “Legislation on Foreign Relations Through 2002.”

1990s, the Togolese government's failure to hold plausibly democratic elections led to a near-total suspension in nonhumanitarian foreign aid for more than a decade. General Gnassingbe Eyadema, who came to power in a 1967 coup d'état, came under increasing international pressure in the early 1990s to hold multiparty elections (he allowed noncompetitive presidential elections in 1979 and in 1986). In early 1993, major donors, including the United States, France, Germany, and other members of the European Commission suspended foreign aid to Togo over the "worsening political situation" and the president's "unwillingness to create conditions for a peaceful transition to democracy."<sup>89</sup> Following the suspension, Eyadema agreed to multiparty elections but allowed only forty-five days of preparation and campaigning. International observers from the Carter Center, NDI, the Organization for African Unity, La Francophonie, and several smaller NGOs deployed missions to the country.

After elections were scheduled and international observers arrived, conditions deteriorated, ultimately leading all major international observers except La Francophonie and the OAU to suspend their missions. Following ten months of observation, and after the government refused to delay the elections, the joint Carter Center and NDI statement said that the "minimum conditions did not exist to conduct meaningful elections."<sup>90</sup> The problems cited in their statement included the refusal of all major opposition candidates to participate and the resulting lack of real competition; the election commission's own concern about their preparations for the election; out-of-date, manipulated, and inflated voter registration lists; the election commission's failure to distribute electoral identification cards to voters; the government's refusal to accredit non-partisan domestic election observers; the printing of many more voter identification cards than registered voters; unbalanced media time; the distribution of faulty indelible ink; misuse of state resources for campaigning; and the overt partisanship of election officials.<sup>91</sup> As reported in the international news media the day after the election, the decision by international monitors to withdraw was a "fatal blow to the elections' credibility."<sup>92</sup>

89. "Aid to Togo halted," *Globe and Mail*, Reuters News Service, February 12, 1993.

90. National Democratic Institute, "National Democratic Institute/ Carter Center Joint Post-Election Statement on Withdrawal from 1993 Togolese Elections," news release, September 1, 1993.

91. *Ibid.*

92. Karl Maier, "Poll Deemed to Lack Credibility," *Irish Times*, London Independent Service, August 26, 1993.

Even the leader of the delegation from La Francophonie, an organization that rarely criticizes election fraud, was quoted as saying that the election was “meaningless.”<sup>93</sup> Their twenty-member delegation stayed to observe election day proceedings and found that the election scarcely took place.

Nearly one-third of the polling stations were either closed or did not exist. The second third of the polling stations opened, but no one came to vote [and] the remaining third of polling stations functioned more or less correctly, but with a voter turnout of only five to fifteen percent.<sup>94</sup>

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. In 2006, after the Togolese government complied with a series of mandated democratic reforms, the EU released 40 million Euros in foreign aid. When Togo held its first credible elections in October 2007, the EU and other donors resumed full development cooperation. Figure 3.6 illustrates the trend of aid from the European Community to Togo.

The relationship between internationally certified elections and foreign support for governments is not always clear-cut, and there remains room for pseudo-democrats to engage in strategic manipulation or try to discredit the reports of observers. However, the perception of a connection between international benefits and internationally certified elections is widespread. Governments that are already facing cuts in international support because of previous anti-democratic actions must hold internationally certified elections in order to resume international benefits. Consistent with the norm of election monitoring, the vast majority of countries now invite international election observers. I now explore those few governments that do not.

#### Refusing to Invite International Observers

By 2000, few countries were violating the norm and not inviting international observers. One interesting feature of the evolving game between international observers and pseudo-democrats is how rarely leaders

93. “Presidential Election in Togo: This Election Was Meaningless!” *Le Figaro*, August 29, 1993.

94. *Ibid.*

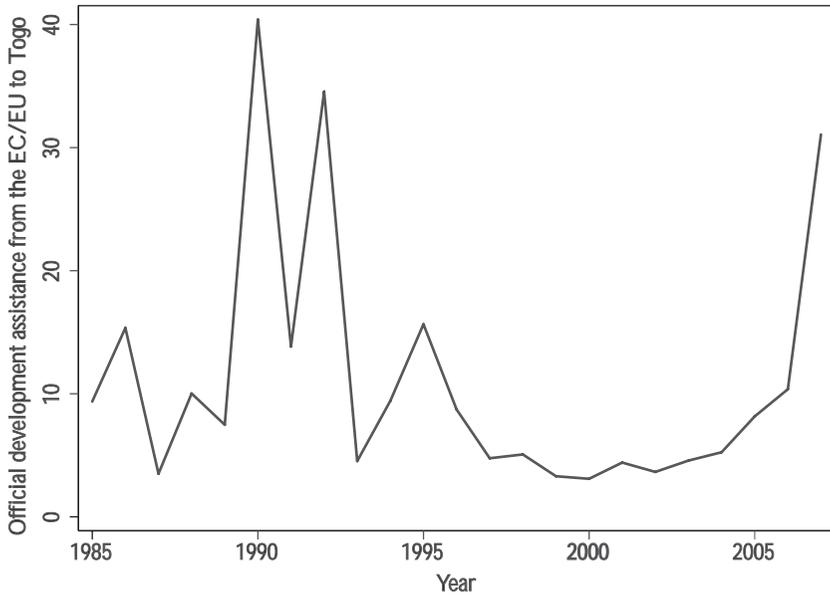


Figure 3.6. Bilateral foreign aid to Togo

simply refuse to invite international observers. Outside of the exclusive club of wealthy and stable democracies, a small subset of countries refused observers even after the norm became widely accepted. As mentioned in previous chapters, some countries stopped inviting observers because they became widely regarded as democracies, such as the Czech Republic and Chile, and were no longer expected to have their elections observed. Other countries, such as Cuba, North Korea, Oman, Vietnam, and Turkmenistan, held elections in which multiparty competition was impossible and therefore stood no chance of holding plausibly democratic elections.

Figure 3.7 summarizes patterns of election monitoring for all countries that did not invite observers to at least one national election between 2000 and 2006. I have excluded noninviting countries that are long-term consolidated democracies, members of the European Union, or countries that are considered to have very democratic political institutions (with a *Polity2* score of 8 or higher). The fourteen countries that never invited observers during this period are Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, Guinea, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, North Korea, Oman, Syria, Turkmenistan, and Vietnam. As indicated in figure 3.7, some of these elections lacked any real multiparty competition, as in Cuba, North Korea, or Oman. The puzzle

in these cases is not why they refuse international election monitors, but why they hold elections at all.

Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Iraq, and Singapore invited election monitors to some but not all of their elections in this period. Malaysia and Gabon are two of the very few countries that invited international observers in the 1990s and then stopped after the norm had developed. Guinea invited observers from the European Union to elections in 2002, but the EU declined to send a mission.

Benin is considered one of the more democratic countries in Africa but does not meet the conditions that I have used to exclude democracies from figure 3.7. The country invited international observers to all but the 2003 national assembly elections. Madagascar similarly invited observers to most elections since 1990 and resumed inviting observers after the disputed 2002 presidential elections.

Other countries (such as Iran and Malaysia) do not rely heavily on international assistance from the West or would otherwise suffer little for

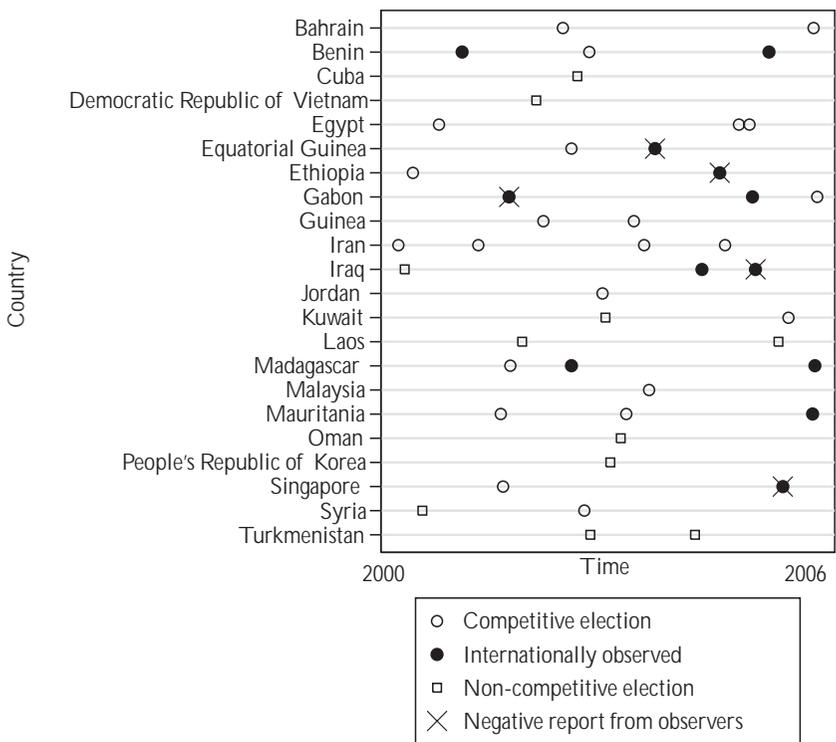


Figure 3.7. Noninviting countries, 2000–2006

violating the norm (such as Egypt). As referenced previously, Egypt is heavily dependent on international support but receives aid despite its political institutions and because of its strategic importance to the United States in the Middle East. Yet even Egypt has responded to the norm of election monitoring. Before the 2005 elections, heated debate took place within the Egyptian government about whether to invite international observers, with President Mubarak's son Jamal unsuccessfully arguing in favor of international observers in response to U.S. pressure on the country to hold democratic elections.<sup>95</sup> The decision in part sparked widespread editorializing about "Egypt's Imitation Elections," including the following condemnation, reprinted in the *International Herald Tribune*:

Here are some simple ways to identify a real democratic election. The ruling party should not be allowed to shape the election arrangements and intimidate voters. The candidates should be able to compete on a reasonably level playing field. Impartial observers should be welcome and given time to deploy themselves at polling places nationwide. Not one of these defining features was evident in last week's Egyptian presidential voting.<sup>96</sup>

Despite the fact that opposition parties were allowed to compete for the first time in the presidential elections, the Egyptian elections were widely viewed as a charade. Overall, the vast majority of governments invite observers, and the majority of governments that do not comply with the norm are unambiguous autocrats or unambiguous democrats.

### **Evidence of the Democracy-Contingent Benefits**

In this chapter I have provided evidence in support of three of the empirical implications outlined in chapter 1 and documented the role of democracy promoters in contributing to the norm of election monitoring. Democracy promoters play a fundamental role in explaining the diffusion of international election monitoring by increasing democracy-contingent benefits, but they did not advocate for the norm. Rather, by increasing support available to governments that were committed to democratization, and eventually by recognizing internationally endorsed elections as a signal sent by all true democrats, they gave governments the incentive

95. "US Presses Egypt to Allow in Election Monitors," Agence France Press, August 29, 2005. Q & A: Egypt's Election Issues. November 15, 2005.

96. "Egypt's Imitation Election," *New York Times*, September 11, 2005.

to initiate international election monitoring and increased the constraints on pseudo-democrats. By the late 1990s, choosing not to invite observers signaled with certainty that a government was a pseudo-democracy not interested in internationally recognized elections. By inviting observers, pseudo-democrats risked a negative report and a reduction in international benefits. However, for governments already perceived to be pseudo-democracies, gaining a positive report from international observers was the path back to full international support, as demonstrated by Togo. Inviting observers and receiving a negative report is not an expected strategy for any type of leader. By showing that some governments are punished for failing to hold internationally certified elections, I have demonstrated that a plausible connection between election monitoring and democracy-contingent benefits exists and that this connection is observable to other governments that decide whether to invite observers. The threat of reduced international benefits is only one of several ways in which inviting monitors can be costly to pseudo-democrats. In the next chapter, I document how election monitors can have a direct effect on election day behavior and present causal evidence that observers can decrease vote share for pseudo-democrats but that observers do not necessarily have the same effect for true democrats.