

How International Election Observers Impact Post-Election Events

The link between international observers, acceptance of results and
post-election violence

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Abstract

Since 1990, international election observers have been travelling the world to monitor and assess close to 1 500 elections in developing democracies. Although often championed as the primary tool of democracy promotion, little is still known about its immediate consequences. In this research, therefore, I explore the relationship between election observers' assessments and domestic electoral reactions. Specifically, I examine the link between an observer condemnation and two post-election events that are crucial for democracy: (a) all losers accepting the results and (b) post-election violence. Analysing data from national elections since 1990 using logistic regression models, my findings strengthen the idea that elections condemned by observers are more likely to experience that actors refuse to concede, as well as post-election violence – irrespective of characteristics like electoral fraud. At large, I thus conclude that what observers say matters. To their credit, observers' statements align electoral reactions to democratic norms: protest the bad elections, not the good ones. However, the link between observers and violence reveals a potential trade-off: always tell the truth, or minimise the risk of violence.

Keywords: *international election observation, democracy promotion, electoral violence, electoral reactions*

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Every year, thousands of international election observers travel around the world to answer a fairly basic question: was this election free and fair? Although they have not always received the utmost attention, neither by the media nor by academia, international monitoring of elections has been common practice for over thirty years. Their efforts have been championed as something that, among other things, strengthens democracy (European Union 2016:17), and observers have been present at a majority of elections – especially in developing democracies, as illustrated in Figure 1.1 – since the 1990s. What is troubling, however, is the fact that little is known about the immediate impacts of the observers’ assessments. It is thus unclear whether one of the main tools in the democracy promotion toolbox, as Kelley (2012:11) described it, has any direct consequences. Like the observers, this study is thus motivated by a rather simple question: does it matter for domestic actors what international observers have to say?

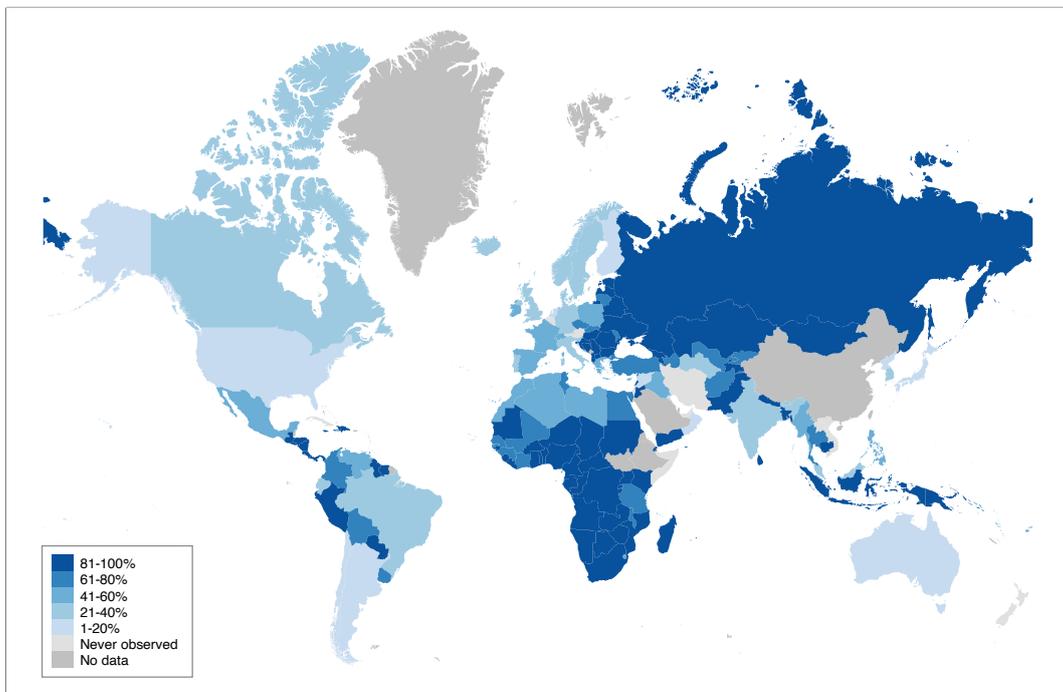


FIGURE 1.1. Elections monitored by international observers (%), 1990-2020

Notes: Percent of all national elections. Sources: Coppedge et al. (2021b) and Hyde and Marinov (2012).

This is important to clarify since actors' reactions to election results, arguably, are as crucial for the functioning of democracy as the election itself. When, for instance, politicians refuse to concede defeat and gather their supporters for protests, they challenge the legitimacy of the entire electoral system which, in turn, risks throwing countries into violent turmoil. This became especially clear during the early 1990s, as an unfortunate pattern of electoral reactions took hold in nations that were arranging competitive elections for the first time. While the electoral winners (usually the incumbents) claimed that everything went by the books, the losers refused to concede defeat and, instead, alleged fraud. The citizens, who wanted democracy but were not sure whether they were getting it, went out to protest. Running elections in contexts of societal and political distrust meant that uncertainty – was this election really free and fair? – persisted.

Thus, when hundreds of international election observers travelled to monitor the first multiparty elections in Kenya in 1992, as an example, the idea behind it was simple. By visiting as many polling places as possible, the third-party observers would be able to assess whether or not everything proceeded according to the rules. They would provide voters, domestic politicians and international donors with an unbiased and neutral assessment of the quality of the election, reducing uncertainty, increasing trust and thus strengthening democracy. Yet, when the results of the Kenyan election was announced, all opposition groups rejected the outcome and said the vote was rigged (Barkan 1993). Protests soon emerged, at least four of which with deadly outcomes (Daxecker et al. 2019b). Nobody seemed to recall that the international observers, just days after the election, had concluded that the vote was largely clean (Barkan 1993).

Driving this research is thus the notion that *if* election observation is a meaningful undertaking, then observers' assessments should be able to lower the risk of 'sore loser' violent challenges, like the one in Kenya in 1992. Yet, if actors really accept the monitors' conclusions, then observer criticism may inadvertently spark violence and instability as losing actors may feel emboldened to pursue more extreme methods, sensing international support for their cause. An observer statement would then be a double-edged sword that, on the one hand, could reduce the risk of sore loser challenges while it, on the other hand, may increase the risk of post-election violence.

In this research, therefore, I estimate the relationship between the observers' assessments and two post-election events that are crucial for democracy: first, all actors accepting the outcome and conceding defeat, and second, post-election violence. Combining three global datasets on national elections, my findings strengthen the idea that observers, indeed, do impact such electoral reactions. The absence of observer criticism makes it more likely that actors will accept the result and lowers the risk of post-election violence. An observer condemnation, however, increases the likelihood that actors will refuse to accept the results, as well as the risk of deadly post-election protests.

The findings raise several questions, like how the proposed relationship between a condemnation and violence plays out in practice, and how observer organisations should consider the potential trade-offs between, on the one hand, avoiding violence and, on the other, telling the truth. Yet, before delving further into the outcomes of the research, consider the rationale behind it.

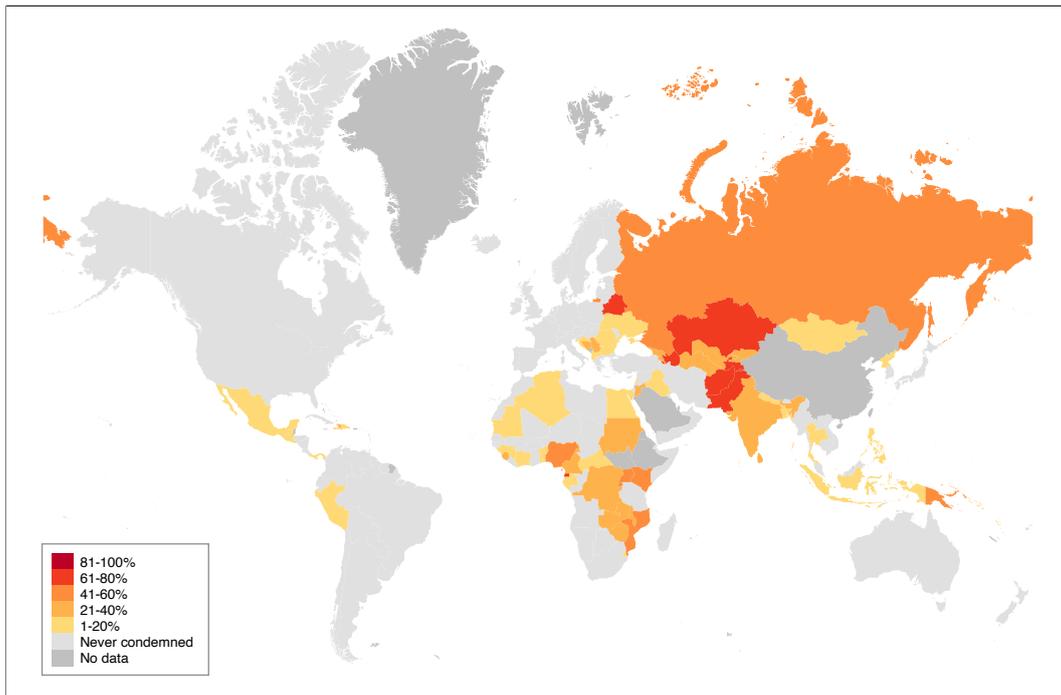


FIGURE 1.2. Elections condemned by international observers (%), 1990-2020

Notes: Percent of all national elections. Sources: Coppedge et al. (2021b) and Hyde and Marinov (2012).

1.1 Why study election observation?

There are at least three reasons to study international election monitoring – especially in relation to post-election events and domestic political actors.¹ First, it has received remarkably little attention. The majority of previous research crediting the virtues of election observation has done so by focusing almost exclusively on observers’ *presence*, rather than their final *assessments*. Consequently, the post-election period, in which both the results and the observers’ statements are announced, have largely been ignored. Yet, since monitors have not shied away from condemning elections, as illustrated in Figure 1.2, it is high time to outline the consequences of their criticism.

Second, most observer organisations likely operate based on the premise that what they say matters. Generally advertised as a part of the democracy promotion regime, election observation has been advocated – at least by the observers themselves – as something that ‘enhances public confidence’, ‘strengthens democracy’ and ‘decreases the risk of election-related conflicts’ (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe 2010:13; European Union 2016:17; Asian Network for Free Elections 2019:84). In addition, yearly expenses for election observation missions range from 7 and 10 million dollars (Organisation of American States 2020:121; Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe 2019:7) up to 47 million euros (European Commission 2019:37). To some extent, this study will indicate whether this is money, time and energy well spent.

Third, post-election issues that election observers potentially can address are on the rise. Whereas democracy has been in decline for years, as authoritarian leaders

¹Throughout the thesis, I use the terms election monitors and election observers interchangeably. Previous research has separated the two, a distinction that has largely become obsolete by today’s standards.

continue to try and hide behind flawed elections, unfounded allegations of fraud from sore losers – what Schedler (2001) labelled the 'fraud syndrome' – remain common. The invasion of the US congress in early 2021, an effort by supporters of former US President Trump to 'stop the steal!' is one example (Taylor 2021). Similar recent events include what happened after the election in Kyrgyzstan, in October of 2020, when protesters stormed the parliament (Khurshudyan 2021), as well as in North Macedonia after a snap election in 2017 (Noack 2017). If politicians listen to and act upon observers' statements, these types of event could be mitigated.

1.2 Purpose and outline

The overarching motivation behind this study is to clarify the extent to which it matters what international election observers have to say. To shed light on this, I focus on the immediate post-election period and examine the relationship between international observers' assessments and domestic political actors' reactions to election results. Specifically, the purpose is thus to detail if an observer condemnation: (a) makes actors more or less prone to accept election results, and (b) increases or decreases the risk of post-election violence. I proceeded based on the following research question.

How do assessments by international election observers impact domestic reactions to election results?

Having offered a brief overview of what this study will entail, detailed the rationale behind it, and drawn up a research question, this introductory chapter goes on to describe how observing elections work in practice, informing readers who are unacquainted with the topic. The next chapter then outlines some *previous research* on the subject, detailing what is known already about the effectiveness of election monitoring.

Moving into the theoretical parts of the research, the third chapter takes a step back to set up the *conceptual framework*, addressing the role of elections in political regimes and the very nature of political actors, the behaviour of which is up for scrutiny. The fourth chapter outlines the *theoretical framework*. Here, I describe elections as taking place in either high- or low-information environments and argue that the job of observers is to increase levels of available information. I present four falsifiable hypotheses of observers' impact on both acceptance of results and post-election violence.

Before evaluating the hypotheses, chapter five describes the *methodology* of the study. I outline the quantitative research design, specific the dependent, independent, and control variables, and explain the statistical regression models used to analyse the data. The sixth chapter is the *empirical analysis* in which I present my findings. I offer some descriptive statistics on each subject, analyse the relationships, and detail the predicted probability of acceptance of results, as well as post-election violence, depending on the observers' assessment. Chapter seven offers a *discussion* on the findings. Here, I illustrate and reflect upon the link between observer criticism and violence, as well as the future of the practice. Finally, the eighth chapter presents the *conclusion*, including recommendations for future research.

TABLE 1.1. *Notable international election observation organisations*

Acronym	Name	Regional focus	Active since
AU	African Union	Africa	1989
ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections ^a	Asia	1998
CC	Carter Center ^a	Global	1989
CS	Commonwealth Secretariat	Africa & Asia	1989
COE	Council of Europe	Continental Europe	1989
EU/EC	European Union/European Commission	Africa, Asia & Latin America	1993
EP	European Parliament	Africa, Asia & Latin America	1994
IRI	International Republican Institute ^a	Global	1986
NDI	National Democratic Institute ^a	Global	1986
OAS	Org. of American States	Latin America	1962
OIF	Org. Internationale de la Francophonie	Africa	1992
OSCE	Org. for Security and Cooperation in Europe	Continental Europe & Central Asia	1990

Notes: ^aNon-governmental or non-profit organisation. Source: Kelley (2012:35-6)

1.3 How international observation of elections work

For readers who are unfamiliar with the practice of international election observation, it is necessary to describe some of its basic functioning before moving further ahead. The paragraphs below answers three essential questions. When did it start? Who is it that does the actual observing? And, perhaps most importantly, how does it work?

Although international monitors were sporadically deployed to elections during the cold war, it was in the early 1990s, as the Soviet Union collapsed and the 'third wave' of democracy swept across the globe, that the practice developed into a global norm (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009). Due to its relatively low costs and the rediscovered interest of Western governments in 'democracy promotion', it quickly rose in popularity. Since the mid-2000s, some 70 to 80 percent of all national elections are observed by international monitors, and even the world's most committed autocrats, like Vladimir Putin in Russia, Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus and until recently Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, have invited observers to their elections (Hyde 2011:3).

The 'monitoring industry' as Kelley (2012:9) labelled it, is crowded. To date over 55 organisations are signatories of the UN Declaration of Principles for Election Observation (United Nations 2005), which developed as a response to diverging practices and the establishment of several 'shadow' observer groups. Among the more prominent groups, however, are governmental organisational like the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the European Union (EU), as well as non-governmental organisations and non-profits like the US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Carter Centre (CC).² Table 1.1 offers a brief overview of some of the more notable observer groups, all of which are signatories of the aforementioned UN Declaration.

An international election observation mission generally proceeds as follows. First, a government invites one or more observer organisations to monitor its election.

²Throughout the research, I refer to these types of established or 'reputable' organisations when discussing election observation unless, of course, otherwise noted.

This decision is always up to the government in question, which is important to emphasise because it means that election observers are not a global election police force – they always operate with the blessings of the host government. If a mission is deployed, however, the first to enter the country are the long-term observers. They arrange the logistics, assess the legal electoral framework, and begin to monitor the pre-election campaign period by, for instance, interviewing stakeholders (Kelley 2012:39).

A few days before election day, the missions are joined by a vast number of short-term observers. Spreading out across the country, the short-term observers cover election-day proceedings in different polling places and report their findings by filling in forms with questions like:

- Is there tension or unrest in the vicinity of the polling station?³
- Did you observe threats targeted at potential voters?⁴
- Did you observe any evidence of falsification of voter lists entries, results or protocol?⁵

The findings are reported to and compiled in the head offices of the missions, usually in the capital. The day after the election, the monitoring organisations release a statement, sometimes subsequent to a press conference, which details their preliminary findings and assessments to the public. After a few weeks, the observers issue a final report which includes recommendations (if necessary) for how to align the country's elections further towards the ideals of democracy. Generally, election observers thus have a short-term goal of assessing elections, as well as a long-term objective of improving them.

Whether observers succeed in reaching these goals is not evident. Since the practice gained prominence in the 1990s, some have been vocal in questioning its relevance and general capabilities. A commonly mentioned critique is that observer organisations are bound by their own political interests, or that they are not strong enough to withstand hard political pressure (Kelley 2012:7). Further, studies have shown that observers can be un-prepared, ill-equipped, biased and reach completely different conclusions when presented with the same set of facts (Dorman 2005; Kelley 2010).

In the next chapter, therefore, I offer an overview of what previous research has concluded, broadly, on the effectiveness of election monitoring and, specifically, on the focus of this research: acceptance of results and post-election violence.

³Drawn from the OSCE's (2010:110) 'observation report form' for monitoring election-day voting.

⁴As listed in the 'election-day questionnaire' by the OAS (2007:16).

⁵Taken from the EU's (2016:203) observation form on monitoring 'closing and counting'.

Chapter 2

Previous Research

Given the amount of time, resources and emphasis the international community devote to observing elections, it is arguably one of the more under-researched areas of international politics and democratisation. Thus, before moving further ahead, this chapter outlines what is, and what is not, known already about the impacts of election monitoring – both on election quality in general, as well as the focus of this study: post-election reactions. First, however, I outline why it is only in recent years that research has made significant progress.

2.1 The lost decade(s)

When international election observation became standard procedure during the 1990s, practically nothing was known about its effects. This spurred criticism in the academic world, famously promoting Thomas Carothers (1997) to refer to election observers as ‘glorified tourists’, eager to go home and tell their colleagues about their exotic experiences from the foreign worlds of authoritarianism. His larger point, however, was that election observation was more for show than for substance and, arguably, Carothers was right to be sceptical. By the end of the 1990s, major research on election observation was still absent from the academic journals except for articles that largely assumed, rather than tested, its effectiveness (see, for instance, McCoy et al. 1991; Franck 1992; Garber and Cowan 1993) and some country-level case studies (like Geisler 1993; Sives 1999).

Entering the 2000s, research picked up ground as Bjornlund (2004) addressed the issue at length in book format, although his analysis relied on a limited set of case studies. Some still questioned the substance of observation missions, often based on single experiences (such as Laakso 2002; McIntire and Gettleman 2009) whereas others were continuing to point towards it as a force for good – mostly without providing any evidence thereof (like Levitsky and Way 2005; Calingaert 2006). This meant that by 2010, international election observation had yet to be systematically assessed.

2.2 How observers impact election quality

Since 2010, some studies have evaluated the impacts of election monitoring, partly addressing the fundamental rationale behind the practice. In outlining these findings,

it can be said with some degree of confidence that election observation is not only for show, it has something to show for. Specifically, albeit with different caveats, it has been concluded that international observers can, at least to some extent:

- Both detect and deter fraud (Kelley 2012:130; Hyde 2011:126-7).
- Encourage participation of opposition parties (Kelley 2011).
- In some cases, raise the quality of future elections (Donno 2013:108-9; Kelley 2012:151-2).

The research by Susan Hyde (2011) and Judith Kelley (2012) were among the first efforts to systematically and quantitatively assess the effects of international observers on electoral quality. Comparing observed and unobserved elections, Kelley (2012:130) highlighted that observed elections were less likely to be fraudulent compared to unobserved. As such, she found a significant relationship between international monitors' presence and electoral quality. Hyde (2011:126-7) provided additional strength to that argument, showing that incumbents are more likely to lose elections when observers are present. Quantitative assessments such as these fortified the findings of previous country-level experiments, like that of Hyde (2007), who showed that vote shares for the incumbent dropped significantly in polling stations visited by international observers, as well several of the case studies listed above.¹

Although the findings above indicated that observers' presence could reduce electoral fraud, it is not the complete picture. Simpser and Donno (2012), for instance, found that when governments invite observers, incumbents do not abandon fraudulent tactics but simply alter them away from election day proceedings. Instead of cheating in the vote count, they attack more long-term democratic ideals like the rule of law and media independence. Accordingly, Bjornlund (2004:305) argued that election observers often are dangerously superficial and focus too much on what occurs on election day. Strikingly, Beaulieu and Hyde (2009) found evidence to suggest that the presence of observers increase the probability of opposition boycotts – although Kelley (2011), on the other hand, showed that this relationship only holds for 'shadow' or non-reputable observer groups. When reputable observers are present, the opposition is more likely to participate.

In terms of long term effects, the evidence is much more scarce. Kelley (2012:140) put some 10 countries under scrutiny and found that only one-quarter showed signs of long-term improvements – something that, further, was hard to attribute solely to international observers. Half of the countries made very little or no improvement in election quality over time, and most seemed to ignore monitors' recommendations (Kelley 2012:152). Donno (2013:104-5) made further advancements and found that election observers can have a long-term effect on election quality but only when they assert some type of conditionality.

In summary, it thus appears like the presence of international observers could reduce fraud, albeit only on election day itself and not equally in all cases. Whether their presence has any long-term effects is still unclear.

¹In an experiment similar to Hyde's (2007), however, Leeffers and Vicente (2019) studied whether the presence of international observers reduced fraud during the 2009 election in Mozambique and found only ambiguous results.

2.3 How observers impact post-election reactions

Having established that elections observers in most cases are more than simply ‘glorified tourists’, I proceed to outline what is known about the link between international observers and reactions to election outcomes. Specifically on the issues this research address: acceptance of results and post-election violence.

Acceptance of results

Several studies, like Lindberg (2004) and Schedler (2001), have previously discussed the issue of actors refusing to accept elections results based on (their own) fraud allegations. Anderson et al. (2005) even produced a book on the issue, arguing that ‘losers’ consent’ is essential for the survival of democracy. In that vein, Przeworski et al. (2000:55) suggested that *allegations* of fraud are more common than actual fraud which, he argued, remained a threat to democracy.

To date, however, no study has explicitly researched the link between this issue and election monitoring, nor whether the assessment of observers makes the electoral contenders more or less likely to accept election results. Although some have suggested theoretical reasons for why this might be the case, like Hyde (2008:210), and case studies have found a connection between what observers say and public opinion, like Bush and Prather (2017) and Benstead et al. (2020), the relationship between losers’ acceptance of elections and observers’ assessments has yet to be tested explicitly.

Post-election violence

Election-related violence has received plenty of attention in electoral and democratisation research, for instance by Von Borzyskowski (2019a) and Hafner-Burton et al. (2014). This is understandable since the issue remains extremely prevalent, especially in parts of Asia and Africa. Figure 2.1 underlines this, showing the characteristics of some 2 500 post-election protest events around the world during 1990-2012. However, only a few studies have researched electoral violence in relation to international election observation. These efforts, generally, have concluded that elections for which international observers are present are more likely to experience post-election protests and violence.

Surveying African elections, Daxecker (2012) showed the link between observer presence and protests empirically, arguing that the relationship holds irrespective of whether or not the election itself was fraudulent. Smidt (2016) also studied elections in Africa but distinguished between government- and opposition-led violence. Her findings, somewhat counter-intuitively, illustrated that opposition-led violence becomes more likely when observers are present – albeit only after elections without major fraud. Moving towards a more general understanding, Beaulieu (2014:73-6) extended the analysis beyond Africa and was able to confirm that the presence of international observers increases the probability of protests, particularly ones that are opposition-led. Although Roberts et al. (2017) argued the contrary, that the presence of an observation mission mitigates risks of violence, their method was to interview stakeholders rather than to statistically test for an empirical relationship.²

²The study by Roberts et al. (2017) is an evaluation report of election observation activities undertaken by the EU. It is, as far as I am aware, the only (or at least one of few) external evaluations on the effects of election observation ordered by an observer organisation. That is, arguably, extremely

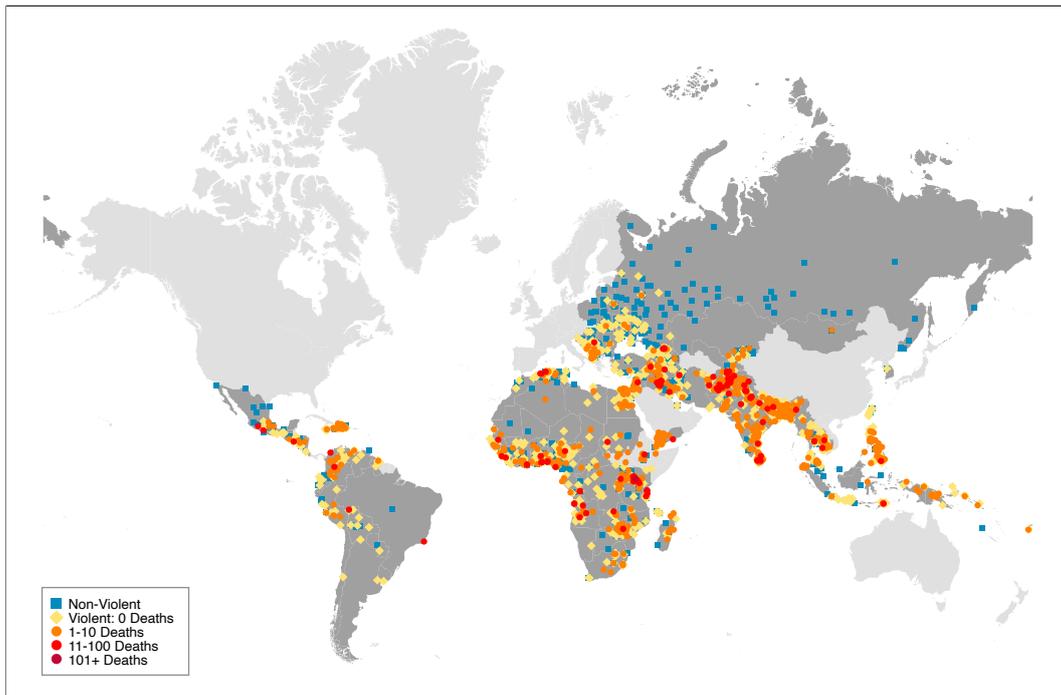


FIGURE 2.1. Post-election protest events around the world, 1990-2012

Notes: Each dot represent the geographical location of a post-election protest event. Source: Daxecker et al. (2019b).

Besides the mere presence of observers, two studies have researched protests and violence in relation to the assessment international observers make. First, Hyde and Marinov (2014) found evidence of a strong relationship between post-election protests and a negative report from international observers. The study, however, made no distinction on whether such protests were violent which, arguably, is a consequential difference.³ Von Borzyskowski (2019b) recognised this and thus researched the link between an observer condemnation and post-election violence specifically. Although the study was limited to African elections, the findings clearly illustrated that a negative assessment by international observers indeed makes violence more likely, independent of whether the election was seriously flawed or not.

The study by Von Borzyskowski (2019b) is the only one to date that explicitly dealt with observer assessments and violent protests. This research will be able to evaluate whether or not the identified relationship holds outside the African continent.

2.4 The way forward

When research on the effects of election monitoring started appearing during the last decade, it was able to unveil a link between election quality, post-election protests and international observers. Detailing these relationships, however, previous research share one consequential characteristic. By focusing on the difference between observed and unobserved elections, the studies have outlined the effects of international monitors' *presence*. Yet, the primary job of observers, arguably, is not

notable and should at large increase the relevance of studies such as this.

³Citizens' right to peacefully demonstrate their disappointment in an election result is very much within the realms of democracy – violence is not.

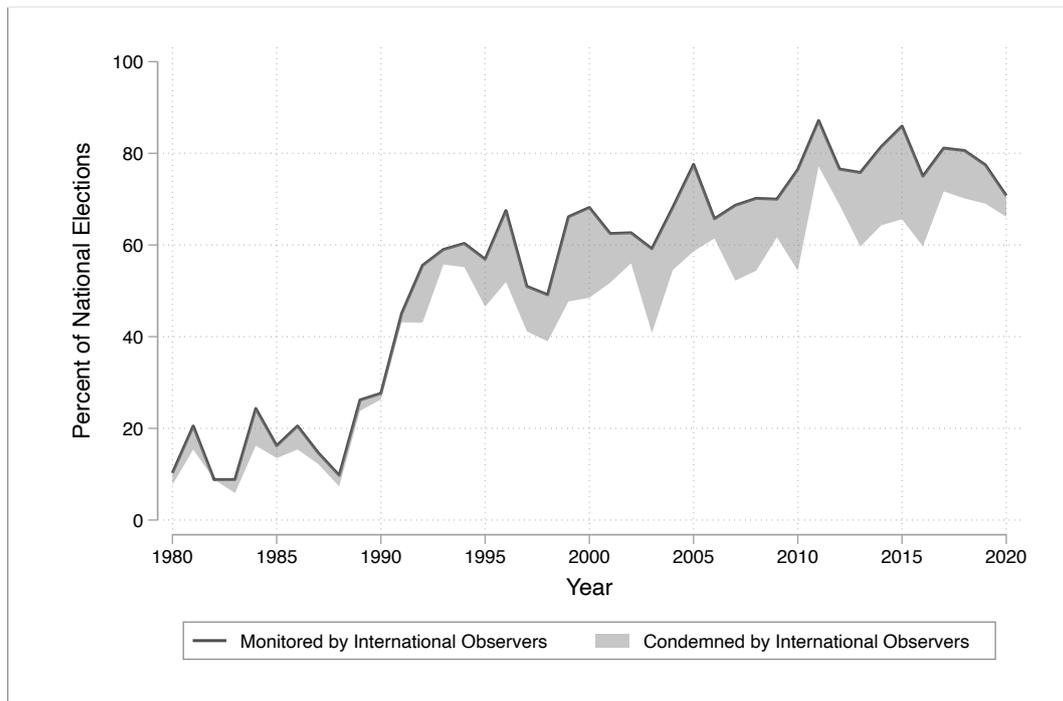


FIGURE 2.2. Elections monitored and condemned by observers annually (%), 1990-2020

Sources: Coppedge et al. (2021b) and Hyde and Marinov (2012).

to be physically present, it is to deliver an *assessment* on the quality of the election in question.

In addition, and what is more critical, the focus on observer presence has today become completely misplaced. Figure 2.2 shows the annual share of national elections for which international observers were present. Strikingly, since the mid-2000s, some 70-80 percent of all elections globally are observed. This means that presence, intuitively, is hardly a determining factor anymore. Therefore, in this research, I instead focus on the difference among observed elections, tracing out whether or not the observers' assessments can be associated with, first, acceptance of results and, second, post-election violence. These are issues that previous research has largely left unresolved.

Chapter 3

Conceptual Framework

Elections are, as Hartlyn and McCoy (2006:41) wrote, the lifeblood of democracy. Thus, to further understand why electoral reactions matters for democracy, this chapter takes a step back to clear up two aspects. First, I outline the very role of elections in political regimes. Second, I conceptualise the nature of political actors, the behaviour of which is up for scrutiny.

3.1 The role of elections in political regimes

Conceptually, an election can fill multiple roles in a political regime. Compiling previous thinking on the issue, Wojtasik (2013) outlined some of the core functions authors have previous ascribed to the general act of voting. For this research, two aspects appear as key. First, and foremost, an election is a procedure used to (peacefully) allocate power. It is the way through which citizens delegate political representation or, as Przeworski et al. (2000:18-9) would describe it, a mechanic that is used to fill governmental offices. In a pure functionalist, technocratic or 'electoralist' view of democratic regimes, this is the role elections play (Linz and Stepan 1996:4).

What follows from the above, however, is a second, more constructivist point that Wojtasik (2013) labelled 'legitimisation of those in power'. In this regard, an election is not only a mechanic through which a government is chosen but also a way to legitimise that government's domination over society. The function of the actual voting here, as Rose and Mossawir (1967) argued, is that it makes individuals inclined to voluntarily accept regulations of the regime. Legitimacy, as such, is what allows the winner of an election to say 'the people have spoken' which, in turn, makes it rational for citizens to submit themselves to being governed by that winner. Lending the typology from Frey et al. (2004), this two-folded conceptualisation can be illustrated as follows. Whereas the first, technical point refers to the *procedural outcome* – the results in power distribution – the second point deals with the *procedural utility* – how the election in and of itself generates legitimacy.

The point about procedural utility can be illustrated by the fact that elections, as Diamond (2002) argued, often are used to mask the reality of authoritarian rule. Arguably, the North Korean regime, or any other authoritarian government for that matter, does not arrange elections as mechanisms to allocate power – they use elections to produce legitimacy. Having an election allows the (eternal) leader to

claim a mandate for governing the country, which is arguably why the North Korean authorities claimed turnout was 99.99 percent during the 2019 election (up from 99.97 percent in the previous one) (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2021).

International election observers do not impact the first conceptual aspect of an election, as in the distribution of power, but they do impact the part regarding legitimacy. As Diamond (1994), I thus view election monitoring as an effort that can either affirm or disaffirm the legitimacy of election results. This is important because it has consequences for whether citizens will perceive it as rational to abide by the elected government. Thus, while the role of an election is to allocate power as well as to produce legitimacy, it is the job of election observers to interfere in this process.

3.2 The nature of political actors

As this research will frequently refer to political actors – the politicians who do the actual competing in the elections – it is necessary to take a moment to understand what that term entails. This matters because if we are to predict the behaviour of political actors theoretically, as in their willingness to challenge electoral outcomes, we must have some explicit understanding of their basic nature.

Like Norris (2004:9), I start from the premise that political actors are (a) rational and (b) vote-maximisers. The first assumption, that actors are rational, means that they, first, are able to order choices and actions based on their perceived utility and, second, will choose the option they regard features the best pay-off in relation to their goal (Simon 1985). To act rationally thus means choosing the better alternative over the worse, a notion that within the realms of this research does make sense. The full debate over rationality, which is a constant one in political science, is beyond the scope of this study (see Hindmoor 1995:51-7 for an overview). Yet, it is important to acknowledge that rationality in and of itself says nothing about the second assumption: that an actor's goal generally is to maximise votes.

What is guiding this assumption is the fact that political actors are, well, political. Here, previous conceptualisations have distinguished between politicians as vote-seeking, office-seeking or policy-seeking. Although each aspect holds its own assumptions, Strom (1990) made the point that actors' objectives tend to encompass all three.¹ However, detailing their prominence or weight relative to one another, be it offices of policies, is not essential. Regardless of their specific end-goals, political actors are, generally speaking, more likely to reach them the more votes they attain. In other words, the better actors perform in elections, the better their chances are to either impact policies or attain certain offices. This means that although politicians come in many shapes and sizes, they do, indeed, tend to be vote-maximisers (Norris 2004:9).

It follows from this that political actors are strategic (Jacobson 1989). They do what they need to do, like inflate their records or talk down their opponents, since they, generally, need votes to reach their goals. Being strategic could also be understood as the fact that political actors are opportunistic. While the two are not

¹This is a more generous conceptualisation than that of Downs (1957:28), who argued that political actors are solely self-interested, motivated by the "income, prestige, and power which come from being in office".

always synonymous, previous research, for instance that of Aidt et al. (2011), has shown that politicians systematically manipulate economic conditions to increase their chances of re-election.

The implications of this conceptual understanding become the following. Since political actors are also strategic actors, they weigh and assess options and information to decide the most strategic procedure to gain popular support. A political actor, therefore, might choose a strategic path that is blatantly undemocratic – like screaming fraud when there is no fraud, or rigging an election and claiming it was fair – simply because that actor believes it helps electorally.

An actor might also choose not to do any of that and, instead, pursue strategies within the reals of democracy. This, however, does not mean that the actor is not strategic, it simply means that they have weighed their options and, in any given context, ended up with a different conclusion. Yet, when democracy is fragile and there is a lack of credible information, as I discuss in the next chapter, actors may indeed have more to gain electorally by protesting an election and casting doubts over its legitimacy.

3.3 Entering the theoretical framework

To summarise, I have taken a step back to more fully understand elections and political actors in political regimes. My conceptual starting-points, in short, are that:

- An election is not solely a way to allocate power but, equally important, to provide legitimacy.
- Political actors, generally speaking, are rational vote-maximisers and thus inherently strategic. Thus, to reach their end-goals, actors tend to pursue the avenues they perceive will maximise their electoral support.

These basic conceptualisations of elections and their contestants make it possible to start theorising about why political actors react the way they do to election results. This, and how actors' behaviour is impacted by what international election observers have to say, is indeed what the next chapter is devoted to.

Chapter 4

Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, my theoretical arguments are presented. In order to understand reactions to election results, I draw up a theoretical framework of high- and low-information environments and argue that, in low-information settings, it is rational for actors to challenge election results due to heightened uncertainty. I then introduce international election observers as providers of information and, using rationalist logics, present arguments for why their assessments should, and should not, impact actors' willingness to (a) contest the result and, subsequently, (b) call for post-election violence. My arguments result in four falsifiable hypotheses, summarised at the end of this chapter.

4.1 Understanding post-election reactions: access to information

In this research, I am fundamentally trying to understand why political actors react the way they do to election results. To anchor this issue theoretically, I draw on the idea of high- and low-information environments – a framework developed, in part, by Beaulieu (2014). Now, picture a scenario in which all electoral contestants have complete information about the quality of the election. Complete information means that the opposition would know the degree of fraud, if the end result really represented the will of the people, and whether or not the incumbent tried to rig the vote. Frankly, in such high- or complete-information settings, election observers are needless. Based on the (complete) information at hand, rationalist logics suggest that the electoral losers would be able to make an informed decision on their post-election reaction. They would accept the outcome if the information at hand satisfies them, or protest the outcome if the information indicates irregularities. Indeed, in complete- or high-information environments, incumbents would probably not try to rig the vote in the first place – everyone would know about the scheme.

The opposite case is what Beaulieu (2014:40) referred to as a low-information environment. In low-information environments, actors operate under heightened uncertainty simply because they lack information. Opposition parties cannot be certain of whether or not the incumbent tried to rig the vote, or know if the rigging succeeded. Elections in low-information settings can thus be outright fraudulent or perfectly free and fair – the point is that it does not matter. A lack of information will lead to uncertainty and, as Beaulieu (2014:43) put it: when the level of avail-

able information decrease, the opportunity to create and misrepresent information increase.

It follows from this that low-information environments have major impacts on electoral incentive structures. First, low-information environments create incentives for protesting the result because, again, no opposition group can be certain of whether the incumbent has won fairly or through manipulation (Chernykh and Svulik 2015). Second, low-information settings incentivise spurious accusations of misconduct since such allegations are hard to evaluate without good information (Donno 2010). Consequently, opposition parties will have little to lose from challenging a lost election which, from an informational standpoint, thus appears as a fully rational action.

Low-information environments also impact incentive structures for incumbents since, naturally, an incumbent choosing to run a fair election is taking the risk of losing. Yet the rewards for taking that risk – for example, being perceived as a true democrat by international and domestic audiences – are strikingly low, arguably even offset, in low-information environments. Again, the *de facto* quality of the election is close to irrelevant when information is lacking, which means that incumbents will not be able to reap any democracy-contingent benefits from the international community. International actors or donors, like any domestic audience, cannot be certain that the election was fair.

Thus, whereas high-information environments spur trust – in society, in governments and in electoral proceedings – the opposite is true of settings in which information is scarce. In practice, then, low-information environments result in election quality being uncertain which (a) incentivises the opposition to challenge the results by (b) lowering the costs of allegations of wrongdoing, at the same time as (c) the incumbent is discouraged from running fair elections. This is what Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) might have labelled a 'vicious cycle', where (a) → (b) → (c). Uncertainty, in other words, that stem from a lack of information mostly rewards undemocratic behaviour – both for those *without* political power (the opposition and electoral losers) who would likely benefit the most from democracy, and for those *in power* (the incumbent) who can actually change things.

To illustrate my argument, consider the work of Lindberg (2006:151) who studied electoral proceedings in Africa between 1989-2003. Analysing elections that were rated competitive, or 'free and fair', he found that opposition parties and candidates challenged the outcome in 60 percent of all cases. Again, these were reactions to fair elections. Stipulating that most occurred in the types of low-information environments I outlined above, my argument is that this can be explained, to a large extent, by the type of incentive structures that a lack of information generates.

4.1.1 The consequences for legitimacy

Low-information environments make it easier for political actors to be sceptical of the quality of the election (in many cases rightly so) while it, at the same time, lowers the costs of allegations of misconduct. Why is this important? The electoral losers do not have much say (if any) in the allocation of power. Neither are they responsible for the fact that elections are rigged in the first place. Yet, consider what happens to the legitimacy of the election when actors refuse to concede and post-election violence break out.

At large, contesting the result of an election challenges the legitimacy of the entire electoral process and, as such, delegitimises any winner's claim to power. Choosing not to concede and protesting the results is, therefore, nothing else than a declaration of electoral illegitimacy (Schedler 2013:300). Even though electoral losers might appear powerless, they are in this regard fairly influential. Accusations of fraud and improprieties, be them substantial or not, discredit the government, the election itself and any mandate to govern based on it (Alvarez et al. 2008:4). This is a major point because, as I argued in the conceptual framework (see section 3.1), legitimacy is one of the core reasons elections are organised in the first place.

As Lindberg (2004) and Anderson et al. (2005:13) argued, to study actors' acceptance of elections is, therefore, core in understanding the legitimacy of political systems. Alternatively, as Nadeau and Blais (1993) put it, the establishment and continuation of an electoral regime depend, in part, on 'the losers' consent'. In practice, this is conveying the larger point that electoral losers hold leverage over the legitimacy of the election. A challenge to an election result is, as such, a way for losers to make use of that leverage.

4.1.2 Factoring in the nature of political actors

It is not only uncertainty that drives reactions to electoral outcomes. Actors' reactions must also be understood as a consequence of their inherent nature. This is important, because even when political actors possess information suggesting that an election was legitimate, some may still 'default' to fraud allegations (consider the actions of former President Donald Trump after the 2020 US presidential election). As I argued in the conceptual framework (see section 3.2) political actors are, generally speaking, likely to choose the most strategic path to gain and consolidate supporters. Being what some might label opportunistic, they pursue the avenues they deem to be the most beneficial. Indeed, such avenues do not have to be democratic.

Consequently, high-information environments are not fail-safe. It is still possible for actors to pursue strategies of alleging fraud or assembling protests in such environments, as several examples may illustrate. My argument, however, is simply that it is a lot harder. What incentivises electoral reactions in high-information settings is very different from what incentivises reactions in low-information environments – a difference that is further exacerbated by the support-maximising nature of political actors. Since a lack of information makes challenges and protests easier and less costly, it allows political actors to more easily follow this line of strategy.

In addition, consider that political actors may well seek a pay-off in order to accept the result even when they do not genuinely believe that there was election fraud. Actors that, for instance, are policy-seeking or office-seeking, as distinguished by Strom (1990), could well make advancements on their goals by making use of their leverage that is, as described above, electoral legitimacy. Yet, their leverage is also, in general terms, peace. The former is challenged through the first step of challenging an election, rejecting the outcome; the latter through the second step, assembling supporters for violent protests.

In summary, my argument is that electoral reactions must be understood both in terms of access to information, which sets incentives for actors' behaviour, as well as an inherently political strategy that the actors may use to achieve any set of goals. My theoretical case, thus, is the following.

- Uncertainty, a consequence of low levels of information, incentivises electoral losers to challenge and protest election results.
- Such challenges have severe consequences for electoral legitimacy, irrespective of the actual quality of the election.
- This dynamic is further exacerbated by the nature of political actors who can use legitimacy (refusing to accept) and peace (assembling violent protests) as leverage to attain their goals.

Now, although Przeworski et al. (2000:55-6) recognised that ‘screaming fraud’ in many cases is a part of the ‘standard repertoire’, they concluded that there is no way to assess the validity of such allegations. Arguably, there is.

4.1.3 Introducing election observers: the providers of information

In my framework, as in the work of authors like Bjornlund (2004:40), election observation is the purposeful gathering of information about an electoral process. The observers’ main task is to present an assessment of the electoral processes against a universal standard of democratic elections to domestic and international audiences. In so doing, international observers increase the levels of information. Their statements provide the voters, the political actors and the international community with answers on whether or not the election was good, bad, or in-between. Observers’ statements thus temporarily transform a low-information environment into a higher information setting, reducing uncertainty.

In addition, I argue, as Hyde and Marinov (2014), that international observers often form one of the few reliable sources about electoral quality in low-information environments since they are, generally speaking, environments of mistrust towards the government, a lack of checks and balances and an absence of truly independent media outlets. To support this claim, consider the fact that international observers are not dispatched randomly but tend to monitor elections where there is a perceived need for the information they are capable of providing (European Union 2016:121; Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe 2010:26; The Commonwealth 2019:13). Now, while some observer groups try to avoid using language such as ‘we condemn’ in their post-election statement, and although such statements are often nuanced and lengthy, they are largely perceived, understood and interpreted binary (Kelley 2012:7). Essentially, observers can declare the election either acceptable or unacceptable.¹

Information from election observers, provided in their post-election statement, thus enables political actors to make an ‘informed’ electoral reaction. The question then becomes, to what extent do actors factor the observer assessments into their decision on an electoral challenge? Is it reasonable to expect a change in behaviour, because of reduced uncertainty?

¹Similar to previous research, like Von Borzyskowski (2019b), I use the term ‘condemnation’ to describe cases when observer issue a negative statement alleging that significant fraud or irregularities occurred in the election. I discuss this definition further in section 5.2.1.

4.2 Hypothesising post-election reactions

In the following two sections, I go on to hypothesise post-election reactions based on the information that international election observers can bring to the table. I generate four hypotheses on electoral reactions. First, on the initial step of challenging an election outcome: whether or not losers refuse to accept the results. Second, on what would then be the next logical step: whether or not losers assemble their supporters for protests and, consequently, violence.

4.2.1 Acceptance of results

When the quality of an election is uncertain, political actors have little to lose from challenging its outcome. Yet, when the levels of available information increase, which is what happens when international observers reveal their assessment, uncertainty decreases. An observer assessment could thus further lower, as well as further increase, the costs of refusing to accept an election result.

Now, when international observer *condemn* an election, they indicate that the final result is severely skewed and, therefore, suggest that the election was illegitimate. This incentivises actors to follow down the path of refusal. In cases where opposition groups are already sceptical towards the legitimacy of the election – as I would argue most are in low-information environments – an observer condemnation plays the role of reinforcing existing criticism (Hyde and Marinov 2014). Their report of irregularities is something a political actor is very likely to make use of since that actor is strategic. Indeed, if any monitoring organisation thus alleges that an election was fraudulent, it appears reasonable that the losers would refuse to accept the results.

Hypothesis 1a

When *any* international election observer condemn the election, losers will be *less inclined* to accept the result.

When, on the other hand, an observer assessment is not negative, a very different dynamic follows. Here, information is provided that do not reinforce existing criticism but instead points to the fact that the election was legitimate. The uncertainty decreases, although not in favour of the electoral loser. When this happens, both the observers' (a) credibility and (b) consensus appear as key in predicting post-election reactions. In terms of credibility, it seems plausible that actors would listen to and act upon statements from credible rather than 'shadow' observer organisations. It is unfortunate, but several such 'shadow' groups exist, one example being the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Composed by post-Soviet states and headquartered in Belarus, the CIS has gotten famous for endorsing fraudulent elections, often in what appears to be a deliberate manner to create confusion (Hyde 2011:159).

Arguably, a declaration of 'all good' from the CIS is not likely to incentivise any losers to accept the results – which is why, in this research, I am only interested in what reputable, or non-shadow, organisations conclude. A reputable observer that is known for delivering substantial and neutral information should bear greater

legitimacy, thus making it harder for a ‘sore loser’ to refute its statement (Hyde 2011:53).²

The second aspect is that there has to be some sort of consensus. Recall again that political actors are strategic. If an election is observed by multiple observer groups and there are discrepancies between their final assessments, political actors can ‘forum shop’. In other words, actors may choose to act upon the assessment they view to be the most beneficial (Arceneaux and Leithner 2017:33). A lack of consensus thus allows opposition groups to allege that irregularities did occur, just like inviting the CIS allows an incumbent government to claim that all went by the books. When some observers approve and others disapprove, it simply floods a low-information environment with more uncertainty, not less. When, on the other hand, no reputable observers allege fraud, there are no straws to grasp for. Refusing to accept defeat then risks portraying actors unfavourably, as ‘sore losers’, which is not a viable way to maximise popular support. Indeed, this should incentivise losers to concede.

Hypothesis 1b

When *no* international election observers condemn the election, losers will be *more inclined* to accept the result.

4.2.2 Post-election violence

Above, hypotheses 1a and 1b suggested that information from election observers incentivises political actors to either challenge or accept electoral outcomes. Yet, besides simply stating their discontent, electoral losers have a much stronger way of contesting an election result. That is, rallying their supporters for protests.

In calling for large-scale protests, opposition groups are able to demonstrate (no pun intended) both their discontent and strength relative to the government. In fact, post-election violent protesting is, as Birch et al. (2020) argued, one of the most commonly deployed tactics to achieve electoral ends. Be it power in general, a certain policy, or a position in the government, violence is a strategy that defeated political actors can and do use, however good the election was. It has also proven to be effective and, according to Thompson and Kuntz (2006:114), has toppled authoritarian leaders who tried to steal elections in several cases, for instance in Serbia 2000, Georgia 2003 and Ukraine 2004.

If political actors seek to challenge an election result by assembling public protests, they need something that can (a) incentivise the average citizen to participate (illustrating popular support) and (b) aggravate already convinced followers to more extreme methods (illustrating strength). An observer assessment impacts both of these issues. In relation to the first point, incentivising broad participation, consider that low-information settings make it harder for citizens – the ones who are called upon to do the actual protesting – to discern cheap political talk from the actual truth. Yet, when election observers issue their statements, assessing whether the election was free and fair, they impact the degree to which voters will perceive the election as legitimate. This, of course, also impacts voters’ incentives towards protesting its

²As previous researchers, like Von Borzyskowski (2019b) and Kelley (2012), I understand a legitimate or reputable observer organisation to be one that has previously criticised elections. The term ‘Western observers’ is sometimes used for the same purpose – which I discuss further when specifying the variables in section 5.2.1.

outcome. Simply put, citizens are more likely to protest an election they perceive to be illegitimate than an election that they think was fair.³

The same logic holds for the second point, aggravating convinced followers. If political actors seek violence to take down the regime, whether explicitly stated or not, they need something to justify such actions with. An observer assessment, again, impacts citizens' incentives – including the followers of the losing party – motivating the degree to which more extreme methods, including violence, may seem justified. In addition, what observers conclude also impact such followers' perceptions of external, international support for their cause. As Beaulieu (2014:50) argued, external support could embolden actors and supporters, again making violence appear more or less justified. Therefore, when election observers provide information, they impact the degree to which voters will perceive the electoral process as legitimate. This, in turn, creates incentives for general protests, as well as violent protests.

An observer *condemnation*, therefore, is a golden focal point for an electoral loser who seeks to illustrate its support and strength. Von Borzyskowski (2019b) framed this in terms of solving the collective action problem: the political actor gets access to information that can both (a) persuade average citizens into taking his or her side and (b) fortify support from and aggravate existing followers. A negative statement by international monitors is thus something that allows the opposition to 'drive home the point' that the election was fraudulent (McFaul 2005). Or, as Kelley (2012:193) put it, when international monitors reinforce domestic criticisms, they increase the risk of protests. Consequently, following the reasoning above, they also increase the risk of violence.

Hypothesis 2a

When *any* international election observer condemn the election, post-election violence becomes *more likely*.

However, when observers are not critical and their information indicates that all went by the books, it seems more likely that the opposite scenario would apply. Here, political actors will have a harder time mobilising and aggravating supporters because the central focal point, the negative observer statement, is missing. With more access to information, citizens can assess the cries of fraud from the losers for what it is: cheap talk. Now, my argument is not that violent protests never happen when international monitors do not issue negative verdicts. Instead, it is that when such a negative verdict is missing, the collective action problem is harder to address and post-election protests, therefore, less likely to be large scale and violent. Thus, in cases where the observers do not reinforce existing critique by not condemning the election, post-election violence will be less likely to erupt.

Hypothesis 2b

When *no* international election observers condemn the election, post-election violence becomes *less likely*.

³My starting point here is thus that citizens, by and large, tend to prefer democratic elections. This is, of course, a simplified view but large scale surveys tend to display the fact that citizens prefer democratic regimes (Bratton and Mattes 2016; Dalton et al. 2007). Knutsen et al. (2019) made the theoretical distinction that citizens are more likely to prefer democracy than leaders because leaders derive status, power and rent from controlling political office - the average citizen simply does not.

TABLE 4.1. *How observer assessments impact electoral reactions: summary of hypotheses*

Post-election event	Election observer's assessment	
	A) Condemnation	B) No condemnation
1) All accept the result →	Less likely (<i>Hypothesis 1a</i>)	More likely (<i>Hypothesis 1b</i>)
2) Violent protests →	More likely (<i>Hypothesis 2a</i>)	Less likely (<i>Hypothesis 2b</i>)

4.3 Summary of hypotheses

Based on the theoretical reasoning above, I have stipulated a total of four falsifiable hypotheses on how political actors react to election results based on what international observers conclude. The hypotheses, summarised in Table 4.1, address the first step of an election challenge, accepting the results or not, as well as the following step, whether or not violent protests ensue.

In the following chapter, I outline the employed methodology, detailing how the research will deploy quantitative methods to evaluate said hypotheses and, thus, answer the research question.

Chapter 5

Methodology

In this chapter, I describe how the research will evaluate the hypotheses and answer the research question. First, I specify the general research design and the choice of quantitative methods. Second, I describe my data sources and specify the dependent, independent and control variables. Finally, I describe how the data will be analysed and offer an overview of logistic regression models, the employed method of statistical analysis.

5.1 Research design

This research is designed as a quantitative study of international election observation. The logic behind quantitative research is to find out whether a casual relationship is generally true, on average, using a large sample of data (Coppedge 2012:194). This aligns well with the purposes of this study. I thus use statistical analysis to trace out the effect of a condemnation by international observers – the independent variable – on acceptance of election results and post-election violence respectively – the two dependent variables. The unit of analysis is national elections (legislative, presidential and general) in independent countries.¹ The starting point for the analysis is 1990 since that is when election observation became a widespread phenomenon. The end-point varies between 2015, for the analysis on acceptance of results, and 2012, for the analysis on violent protests, due to limitations in the data.

Besides the temporal limit, the research is designed with four additional constraints. First, in being concerned with the assessment of international observers, the analysis is limited to elections observed by international monitors. This means that unobserved elections are beyond the scope since they, naturally, never were objects for an observer assessment in the first place. The research could thus, by design, face selection bias in solely studying elections observers chose to visit. Theoretically, this is not of major concern since the purpose is to study monitored elections. Statistically, I account for selection issues by running sample selection models in Appendix B, Table B.11. The results confirm the original findings.

Second, because election observers cannot be present in countries that do not arrange elections, like China, Eritrea, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, such states are not covered by this research. Third, because observers extremely rarely monitor elections

¹A general election, to be clear, is a legislative and presidential election that occur on the same date. When legislative elections occur consecutive of presidential ones, or vice-versa, they are coded as separate events. The same is true of second-round elections, like a run-off presidential vote.

in consolidated long-term democracies, I exclude such elections from the analysis.² Even though these elections tend not to be observed in the first place, I omit them all together to avoid skewing any findings.³ Fourth, and finally, I exclude micro-states with populations of less than 500,000 – mainly because of limitations in the data, partly to align this study with previous research (Hyde 2011:233).

5.2 Data specification

By compiling existing data from three sources, I get an extensive dataset with details on over 2 300 elections arranged between 1980-1990. Over half of these, 1 430, are recorded as being observed by international monitors and are thus the observations I use in the data analysis to evaluate the hypotheses.

My primary source of data is the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset by Coppedge et al. (2021b). V-Dem provides both election-level and year-level data on democratic developments in over 200 countries and has been used extensively in academic research since its conception in 2014 (Lindberg et al. 2014). Updated annually and relying on some 3 500 national country experts, the reliability of V-Dem data is considerably high (Marquardt et al. 2018). I use the V-Dem dataset to generate both independent and dependent variables, namely variables on the assessment of observers, acceptance of results and country-level controls (further described in the sections below).

Additionally, I use data from the Nelda, National Election Across Democracy and Autocracy, dataset by Hyde and Marinov (2012). Nelda provides information on issues related to electoral proceedings and covers national elections in over 200 countries, spanning 1945-2015. The data has been widely used in research, including studies of election observation (see, for instance, Daxecker 2012; Daxecker and Schneider 2014; Dodsworth 2019; Donno 2010). Primarily, I use Nelda data to generate a set of election-level control variables. The V-Dem dataset contains some variables originally compiled in Nelda and, as a practical matter, I use the V-Dem dataset for analysis of such variables. However, I cross-check with the original Nelda data to ensure validity.

My final source of data is the Electoral Contention and Violence dataset (ECAV) by Daxecker et al. (2019b). ECAV covers 1 206 elections in 136 nations, spanning 1990-2012, and has previously been used by scholars on the issue (see Birch et al. 2020). It is one of few datasets on electoral violence with a global, rather than regional, focus – aligning well with the purposes of this study. I use the ECAV data to generate data on post-election violence.

By merging data from these three sources, I am able to analyse the vast majority of observed elections across the globe, enhancing the ability of this research to make proper generalisations. Table 5.1 provides details on the number of elections in the dataset across world regions, from 1980-2020. A detailed list of countries covered in

²Like Hyde (2011:74-5, 220), I understand long-term consolidated democracies to be states that have been continuously democratic for over 40 years. This includes Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

³To assure validity, nevertheless, I rerun the models when data on observed elections in consolidated democracies is available, in Appendix B, Table B.4, and get close to identical results.

TABLE 5.1. *Number of elections in full dataset (observed elections in italics)*

	General Elections	Legislative Elections	Presidential Elections	Percent ^a	Total ^b
Africa	123 <i>101</i>	325 <i>206</i>	237 <i>182</i>	29.01 <i>34.20</i>	685 <i>489</i>
Asia	14 <i>9</i>	412 <i>212</i>	153 <i>96</i>	24.52 <i>22.17</i>	579 <i>317</i>
Europe	19 <i>19</i>	433 <i>228</i>	200 <i>126</i>	27.62 <i>26.08</i>	652 <i>373</i>
Latin America	150 <i>100</i>	143 <i>70</i>	84 <i>58</i>	15.97 <i>15.94</i>	377 <i>228</i>
Oceania	0 <i>0</i>	68 <i>23</i>	0 <i>0</i>	2.88 <i>1.61</i>	68 <i>23</i>
Total	306 <i>229</i>	1 381 <i>739</i>	674 <i>462</i>	100 <i>100</i>	2 361 <i>1 430</i>

Notes: The full dataset covers elections in the period 1980-2020 in 174 countries, including in long-term consolidated democracies. In the data analysis, however, the starting point is 1990 given the arguments in section 5.1.

^aThe percentage shares suggest that the observed elections accurately reflect the global distribution of all elections – despite a slight over-representation of Africa – arguably strengthening the ability of this research to seek proper generalisations.

^bWhen excluding consolidate democracies, the final number of total observations is 2 024, out of which 1 367 were monitored by observers.

the data can be found in Appendix A, Table A.2.

5.2.1 The independent variable

The independent variable in this research is the post-election assessment made by international election observers. In accordance with the theoretical framework, this is the information observers provide immediately after an election, assessing its quality. Similar to previous research, I operationalise an observer assessment in terms of allegations of fraud and/or wrongdoing found in the observer’s statement (Hyde 2011; Kelley 2012; Von Borzyskowski 2019b). I generate the dichotomous variable *condemnation*, coded as 1 if any monitoring organisation issued a negative statement about the election in question and 0 otherwise.

The underlying data comes from V-Dem’s variable ‘fraud allegations by Western monitors’, which, in turn, originates from the Nelda dataset and reflects if ‘any allegations of significant manipulation’ were found in the language by observers (Coppedge et al. 2021a:60; Hyde and Marinov 2019:25-6). While the reference to ‘Western’ monitors might appear as a potential limitation at first glance, it is evident that non-western monitoring organisations seldom (if ever) actually criticise elections. In fact, the term western and reputable monitors are often used interchangeably (Von Borzyskowski 2019b; Kelley 2009).

5.2.2 The dependent variables

As I analyse actors’ acceptance of results and post-election violence respectively, my research has two strands of dependent variables. The first is the degree to which

candidates accepted the results of the election. Like Lindberg (2006:150), I use an ordinary scale that ranges from 0 to 3 and indicates if *few*, *some*, *most* or *all* of the electoral losers accepted the outcome. The data is drawn from the V-Dem dataset and the ‘losers accept results’ variable (Coppedge et al. 2021a:69).⁴ To analyse this data, and following the purpose of the research, I generate the dichotomous variable *all accept* which equals 1 if all electoral losers accepted the outcome and 0 otherwise. These variables have a temporal distinction and thus encapsulates acceptance within three months after the election. The three months reference is arbitrary but, as described by Daxecker (2012) and Von Borzyskowski (2019b), standard in reference to post-election events.

The second dependent variable is the presence of post-election violence. The ECAV dataset, from which I draw the data, covers protest events that both substantially and temporally can be related to an election. Substantially, protests are defined as ‘public acts of mobilisation, contestation, or coercion by state or non-state actors’ related to an election that, temporally, takes place within three months after the election (Daxecker et al. 2019a:3). Furthermore, ECAV distinguishes between protests that were violent (events that included the threat or use of force), fatal (events from which 1 or more deaths were reported) and non-violent (Daxecker et al. 2019a:4).

I aggregate the ECAV data to get a raw number of post-election protest events for each election that were either non-violent, violent or fatal. For the data analysis, I then generate the dichotomous variable *violence* which equals 1 if at least 1 post-election protest that resulted in any fatalities occurred and 0 otherwise. I thus choose to use the less arbitrary standard of violence – as meaning protests that resulted in fatalities – since it allows my results to be contrasted with those of, for instance, Von Borzyskowski (2019b). As such, while I refer to protests as violent in the data analysis, readers should be aware that this implies protests that resulted in one or more fatalities.⁵

5.2.3 The control variables

In order to establish the substantive effect of international election observers, I use a large set of control variables. In essence, I seek to control for both the election environment in general, as well as distant country-specific characteristics. First, in terms of the election environment, I intend to distinguish the effect of a condemnation by observers from any effect that electoral fraud itself might have. I thus attempt to control for cases with serious electoral discrepancies, where actors might react (as in challenging the results) based on that, rather than based on what observers had to say. This is tricky since there is no straightforward definition of what fraud actually entails, which means that there is no obvious variable to deploy. The goal, nevertheless, is to use a measurement that as accurate as possible reflects whether or not fraud occurred that, at the same time, does not rely on what observers had to say because (a) factors other than election quality could bias observers’ conclusions and (b) then the two variables would reflect the same issue (Kelley 2012:112-3).

⁴From the original data, I aggregate the two lowest levels, *none* and *few*, into the *few* category due to a lack of observations.

⁵To make sure that the findings hold independently of this definition, I rerun all models to include protests that, aside from fatal, were violent and non-violent. As reported in Appendix B, Table B.13, this renders similar results.

Like Von Borzyskowski (2019b), I choose to make a dummy variable to indicate cases in which irregularities were serious enough to have impacted the final outcome of the election. I use the two lowest levels of V-Dem's ordinal variable 'free and fair election', which describes cases where the final results had little or nothing to do with the 'will of the people' (Coppedge et al. 2021a:70). I thus generate the variable *serious fraud* which equals 1 if irregularities and/or fraud were deemed to have had an impact on the final results and 0 otherwise.⁶ The variable differs from the observer condemnation variable in that it, first, is based on the assessments of V-Dem country experts, rather than the election observers, and second, is coded with the benefit of hindsight. This means that the variable can more accurately reflect whether serious fraud actually occurred – rather than if election observers *said* that serious fraud occurred – since it can take into account factors revealed after the election, which would have been unknown to observers at the time.⁷

Apart from pure fraud, I identify three other election-level factors that could explain electoral challenges and protests regardless of what international observers have to say. First, I agree with Beaulieu (2014:73) and Von Borzyskowski (2019b) that concerns and dissatisfaction before the elections could well spill over in the post-election period. I thus generate a variable to indicate cases in which there were concerns already ahead of the election that the proceedings would be manipulated. I use data from 'nelda11' to get the dichotomous variable *pre-election concerns* which is coded 1 if such concerns existed and 0 otherwise (Hyde and Marinov 2019:11). As another example of this, boycotts ahead of the election could well inspire others to object once the election is over. Therefore, I draw from the 'nelda14' variable and generate the dichotomous variable *boycott* which equals 1 if any major opposition parties boycotted the election and 0 otherwise (Hyde and Marinov 2019:12).

Additionally, it is likely to assume that a vote count which results in a gain for the opposition may fortify their sentiment of public support. Illustrating their strength, this could incentivise a challenge towards the incumbent (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Hyde and Marinov 2014). Using 'nelda27', I generate the dichotomous variable *opposition gain* which is coded as 1 if the vote-count resulted in an electoral gain for the opposition (for instance, more seats in the parliament) and 0 otherwise (Hyde and Marinov 2019:18).⁸ Finally, when it comes specifically to the analysis on post-election violence, I use ECAV data to generate the variable *pre-election violence* which equals 1 if the election experiences any violent protest ahead of the election and 0 otherwise.

In addition to the election-level variables, I control for a set of country-level characteristics to account for context and potential remote causes. All country controls are lagged by one year to appreciate their *de facto* impact and mitigate potential endogeneity (Von Borzyskowski 2019b). Using V-Dem country-year data,

⁶To make sure that the results hold independent of this definition of fraud, I replace the *serious fraud* variable with other identifiers of fraud, namely other general irregularities, vote-buying, and voter registration issues. This renders similar results, as reported in Appendix B, Tables B.9 and B.10.

⁷These arguments depend on the premise that the two variables can differ. A closer look at the data reveals that not all elections coded as seriously fraudulent received an observer condemnation and vice-versa. The correlation matrix and multi-collinearity statistics in Appendix B, Tables B.1, B.2 and B.3 illustrate this well.

⁸To ensure robustness, I replace this binary 'gain' variable with a measurement of the loser's share of votes in Appendix B, Tables B.5 and B.6. At large, this renders similar results but should be interpreted with caution due to a significant loss of observations.

TABLE 5.2. *Summary of variables deployed in the statistical analysis*

Name	Type	Description
<i>Independent Variable</i>		
- Condemnation	Dichotomous	Equals 1 if at least one international observer organisation concluded that significant manipulation had occurred in the election
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
- All Accept	Dichotomous	Equals 1 if all losers accepted the result of the election
- Violence	Dichotomous	Equals 1 if at least one violent protest that resulted in fatalities occurred after the election
<i>Election Control Variables</i>		
- Boycott	Dichotomous	Equals 1 if some opposition candidates boycotted the election
- Opposition Gain	Dichotomous	Equals 1 if the opposition gained seats in this election compared to the previous
- Serious Fraud	Dichotomous	Equals 1 if fraud and irregularities impacted the outcome of the election
- Pre-Election Concerns	Dichotomous	Equals 1 if there were concerns about irregularities ahead of the election
- Pre-Election Violence	Dichotomous	Equals 1 if there were violent protests before the election
<i>Country Control Variables</i>		
- Education	Continuous	Average years of education in adult population (lagged one year)
- GDP Per Capita	Continuous	GDP per capita (logged and lagged one year)
- Polarisation	Continuous	The degree of political polarisation in the country (lagged one year)
- Population Size	Continuous	Population size (logged and lagged one year)
<i>Spatial & Temporal Control Variables^a</i>		
- History of Acceptance	Dichotomous	Equals 1 for countries that has previously experienced that all losers accepted the election results
- History of Violence	Dichotomous	Equals 1 for countries that has previously experienced post-election violence
- Region	Ordinal	The geographic region of the country
- Year	Continuous	The year of the election

Notes: ^a*Spatial and temporal dependence controls are further detailed in section 5.3.3.*

I employ variables for *GDP per capita*, *population size* and the *average years of education* of the adult population. As is common, I use the natural logarithm of population size and GDP per capita to avoid heteroscedasticity (Coppedge 2012:277). Furthermore, it is likely to expect that electoral challenges are influenced by the levels of polarisation in the country. I therefore add a country control labeled *polarisation* which reflects the continuous V-Dem polarisation index (Coppedge et al. 2021a:225). All variables that are deployed in the data analysis are summarised in Table 5.2.

5.3 Data analysis

As is appropriate for categorical variables, I analyse the data using logistical regression models. For those unfamiliar with the technicalities of such analysis, it predicts the likelihood of an event happening (like all actors accepting the outcome of an election) based on a set of predictors (like an observer condemnation). This section

offers an overview of logistic regression models to help readers interpret the results.

5.3.1 Logistic regression analysis

Logistic models are a category of regression analysis for dealing with categorical dependent variables. The logistic model is necessary when a dependent variable is categorical, as several basic assumptions of standard linear regression require continuous data. This includes, for instance, normal distribution, homoscedasticity, as well as linearity itself (Liu 2016:94-5). The point of binary logistic regressions in particular, as the data is non-continuous, is to estimate the probability of an event occurring or not occurring depending on any other set of variables. For instance: does an observer condemnation increase or decrease the probability of post-election violence? As such, it is the appropriate way of data analysis for the variables of this research. To be specific, the binary logistic regression model calculates probabilities in the following form:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_n X_n \quad (5.1)$$

In which $\text{logit}(p)$ is the logistic transformation (the natural logarithm) of the probability of success (an event occurring), p is the probability of success, α is the intercept (when all independent variables are equal to zero), β_1 is the coefficient for X_1 , the first independent variable, and n is the number of independent variables.

This logistic probability expression is easily transformed to a regular probability function – which is more easily interpreted – by exponentiating the coefficients. Here, let Pr be the probability that Y_i , a dichotomous dependent variable with 0 and 1 as potential outcomes, is equal to 1 given X_i , the dependent variables. This gives:

$$Pr(Y_i = 1|X_i) = p = \frac{1}{1 + \exp(-(\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_n X_n))}. \quad (5.2)$$

The above thus illustrates the logic behind the data analysis, showing how the probability of the independent variable being equal to 1 (which could represent, for instance, post-election violence) is calculated based on a set of dependent variables.

5.3.2 Probabilities, odds and odds ratio in logistic regression

To estimate probabilities, logistic models calculate how the probability of success depends on each independent variables in terms of the odds and the odds ratio. While the probability is the chance of an event occurring, like the chance of post-election violence, the odds are the ratio between two probabilities. The odds are thus the probability of success (the event occurring) divided by the probability of failure (the event not occurring). If p is the probability of success, then:

$$\text{odds} = \frac{p}{1 - p}. \quad (5.3)$$

If the odds are equal to 1, the probability of success and failure are exactly the same. If the odds are above 1, the probability of success is higher, while the opposite is true when the odds are below 1 (Liu 2016:97-8). In order to compare odds between different values in independent variables – like an observer condemnation (1) or not

(0) – the odds ratio, OR, is calculated. An odds ratio is simply the ratio between two different odds – the odds of success (the dependent variable being equal to one) when an independent variable is equal to 1, divided by the odds of success when that independent variable is equal to 0. In logistic models, the odds ratio is given by exponentiating the beta coefficient from the probability function (equation 5.2). If X_1 is an independent variable with two outcomes, 0 and 1, then:

$$\text{OR} = \frac{\text{odds}_{X_1=1}}{\text{odds}_{X_1=0}} = \frac{\exp(\alpha + \beta_1)}{\exp(\alpha)} = \exp(\beta_1). \quad (5.4)$$

When the odds ratio is equal to 1, it means that the chance of success is the same for both categories in the independent variable and, therefore, that there is no relationship between the dependent and the independent variable at all. If the odds ratio is higher than 1, it means that chance of success is higher when the independent variable is 1, and vice-versa (Liu 2016:99-100).

The odds ratio of an independent variable, furthermore, can be understood as the change in percent in the odds of success in the dependent variable. For instance, a binary independent variable with an odds ratio of 1.2 means that it increases the odds of success in the dependent variable by 20 percent (Liu 2016:106). In simple mathematical terms, $(\text{OR} - 1) * 100\%$ thus indicates how (every one-unit increase in) an independent variable impacts the chance of success in the dependent variable. With this elemental understanding, readers will be positioned to interpret the estimates in the empirical analysis.

5.3.3 Measures to ensure validity

Controlling statistical models for heterogeneity and unobserved factors is crucial to ensure reliable results. In standard linear regression analysis, the dominant approach is to use country-fixed effects (FE) which uses within-country variation to exclude unobserved country characteristics from the analysis (Bell and Jones 2015). The approach is not as common in logistic regression, however, due to both statistical and practical issues. The statistical issue is often referred to as the incidental parameter problem (see Baetschmann et al. 2020) which, in brief, means that as groups tend to infinity, the number of the estimated parameters increase at the same rate – making standard errors biased (for a more detailed description, see Lancaster 2000). Still, testing logistic FE in practice, Schoeneberger (2016) showed that while the number of groups is held constant, a minimum of 50 group-level observations is required to estimate unbiased fixed effects – something that is rarely upheld, neither in this research.

Country FE thus excludes countries in which observations do not vary. Practically, this becomes an issue for logistic models as dichotomous variables are less flexible to variation than continuous variables are. The result is often a major loss of data. Given these reasons, existing research deploying logistic models tend not to use country FE (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Beaulieu 2014; Donno 2010; Daxecker and Schneider 2014; Dodsworth 2019; Hyde and Marinov 2014; Kelley 2011; Kelley 2012; Von Borzyskowski 2019a; Von Borzyskowski 2019b; Schedler 2013). I choose to follow praxis and model the data without country FE, but employ the current standards of ensuing validity in the field. First, I cluster robust standard errors by country to account for the lack of independence of elections in the same country

(Coppedge 2012:282-3). Second, I attempt to account for country characteristics and distant factors by including varied country controls (from population size to education levels). Third, I include a dummy year variable to account for temporal dependence in all models (Coppedge 2012:286). Fourth, my final models include a dummy region variable to account for spatial dependence.

Fifth, following the reasoning of Hyde and Marinov (2014), I attempt to account for unmeasured country characteristics by the dummy variables *history of acceptance* and *history of violence*, indicating if any country in the sample previously has experienced either post-election violence, or that all actors accepted the results. This is similar to fitting the model with an additional lagged dependent variable, although it does not indicate a value for the previous year or election, in the manner of Kelley (2012:148), but instead a baseline or historical low/high point, like Hyde and Marinov (2014). Practically, its inclusion makes the models compare observations in countries that, for whatever reason, experienced violence or acceptance in the past separately from those that did not. The idea is that this can account for the effects of any constant country characteristics, to the likes of, for instance, historical patterns or religious alignments, that may impact the likelihood of violence or acceptance in the first place. This is an admittedly imperfect, yet plausible way to mimic the logic of fixed-effect

Finally, I run a series of robustness checks. I account for selection bias, endogeneity and multi-collinearity, as well as replace and add control variables in order to ensure the validity of the results. All robustness checks are reported in Appendix B.

Chapter 6

Empirical Analysis

In this chapter, I present the findings and report the estimated effect of an observer condemnation on the likelihood of (a) all actors accepting the election result and (b) post-election violence. As a starting point, I offer some descriptive statistics on each subject and proceed to evaluate the hypotheses using logistic regression models. In short, I find significant support for the idea that an observer condemnation does indeed make it less likely that all actors accept the results, and more likely that post-election violence will occur. The findings are summarised at the end of the chapter.

6.1 Acceptance of results

In the theoretical framework, I proposed two hypotheses (1a and 1b) predicting actors' acceptance based on the assessment of international observers. I argued that an observer condemnation should impact acceptance of results as it is information that either sustains or discredits concerns about election quality. Before analysing the relationship statistically, I overview the data.

6.1.1 Descriptive statistics

If there is a relationship between what international election observers have to say and how actors react to elections, condemned elections should be accepted by relatively fewer actors. Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of acceptance of results on a four-point scale, from *few* to *all* actors accepting the outcome, grouped by what the observers had to say about the election. As expected, when observers do not issue a condemnation (bar 1), *all* accept represent the outcome of a majority of elections. For condemned elections (bar 2), however, that category makes up less than 20 percent, at the same time as *few* and *some* constitute the majority. This seemingly lends credit to the idea that an observer condemnation is associated with lower levels of acceptance.

The theory stipulated that observers, by providing information, either reinforce or discredit existing concerns about election quality. Figure 6.2 thus distinguishes between elections that either did or did not face pre-election concerns about irregularities. Here, consider that when observers are not critical, *all* accepting the outcome represents over 60 percent of elections without pre-election concerns (bar 1), but only around 20 percent of elections with such concerns (bar 3). This difference signals

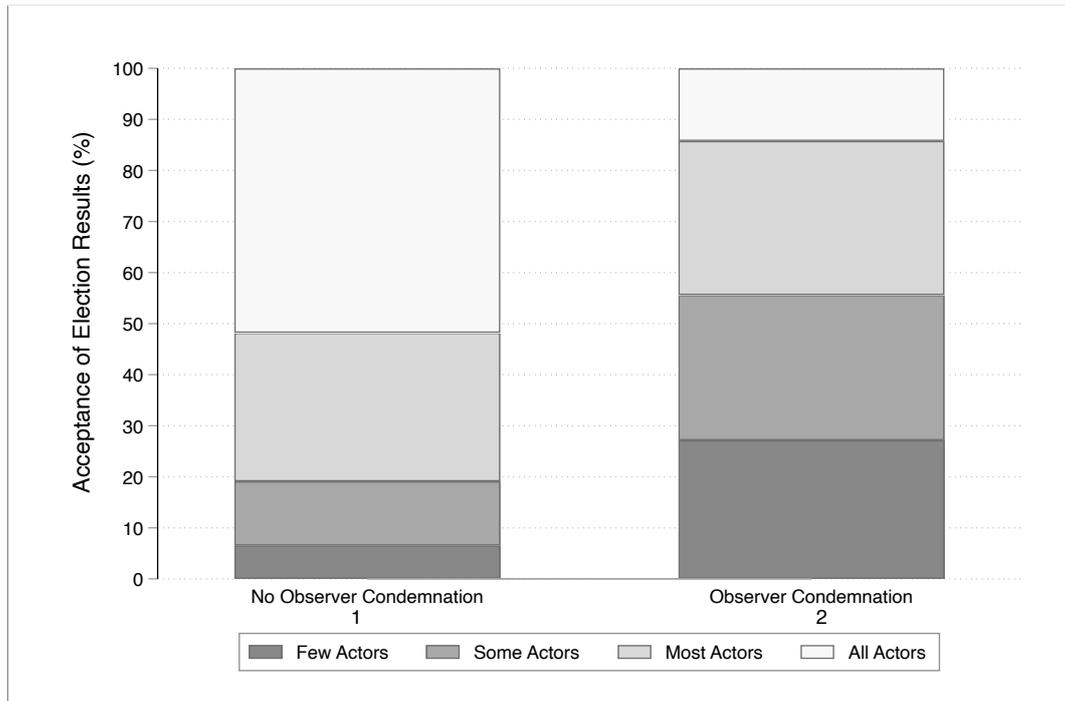


FIGURE 6.1. Acceptance of election results by observer assessment

Notes: Percent of all observed elections. Period: 1990-2020. 1,091 observations. Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 163.624$, $Pr = 0.000$, Cramér's $V = 0.387$. P

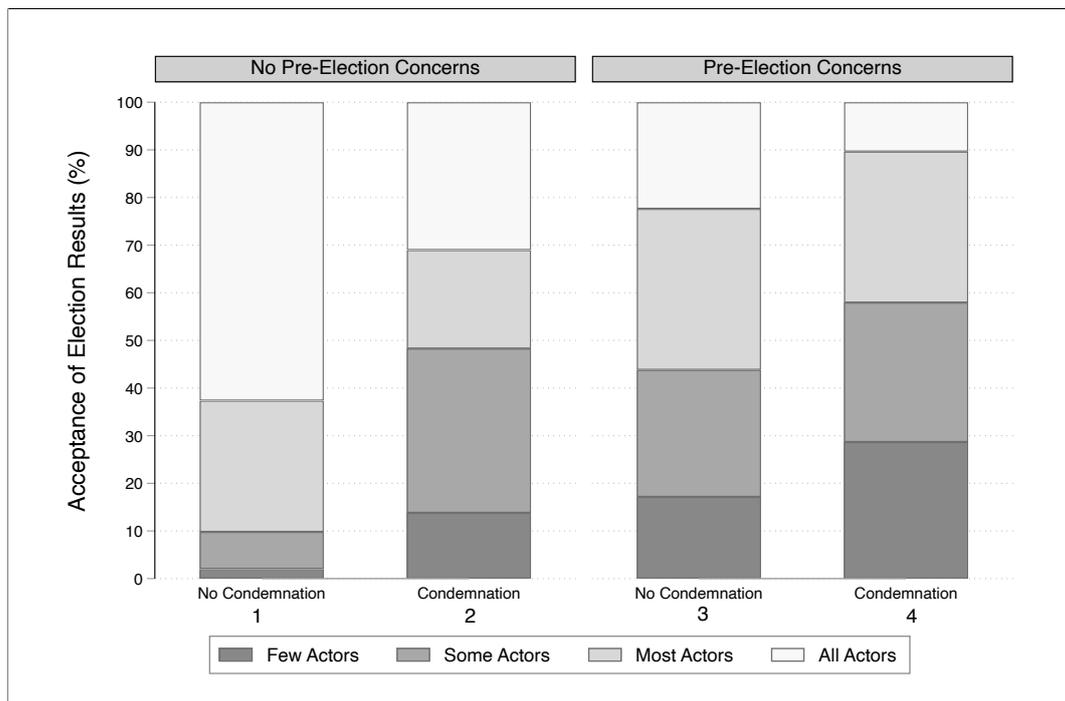


FIGURE 6.2. Acceptance of election results by pre-election concerns

Notes: Percent of all observed elections. Period: 1990-2020.

'No pre-election concerns': 638 observations. Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 94.082$, $Pr = 0.000$, Cramér's $V = 0.384$.

'Pre-election concerns': 544 observations. Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 54.318$, $Pr = 0.000$, Cramér's $V = 0.316$.

that political actors tend to stick to their gut feelings, even if international observers do not give them credit. However, for both types of elections (with and without pre-election concerns) *all* accept makes up a lower share when observer condemn

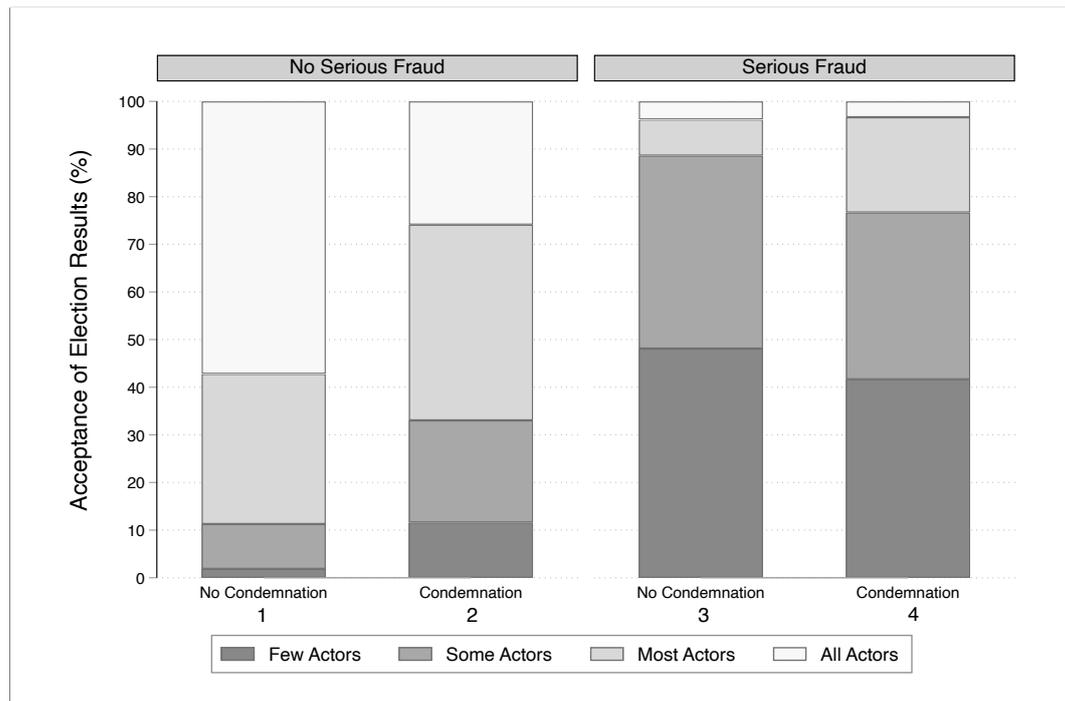


FIGURE 6.3. *Acceptance of election results by serious fraud*

Notes: Percent of all observed elections. Period: 1990-2020.

'No serious fraud': 813 observations. Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 61.891$, $Pr = 0.000$, Cramér's $V = 0.276$.

'Serious fraud': 199 observations. Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 5.726$, $Pr = 0.126$, Cramér's $V = 0.170$.

the election – compare bar 1 to bar 2, and bar 3 to bar 4. This, again, suggests that observers' statements do impact actors' decisions.

Now, a reasonable argument is that an electoral challenge is not so much a reaction to an observer assessment as it is a reaction to fraud itself. Figure 6.3, therefore, distinguishes elections with serious fraud (bar 3 and 4) from those without it (bar 1 and 2). Here, for elections without serious fraud, there is still a significant difference depending on the observer assessment. Consider, for instance, that *all* accept accounts for close to 60 percent of elections without a condemnation (bar 1) but only 25 percent of condemned elections (bar 2).

In seriously fraudulent elections (bar 3 and 4), however, there is little to no difference for the category *all*. Instead, and rather surprisingly, *few* and *some* accept make up a larger share of not condemned election (bar 3) than condemned (bar 4). The latter point would suggest that an observer condemnation is of less influence to actors' choice of acceptance in blatantly fraudulent elections – although this notion puts aside the theoretical reasoning that actors learn about fraud based on what the observers say. Yet, I investigate this relationship further in the statistical analysis.

All of the above, however, suggests that accepting the electoral outcome is strongly associated with the assessment that international observers make, with the potential exception, however, of elections with serious fraud.

6.1.2 Statistical analysis: predicting acceptance of results

Moving into the statistical analysis, Table 6.1 details the estimated effect of an observer condemnation on the likelihood of all actors accepting the election result. All models are binary logistic regressions with robust standard errors (clustered by

TABLE 6.1. The effect of an observer condemnation on acceptance of results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	All Accept	All Accept	All Accept	All Accept
Condemnation	-1.525*** (0.535)	-1.355*** (0.523)	-1.266** (0.639)	-1.221* (0.649)
Serious Fraud		-1.946*** (0.658)	-1.937** (0.853)	-1.788** (0.806)
History of Acceptance			3.955*** (0.737)	4.023*** (0.877)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-1.824** (0.762)	-1.658** (0.810)	-1.431* (0.831)	-1.324 (0.902)
- Opposition Gain	1.255*** (0.314)	1.153*** (0.313)	1.414*** (0.341)	1.409*** (0.344)
- Pre-Election Concerns	-1.130*** (0.350)	-0.886** (0.345)	-0.447 (0.395)	-0.370 (0.417)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.0299 (0.120)	0.0175 (0.122)	-0.101 (0.118)	-0.137 (0.151)
- GDP Per Capita log	1.378*** (0.399)	1.242*** (0.404)	1.534*** (0.372)	1.282*** (0.376)
- Polarisation	-0.371** (0.152)	-0.387** (0.157)	-0.404** (0.172)	-0.440*** (0.162)
- Population Size log	-0.111 (0.206)	-0.118 (0.216)	-0.131 (0.249)	-0.160 (0.231)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	654	654	654	654
Number of countries	100	100	100	100
Pseudo R^2	0.442	0.461	0.567	0.577
Percent correctly classified	81.50	83.03	87.16	87.61
ROC	0.907	0.914	0.947	0.949
AIC	560.6	545.4	454.2	451.4
BIC	713.1	702.3	615.6	626.3
Log Likelihood	-246.3	-237.7	-191.1	-186.7

Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

country to account for the lack of independence between elections in the same country). The models include a dummy year variable to account for temporal dependence, and country controls are lagged one year to mitigate potential endogeneity. Through all four models, the dependent variable is *all accept* which equals 1 if all electoral losers accepted the outcome and 0 otherwise.¹ An observer condemnation has a negative, statistically significant effect throughout all models.

The first model fits the central independent variable *condemnation* with the main country and election controls. Here, all election controls are significant predictors. *Boycotts* and *pre-election concerns* appear to have a negative effect on the likelihood

¹Although an ordered logistic regression could theoretically predict the probabilities across all four categories of loser's acceptance (which was used in the descriptive statistics), such a model assumes that all independent variables have the same effect across all categories of the dependent variable. The Brant test, however, rendered significant, which indicates that this assumption was not upheld and that standard errors in the ordered logistic model would have been biased. The binary logistic model with *all accept* is thus used instead, still in accordance with the purpose of the research.

of full acceptance, as was theorised. *Opposition gain*, however, has a positive coefficient, meaning that it does not make actors feel emboldened to reject an outcome but, instead, seemingly contributes to acceptance. Among the country controls, both *GDP per capita* and *polarisation* are significant predictors. This suggests that polarisation has a negative effect on election acceptance, which seems logical, and that richer countries are less prone to rejection of results in the first place, which could be due to the fact that such countries, generally, tend to be more democratic. An observer condemnation is significant at the 1 percent level, its effect size rendering an odds ratio of $OR = \exp(-1.525) = 0.218$. This indicates that when observers condemn an election, the odds that all actors accept the results decrease by some 80 percent.²

The second model includes the dummy variable *serious fraud* which renders significant. This suggests, as expected, that actors tend to be less prone to accept the outcome of acutely fraudulent elections. Note, however, that the significance of an observer condemnation prevails at the 1 percent level, its effect size, and thus the odds ratio, decreasing only marginally. This suggests that an observer condemnation is still a significant predictor of actors' acceptance – irrespective of whether or not the election itself was fraudulent.

The third model fits the dummy variable *history of acceptance* which accounts for countries in the sample that have previously experienced an election in which all actors accepted the result. The significance and large effect size indicate that if actors have previously conceded their loss, they are likely to do so again. Resembling a lagged dependent variable, its inclusion is one way to account for unmeasured country characteristics in logistic models which, at large, should shed some validity over the findings.³ In this model, the significance of most election controls to drop, including that of an observer condemnation. The effect size of a condemnation, however, decrease only marginally.

The fourth and final model includes a dummy variable for geographic *region* to further account for spatial dependence. Here, the significance of an observer condemnation decrease again, now prevailing at the 10 percent level. This, however, could be explained by the fact that different election monitoring organisations operate in different regions, with some being less prone to condemn elections in the first place. Such regional discrepancies are further illustrated in Appendix A, Figure A.1. Thus, the fact that an observer condemnation is still significant does fortify the idea that it is a good predictor of actors' acceptance.

Indeed, through all models, an observer condemnation is significant and, even when controlling for the presence of fraud, a previous history of all actors accepting election outcomes and geographic region, its effect size (and, therefore, the odds ratio) is relatively constant, varying between -1.525 ($OR = 0.218$) and -1.220 ($OR = 0.295$). The Pseudo R^2 increase for each model, suggesting that the final model can account for most variation. The lower log-likelihood (LL) also suggests that the final model is the better fit for the data, as is the fact that it correctly classifies (as in the predicted probability being above 0.5) the outcome in the dependent variable for

²The interpretation of the odds ratio as the percentage change in odds is given by $(OR - 1) * 100\%$ which, in this case, gives: $(0.218 - 1) * 100\% = -78.2\%$. This was explained in section 5.3.2 and illustrated in function 5.4.

³To be clear, the variable accounts for unmeasured country characteristics in that sense that its inclusion, in simple terms, compares the outcome (all accept) between countries that, for whatever reason, experienced a challenge in the past separately from those that did not.

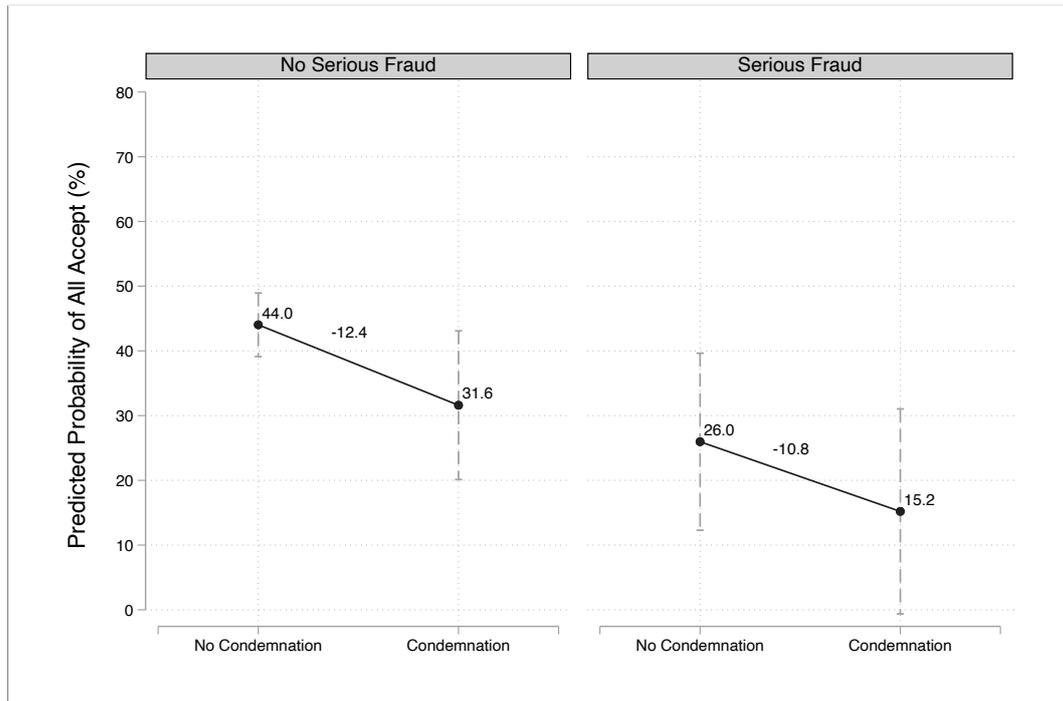


FIGURE 6.4. Predicted probability of electoral acceptance

Notes: Probabilities are calculated based on the full model (4) in Table 6.1 and show the impact of an observer condemnation. Dashed lines detail the 95 percent confidence interval.

87.6 percent of all cases.

So to what extent does the assessment of international observers really impact the likelihood of all actors accepting the election result? Figure 6.4 shows the predicted probability of all actors accepting the outcome depending on what the observers concluded, differentiated by the presence of serious fraud.⁴ Although the numbers should be interpreted with caution, in part since they depend on the full model characteristics, the figure offers an illustration of the identified relationship.

The average marginal effect of a condemnation, which is the difference in probability that a condemnation produces, is negative 11-12 percentage point both for elections with and without serious fraud.⁵ In practice, this means that there is only a one in three chance (some 30 percent) that all actors will accept the result of elections without fraud that observers condemn, down from a 44 percent chance after elections without a condemnation. In fraudulent elections, a condemnation decreases the chance of full acceptance from 26 percent to only 15 percent.

Now, recall that hypothesis 1a stipulated that: When *any* international election observer condemn the election, losers will be *less inclined* to accept the result. The null hypothesis is that there is no significant relationship between a condemnation and acceptance of results. Given the findings in Table 6.1 and the illustration in figure 6.4, I reject the null hypothesis and argue that the findings strengthen hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1b stipulated that: When *no* international election observers condemn the election, losers will be *more inclined* to accept the result. Again, the null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between the two. Once more, I reject the null hypothesis,

⁴Logistic models allow this calculation, as was described in section 5.3.1 and illustrated through equation 5.2.

⁵For more on marginal effects, see Williams (2012).

finding evidence to support also hypothesis 1b.

To ensure that the results are robust, I run a range of different specifications throughout Appendix B. I include elections in consolidated democracies (Table B.4) to make sure that the findings are not dependent on that limitation; replace control variables for opposition gain (Table B.5) and fraud (Table B.9) with other measurements to ensure that the findings hold regardless; include control variables for election type and round (Table B.7) to make sure that results are not dependent on such characteristics; account for potential selection bias (Table B.11) as observers tend to be present at problematic elections, to begin with; as well as endogeneity (Table B.12) since a condemnation is not issued at random but dependent on several factors. Consistently, an observer condemnation renders as a significant predictor.

Finally, what observers have to say seemingly matters for actors' choice of accepting the result of an election. Yet, to what extent does this translate into post-election violence?

6.2 Post-election violence

The next logical step for actors that refuse to accept an election outcome is to demonstrate their discontent through public protests.⁶ Hypothesis 2a and 2b suggested that the likelihood of post-election violence, therefore, should depend on what the observers conclude. Before delving into the statistical analysis, I overview the data to see if condemned elections, on average, are associated with more protests.

6.2.1 Descriptive statistics

If there is a relationship between what international election observers have to say and the presence of post-election violence, then elections that observers condemn should, on average, experience more protests and, especially, more violent protests. Figure 6.5 displays the average number of protests after elections depending on what the observers concluded. Seemingly, there is a large difference between elections with and without a condemnation. Elections that were not condemned by observers experience an average of about 4 protests events (bar 1), while condemned elections face around 10 events on average (bar 2), a majority of which being violent in nature. As expected, condemned elections thus seem to experience more post-election protests.

Average numbers, however, might be influenced by significant outliers and, potentially, few elections with a lot of protests could inflate the means.⁷ To account for this, Figure 6.6 instead displays the percent of elections that experienced at least one non-violent, violent, or deadly protest, depending on what the observers had to say. The first bars in each category illustrate that two-thirds (67 percent) of condemned elections faced at least one non-violent protest, while the same is true for less than half (46 percent) of non-condemned elections. In terms of violence,

⁶Although not central to the study, I test this 'causal chain' assumption in Appendix B, Table B.14. The results suggest that such a link does exist but, strikingly, that an observer condemnation out-powers actors' acceptance in predicting violence.

⁷Among significant outliers are, notably, the 2007 general election in Kenya with a total of 280 protest events, 150 of which were fatal, and the 2005 legislative election in Iraq with 208 protests, 75 of which resulted in casualties.

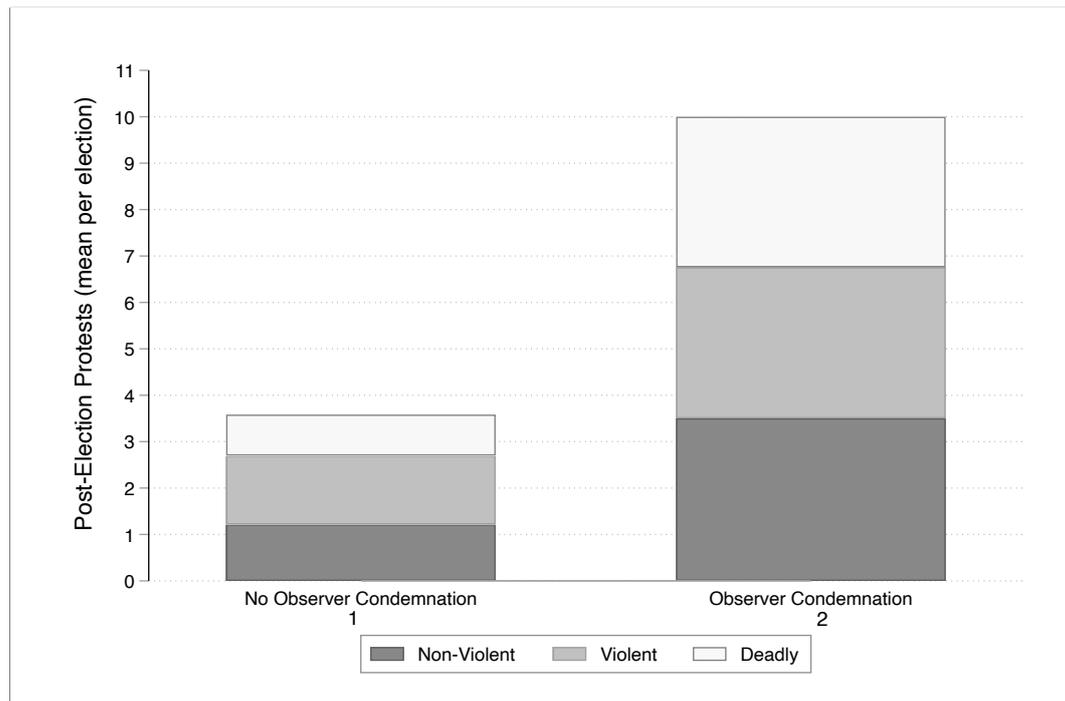


FIGURE 6.5. *Post-election protest events by observer assessment (mean)*

Notes: Mean number of protests after observed elections. Period: 1990-2012. 'No observer condemnation': 626 observations. 'Observer condemnation': 165 observations.

one in three elections (35 percent) that observer condemned experienced at least 1 protest with a deadly outcome, while that number is one in five (20 percent) for elections that observers did not criticise. Quite clearly, these numbers illustrate that condemned elections are associated with not only more protests but more *violent* protests.

Now, as with the acceptance of results, a reasonable argument is that the increase in protests after elections with an observer condemnation is a consequence of electoral fraud itself, rather than a third party actor stating the election was fraudulent. Putting aside the argument that an observer condemnation is one way (or, perhaps, the way) actors learn about fraud, Figure 6.7 shows the average number of post-election protests per election, distinguished between elections with and without serious fraud. The difference between bar 1 and bar 2, representing elections with no serious fraud, confirm the idea that condemned elections experience more protests, both non-violent and violent.

However, somewhat surprising is the fact that a condemned election without serious fraud (bar 2) experience, on average, much more protests than elections with serious fraud (bar 3 and bar 4). Intuitively, one might assume that the numbers would be the reversed, that serious fraud in and of itself would further exacerbate violence. Without delving too far into this issue, one explanation could be that elections with serious fraud tend to occur in more authoritarian and repressive states, environments in which protests are disincentivised, to begin with, due to the risk of punishment. A closer look at the countries that make up for the majority of elections with serious fraud (Egypt, Iran and Uzbekistan) might lend some credibility to such an argument.

Yet, while the average number of events after condemned and non-condemned elections with serious fraud is similar (bar 3 and bar 4), compare the type of protests

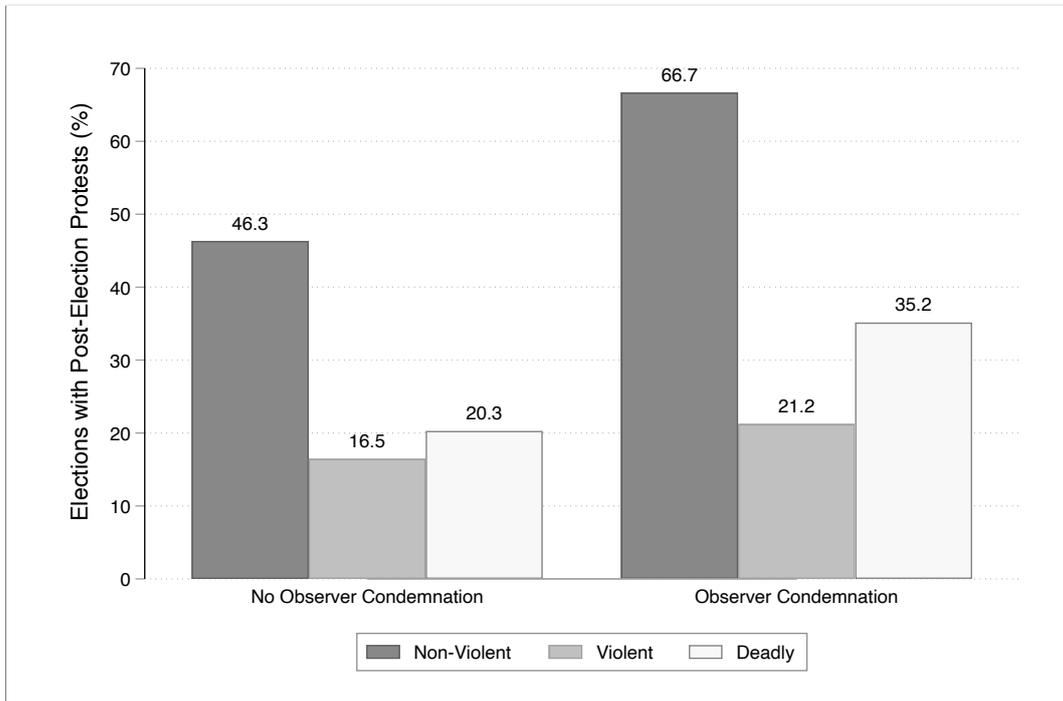


FIGURE 6.6. Post-election protest events by observer assessment (%)

Notes: Percent of observed elections experiencing protests. Period: 1990-2012. 'No observer condemnation': 626 observations. 'Observer condemnation': 165 observations.

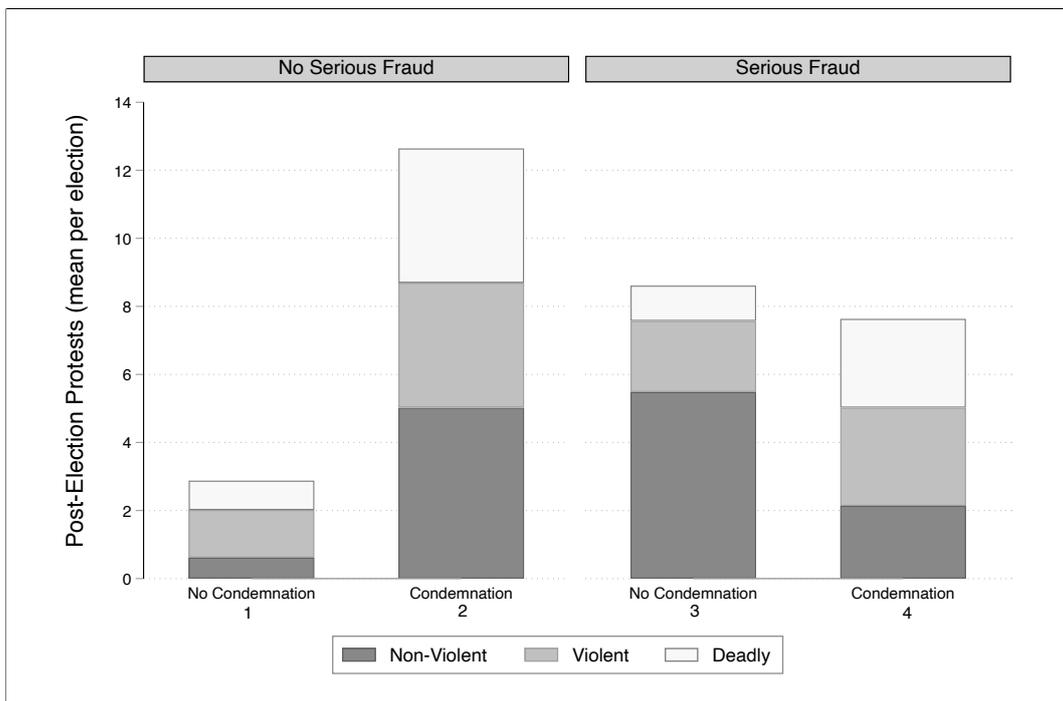


FIGURE 6.7. Post-election protest events by serious fraud (mean)

Notes: Mean number of protests after observed elections. Period: 1990-2012. 'No serious fraud': 627 observations. 'Serious fraud': 164 observations.

that make up each bar. When observers are critical, both violent and deadly protests make up a much larger share, while non-violent protests are the most common type of event after elections without a condemnation. This strengthens the argument

that an observer condemnation acts as a focal point for protests that, consequently, emboldens actors to pursue violent tactics.

In summary, elections that international observers condemn appear to be associated with more protests and, even in accounting for cases of serious fraud, more violent protests. Moving to the statistical analysis, I test to see if this pattern holds when controlling for a variety of other factors.

6.2.2 Statistical analysis: predicting post-election violence

Table 6.2 displays the estimated effect of an election observer condemnation on the likelihood of post-election violence. All models are binary logistic regressions with robust standard errors clustered by country, due to the lack of independence between elections in the same country. As in Table 6.1, the models include a dummy

TABLE 6.2. *The effect of an observer condemnation on post-election violence*

	(1) Violence	(2) Violence	(3) Violence	(4) Violence
Condemnation	0.651** (0.275)	0.698** (0.304)	0.953*** (0.306)	1.267*** (0.365)
Serious Fraud		-0.215 (0.420)	-0.115 (0.287)	-1.012*** (0.325)
History of Violence			2.409*** (0.319)	2.049*** (0.343)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-0.167 (0.342)	-0.141 (0.359)	-0.527 (0.378)	-1.108*** (0.365)
- Opposition Gain	-0.143 (0.284)	-0.184 (0.278)	-0.380 (0.288)	-0.845*** (0.292)
- Pre-Election Concerns	0.718** (0.336)	0.751** (0.332)	0.580* (0.319)	0.512 (0.327)
- Pre-Election Violence	0.872*** (0.309)	0.859*** (0.307)	1.030*** (0.355)	0.0909 (0.319)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.206*** (0.0772)	-0.200** (0.0794)	-0.262*** (0.0739)	-0.294*** (0.110)
- GDP Per Capita log	0.0463 (0.260)	0.0241 (0.265)	0.253 (0.246)	0.374 (0.259)
- Polarisation	0.218* (0.130)	0.221* (0.129)	0.203 (0.127)	0.156 (0.112)
- Population Size log	0.539*** (0.142)	0.540*** (0.141)	0.169 (0.121)	-0.104 (0.131)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	428	428	428	428
Number of Countries	89	89	89	89
Pseudo R^2	0.210	0.211	0.316	0.250
Percent correctly classified	73.60	73.60	80.84	76.40
ROC	0.794	0.795	0.859	0.824
AIC	497.8	499.4	443.6	503.4
BIC	627.7	633.4	581.6	653.6
Log Likelihood	-216.9	-216.7	-187.8	-214.7

*Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.*

year variable, and all country controls are lagged by one year to mitigate potential endogeneity. The dependent variable is *violence* which is coded as 1 if any post-election protests that resulted in fatalities occurred and 0 otherwise. Through all models, an observer condemnation has a negative, statistically significant effect.

The first model fits all the main election and country controls together with the central independent variable, an observer *condemnation*. Among the election controls, both *pre-election concerns* and *pre-election violence* renders significant, suggesting, as expected, that concerns and violence ahead of an election is likely to spill over into the post-election period. Country controls of significance include *years of education* and *population size*. The numbers indicate that the risk of post-election violence is likely to be lower for countries with higher education levels, while the risk is higher for countries with a large population. An observer condemnation is a significant predictor at the 5 percent level.

The second model fits a variable indicating if the election experienced *serious fraud*. Surprisingly, and unlike the models for acceptance of results (in Table 6.1), this variable is not significant and renders only a marginal increase in the Pseudo R^2 . This suggests that accounting for cases with serious fraud (a) does not make the model able to explain more variation and (b) does not decrease the significance of other variables. One potential explanation, as mentioned above, is that serious fraud tends to occur in more autocratic regimes, environments in which protests are less likely, in the first place, since the price of challenging the government is higher.

In the third model, I fit the variable *history of violence* which is coded as 1 for countries in the sample that have previously experienced violent protests resulting in fatalities. Its significance indicates that a history of post-election violence is a good predictor of future violence, although the main purpose of the variable is to enable the model to account for unmeasured country characteristics.⁸ Here, the pseudo R^2 and ROC numbers increase, suggesting that this model is a better fit for the data. Notably, however, the significance and effect size of an observer condemnation increase in this model. This indicates that accounting for countries in which violent protests have happened before renders an observer condemnation as an even more important predictor. Arguably, this should strengthen the validity of the findings.

Finally, the fourth and full model adds a dummy variable for geographic *region* to further account for spatial dependence. Unlike with acceptance of results (the full model in Table 6.1), including a region dummy does not decrease the significance of an observer condemnation as it prevails at the 1 percent level. Three more variables render significant in this model, all with negative coefficients. *Serious fraud*, *boycotts* and *opposition gain* are factors that are associated with a decrease, rather than an increase, in the risk of violence. In terms of serious fraud, this strengthens the argument that such activity mainly occurs in authoritarian regimes in which protests are disincentivised. The negative coefficients of opposition gain and boycotts could be interpreted as the fact that actors are less likely to protest election results they gain seats in, or decide not to participate in.

An observer condemnation is a significant predictor in all models. Its effect size varies some but renders, in the final model, an odds ratio of $OR = \exp(1.267) = 3.550$. This suggests that an observer condemnation increase the odds of post-

⁸As described previously, the logic here is that outcomes are compared separately for countries that have, and have not, experienced violence in the past.

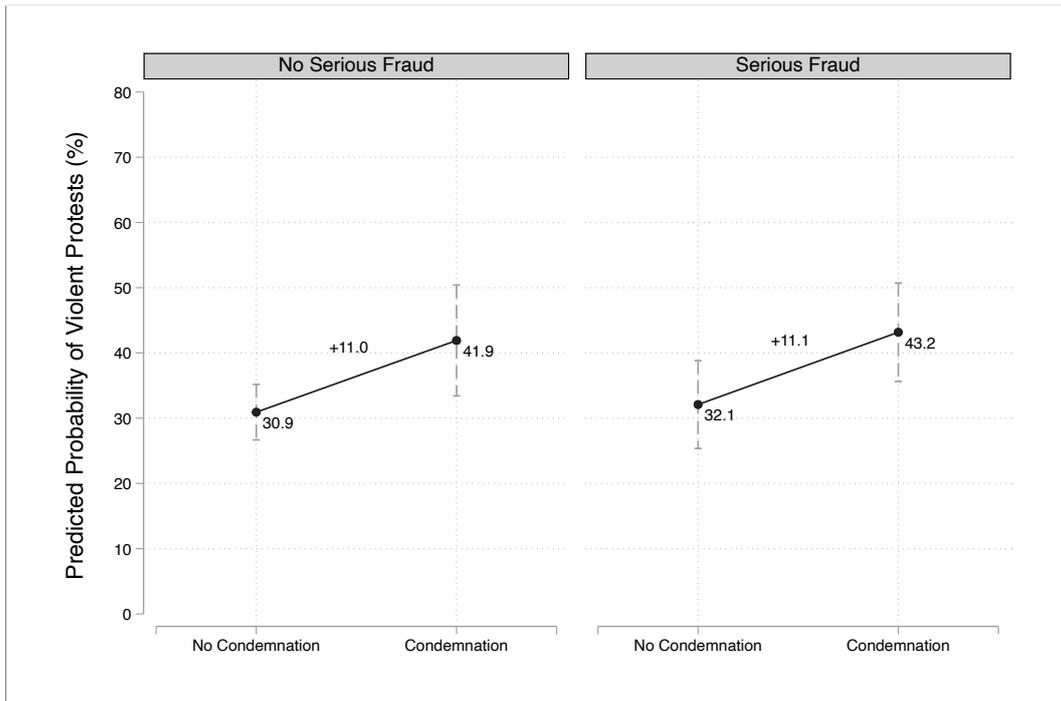


FIGURE 6.8. Predicted probability of post-election violence

Notes: Probabilities are calculated based on the full model (4) in Table 6.2 and show the impact of an observer condemnation. Dashed lines detail the 95 percent confidence interval.

election violence by, strikingly, some 250 percent.⁹ Looking at the model fit statistics, however, it is evident that several measures, like the Pseudo R^2 , the ROC value and percent of cases correctly classified, drop in the final model compared to model three. Controlling for geographic region, however, is important and should strengthen the validity of the findings.

So how is the likelihood of post-election violence influenced by an observer condemnation? Figure 6.8 illustrates the predicted probability of fatal violence occurring depending on what the observers conclude. As already mentioned, the specific numbers should be interpreted cautiously, yet the figure well illustrates the findings. Here, while cases with and without serious fraud are differentiated, the effect of an observer condemnation renders almost identical probabilities across the two. My model projects that when observers *do not* condemn the election, there is a one in three (some 30 percent) risk of post-election violence. When international observers *do* issue a condemnation, however, the risk of violence increase to above 40 percent. This means that, when observers condemn an election, they make post-election violence around 11 percentage points more likely.

Finally, recall that hypothesis 2a stipulated that: When *any* international election observer condemn the election, post-election violence becomes *more likely*. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between violence and an observer condemnation. In accordance with the findings above, I find support for the idea that such a relationship exists and, therefore, reject the null hypothesis. Hypothesis 2b proposed that: When *no* international election observers condemn the election,

⁹As already mentioned, the odds ratio can be interpreted as the percentage change in the odds, as in: $(OR - 1) * 100\%$. Here, this renders $(3.550 - 1) * 100\% = 255\%$. I detailed this logic in section 5.3.2, further illustrated in function 5.4.

post-election violence becomes *less likely*. The null hypothesis, again, is that there is no relationship between the two. Once more, I reject the null hypothesis since the empirical evidence strengthens what was proposed by hypothesis 2b.

To ensure the robustness of the results, I run a range of different specifications throughout Appendix B. Although I cannot include elections in consolidated democracies, due to limitations in the data, I allow the dependent variable to include protests that were, aside from deadly, either violent or non-violent (Table B.13);¹⁰ replace the control variables for opposition gain (Table B.6) and fraud (Table B.10) with other measurements to ensure that the findings hold regardless of my specifications; include variables for election type and round (Table B.8) to control for any impact of such characteristics; account for potential selection bias (Table B.11) as one could argue that observers only visit problematic elections which would bias the findings; as well as endogeneity (Table B.12) since a condemnation is dependent on several factors which may be appropriate to account for. The robustness checks affirm the idea that a condemnation is a significant predictor of post-election violence.¹¹

6.3 Summary of findings

In the sections above, I have scrutinised the relationship between international election observers' statements and domestic actors' reactions to election results. Having analysed two aspects of this issue – all actors accepting the outcome of the election and post-election violence – through statistical analysis of 623 and 428 national elections respectively, my argument can be summarised as follows. Namely, I find that when international election observers condemn an election by issuing a negative statement, they:

- Decrease the likelihood of all actors accepting the results – specifically by some 11-12 percentage points.
- Increase the likelihood of post-election deadly violence – specifically by some 11 percentage points.

Using logistic regression models, I was able to project the predicted probability of both issues occurring – all accepting the results as well as post-election violence – depending on what the observers concluded. While the probabilities are to be interpreted with caution, since they are dependent on the full model characteristics and the values taken by other variables, they well illustrate the argument. Thus, stipulating that the models capture a significant part of electoral characteristics and cover enough elections to be able to make proper generalisations, my findings suggest that:

- The chance, or predicted probability, that all actors accept the results when observers condemn an election is some 30 percent (for elections without serious fraud) and only 15 percent (for elections with serious fraud)

¹⁰Interestingly, while an observer condemnation remains a significant predictor when all types of protests are included (non-violent, violent and fatal), it is not significant when fitted solely against non-violent protests.

¹¹The exception is that a condemnation does not render significant in some of the models fitted with a variable for loser's vote share (Table B.6). This, however, is likely due to a significant loss of observations – almost half compared to the original models above.

- The risk, or predicted probability, of violence after elections that observers condemn is around 42 percent, both for elections with and without serious fraud.

While no study to date has cleared up the relationship between acceptance of results and international observers' assessments, this study does just that. With regards to post-election violence, my findings strengthen what has been previously proposed by regionally focused research on the issue, namely by Von Borzyskowski (2019b). Thus, having found support for the idea that observers impact how domestic actors react to election results, my argument is that what observers have to say matters.

On a final note, my findings suggest that, generally, observers' statements make it harder to challenge and protest the results of a good election, and easier to challenge and protest a bad one. While it is, arguably, good for democracy that observers make it harder to object to a fair election, it may be equally bad for democracy that a condemnation makes post-election violence, irrespective of other factors, more likely. This dynamic, what it means for the observer organisations, as well as how election observation may develop in the future is scrutinised in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Discussion

In this chapter, I address the implications of the findings head-on – in particular the relationship between an observer condemnation and violence. First, I use the Kenyan general election of 2007 to illustrate how international observers can spur violence rather than peace. Second, I address what this link means for the observer organisations in practice, discussing the potential trade-offs between the value of a condemnation and the value of avoiding violence. Finally, I offer some reflections on the future of election observation and discuss whether observers may have a role to play also in consolidated democracies.

7.1 Back to Kenya: the power of a condemnation

Although deadly violence is likely an unintended consequence on behalf of the observers – it is an identified consequence nevertheless. And although post-election violence could well erupt without an observer condemnation, it is *more likely* to erupt with it. Thus, to be blunt, the findings suggest that whenever an observer condemnation or heavily criticism is on the table, it has to be weighed against the potential loss of life. To illustrate what this means in practice, I return to Kenya, previously mentioned in the introduction, and its general election of 2007. Although already discussed by Von Borzyskowski (2019b) among others, the Kenyan experience is worth reiterating here.

In the final days of 2007, Kenyans went to the polls to elect a president and parliament with international observers from the European Union (EU) as well as the International Republican Institute (IRI) present. The campaigning period had been contentious with rumours about fraud emerging around the country. In the months leading up to the vote, some violence had already started breaking out (Cheeseman 2008). As election day came and the votes were to be counted, however, it quickly became clear that significant irregularities had taken place.

On December 30, some hours before the final results had even been announced by the electoral commission, the EU observers issued a striking condemnation. The EU detailed that its observers, for instance, had personally witnessed the altering of some 20 000 votes (Von Borzyskowski 2019b; Cheeseman 2008). As news of the EU's revelations were breaking, the government decided to suspend live news broadcasts, except for the government-run channel where viewers could see the election commission officially declaring the incumbent, President Kibaki, as the winner (Cheeseman 2008). Yet, as the commission failed to address any of the issues

raised by the EU, the electoral loser, Raila Odinga, challenged the results (Gettleman 2007b).

What ensued the observer condemnation and, then, the announcement of the results was violence on a scale rarely seen before, pushing Kenya to the brink of civil war (Atwood 2012:4). In a conservative estimate, over 280 unique protest events occurred, 150 of which resulted in casualties (Daxecker et al. 2019b). In total, more than 1 000 deaths were reported as a consequence of the post-election protests (Cheeseman 2008). In the press, notably, the observer condemnation was linked directly to the protests that occurred, with language such as: "charges of fraud were lent extra weight by the EU election monitoring team" (Daily Star 2008). Yet, as the situation was spiralling out of control, the EU mission went on to reiterate its concerns to the media in the days following the announcement (Gettleman 2007a). Given what the observers had concluded, supporters of Odinga were under the clear impression that his decision to challenge the outcome was rightly justified (Von Borzyskowski 2019b).

It was not only Odinga, his supporters, and the press, however, that connected the observer statement to the escalating protests; the observers themselves later acknowledged their role in the proceedings. In a review ordered by the European Parliament, Atwood (2012:22) concluded that the EU report 'reinforced the narrative' that the vote was stolen by the electoral commission on behalf of incumbent President Kibaki, which fueled the violence (Von Borzyskowski 2019b). The observer mission from the IRI realised the volatility of the situation earlier and, according to McIntire and Gettleman (2009), decided to withhold both data and reports since both suggested that Odinga, the loser, had won.

Yet, an international and independent review of the election, the Kriegler report, was ordered in the aftermath of the crisis and cast some doubts over the assertion that fraud only favoured the incumbent. Odinga, in fact, had also gained significant votes due to malpractice (Von Borzyskowski 2019b). What the Kenyan experience thus illustrates is how an observer condemnation risks sparking and exacerbating an already tense situation – without, perhaps, having been able to assess the full picture.

Unfortunately, there are other examples of how observers can be linked to post-violence, some of which, again, were eloquently described by Von Borzyskowski (2019b). For instance, when the OSCE condemned the 1996 election in Armenia, what had until then been peaceful protests turned violent and fatalities were reported (Bennett 1996). In Azerbaijan, the 2003 election was challenged by the opposition following the OSCE's statement, resulting in at least one death (Anderson et al. 2005:6). And, as mentioned in the introduction, the Kyrgyz election of 2020 saw protesters storm the parliament as the observer statement noted concerns over 'credible allegations of vote buying' (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe 2020b:1). Although an observer condemnation is not the only factor that could spur post-election violence, its importance should not be underestimated.

7.2 The trade-off between truth and violence

As most observer organisations advertise election monitoring as something that strengthens democracy, the practice has turned into the most prominent tool among Western efforts of democracy promotion (Kelley 2012:155). Yet, the fact that international observers make fatal violence more likely when they condemn elections

– irrespective of bad the election was – is not great for monitors’ alignment with and promotion of democratic ideals. This raises several questions regarding the election observers’ status as democracy promoters. Should the observers always tell the truth even if, as the saying goes, life is on the line?

One obvious way for observers to decrease the risk of violence is to stop condemning elections altogether. This, however, is likely undesirable since their main job, arguably, is to provide information and render a judgment – whether it is good, bad or in-between – on the election. A more compelling starting point, thus, is likely that observers should not shy away from calling out bad elections. Avoiding the truth, or tipping around the edges, could hurt the legitimacy of observers and thus render election observation pointless in the long run. If the observers do not tell it like it is, their authority in assessing elections could be damaged.

However, even if one agrees that observers should stick to the truth, a credible argument could still be made that whatever incentivises or spurs violence is not defensible, appropriate, or a force for democracy. To address this, it is necessary to first clear up the extent to which the observers are the ones accountable for violence breaking out. Here, one could argue that the incumbent, who conducted the fraudulent election, always bears the greatest responsibility. Yet, the findings point towards the fact that a condemnation makes violence more likely *regardless* of electoral quality (in other words, regardless of how much the incumbent cheated). As such, although the observers may not be the beholders of the ‘original sin’, it would not be unreasonable to attribute them with some, although far from all, responsibility for any additional violence that may occur.

Yet, if one acknowledges that observers bear some responsibility for post-election violence after a condemnation, do the ends justify the means? For instance, say that an observer condemnation spurs violence that, in the end, leads to the unseating of an authoritarian regime. Should the observers be blamed for triggering violence, or championed for reaching the end goal of democracy promotion: bringing about democracy? Here, even if one argues that observers are accountable for spurring violence, that could be excused if the final result is a democratic transition. Put differently, this discussion is really about how the value of a condemnation – in terms of revealing the truth and, perhaps, spurring democracy – should be weighed against any short term consequences, such as fatal violence.

Several moral and ethical considerations are embedded in these types of questions, and the full extent of that is somewhat beyond the scope here. Yet, Von Borzyskowski (2019b) suggested that violence is rarely positive for democracy in the short-term, as it tends to solely alter the composition of the leadership elite, or the long-term, leading to societal instability. As such, even though one may pardon the violence based on the observers’ goals of democracy, it is not perfectly reasonable to assume that violence actually makes nations more democratic.

So how should the observer organisations act? After her study on African elections, Von Borzyskowski (2019b) proposed that observers should not visit elections that they know to be fraudulent in advance, simply to avoid having to face this dilemma. Observer groups tend to align with this view but have, nevertheless, made conflicting choices. The OSCE, for instance, decided to observe the election in Azerbaijan in early 2020, which they also significantly criticised, but avoided a full-fledged mission to the election in Tajikistan that same year, in part because not enough democratic progress had been made (Organisation for Security and Co-

operation in Europe 2020a; Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe 2020c).

Nevertheless, if one believes that fatal violence is inherently bad (on its own, for democracy, or both), one reasonable conclusion is that observer groups may need to be careful. From this perspective, observers must not only consider *what* to say but also, as Atwood (2012:22) made the point, *when* and *how* to say it. In a context of already high tensions in which post-election violence could be likely, a condemnation may well add fuel to the fire. This may be undesirable if the goal of observers is peace but, to some extent, excusable if the objective is to always reveal the truth.

Ultimately, however, the trade-off between issuing a condemnation that offers the facts, on the one hand, and avoiding to spur any fatal violence, on the other, is one that observers groups have to face. What they say matters.

7.3 The future of election observation

This research has focused on elections in not yet consolidated democracies because, evidently, this is where international observers go. My argument, largely, is also that they should keep going there. The findings suggest that they impact the immediate legitimacy (either good or bad) of the announced results and incentivise actors to electoral reactions that follow some degree of democratic norms; protest the bad elections, not the good ones. Yet, as an observer condemnation increase the likelihood of violence, as discussed above, trade-offs between the value of a condemnation and the potential for violence may have to be made more explicitly in the future.

Besides violence, an interesting question for the future of election observation is where international observers should go. Again, election monitoring today is limited to potentially problematic elections in democratising states, but there is an argument to be made for why monitors could play a role also in elections in the long-term consolidated democracies. Not because elections in these types of states are fraudulent and need to be called out, but because of a sharp increase in societal distrust and information problems. Dahlgren (2018) argued that the rise in populist revolts against Western democracy, accompanied by distrust in the political system and the media, was due to the massive amounts and speed of information in digital societies. Knowledge, he argued, has lost its meaning. What matters is no longer what is true, in the sense that truths should align with a somewhat 'objective' version of reality, but what one *believes* to be true.

Although the discussion on the nature of truth can be problematised, the point is that since the internet has taken over, information problems abound as 'alternative' news sites, sometimes financed by authoritarian states, spread disinformation and use social media to sow distrust in society. The high information environments, that I argued were largely found in consolidated democracies, are thus moving to become *extreme* information environments. Flooded with low-quality information, extreme information environments have real news competing with fake, alternative facts competing with facts, and falsehoods or half-truths competing with truths. In this regard, extreme information settings are not that dissimilar to low-information settings since, in both cases, uncertainty prevails.

From this perceptible, it seems reasonable to propose that election observers, as information providers, could have a role to play also in the consolidated democracies.

At least in theory, international observers are not only information providers – they are *good information* providers. If observer statements can indeed reduce uncertainty, which I have argued, then the presence of observers also in elections in established democracies, in extreme information settings, should be able to counter some of the distrust generated by unfounded claims or insinuations of irregularities.

Two objections could be raised. First, the mere presence of international observers should not, but does, suggest that there is a need for their presence from an election quality perspective. Intuitively, it is not unreasonable for voters to conclude that observers are here because the election might be filled with problems. Thus, an accidental consequence of observer presence might be that they instead spur further distrust in election quality, simply by observing in the first place. Indeed, political actors who seek to saw distrust could use this to their advantage. Second, the observer organisations have limited resources and should, therefore, prioritise missions in countries that need their information the most. By and large, this is not elections in consolidated democracies.

Nevertheless, if the presence of election observers in developing democracies is rationalised based on their ability to provide neutral and accurate information, it is not unreasonable to apply the same test to elections in developed democracies. In fact, trust in democratic institutions in the West has declined significantly in recent years (Van der Meer 2017). To illustrate, albeit with an extreme example, consider again the hundreds of protesters invading the US capitol during early 2021 who wanted to 'fight for Trump!' to 'stop the steal!' (Taylor 2021). They deeply believed that the election was fraudulent, a notion that was spun by friendly media, asking the winners to counter the claim that fraud occurred by proving that fraud did not occur (Bump 2021). As unreasonable as it may sound, it could underscore the need for third-party credible information in relation to elections also in the 'classical' democracies.

Therefore, if election observation works in low-information environments, which I have argued it does, it could well work in the extreme information settings many consolidated democracies find themselves in today.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

International election observers have visited close to 1 500 elections since the 1990s and, as I stated in the introduction, their job is to answer a basic question: was this election free and fair? Considering the number of elections that take place outside of the established democracies, including what authoritarian leaders, generally, are prepared to do to stay in office – this is, by no means, an easy task. While some have argued that sending international observers to elections around the world is more for show than for substance, and the observers themselves claim to contribute to everything from peace to democracy, I went on to test it in practice. The purpose of this research was thus to outline the relationship between the observers' post-election statements and domestic political actors' reactions to election results.

I reasoned that election observers, by assessing whether an election is free and fair, provide information about election quality in what is often information scarce environments. In many cases, observers' assessments may be one of few sources for a somewhat objective and non-partisan depiction of reality. Thus, I argued that if election observation is meaningful, then domestic politicians should listen to what they conclude and, to some extent, act accordingly. A condemnation by observers, therefore, should incentivise actors to challenge the result of an election – as much as the absence of a condemnation should *disincentivise* such challenges. Accordingly, I proposed that an observer condemnation may increase the likelihood of post-election violence – since losing actors can use it to rally and aggravate followers – whereas violence should be less likely after elections that observers do not condemn.

By compiling data on all elections with observers present since 1990, I was able to statistically test these relationships. The findings, quite clearly, strengthened the idea that, yes, observers do impact electoral reactions. First, I found that when international observers condemn an election, they lowered the likelihood of all losers conceding and accepting defeat – irrespective of election-level characteristics, such as serious fraud. Specifically, my models predicted that there was only a one in three chance (some 30 percent) that all actors will accept the results if the election was condemned by observers. When elections, in addition to being condemned, also were seriously fraudulent, the chance of full acceptance rested at a mere 15 percent.

Second, I found that elections condemned by observers were more likely to experience post-election violent and deadly protests. The data suggested that an observer condemnation increase the risk of post-election violence by some 11 percentage points, putting the probability of violence at above 40 percent for condemned elections. Strikingly, neither this relationship was significantly impacted by the degree

to which the election itself was fraudulent.

While no previous study had cleared up the relationship between observers' assessments and actors' acceptance, this research does just that. In terms of post-election violence, this study strengthens what has previously been proposed by regionally focused studies. At large, my findings thus provide ample evidence to the idea that observers' statements have immediate consequences on domestic post-election events: both in terms of acceptance, as well as violence.

After detailing the findings, I went on to illustrate the link between a condemnation and fatal protests, highlighting some country examples. Showing how observer statements can spur violence rather than peace, in practice, I raised several moral and ethical questions on the virtue of condemnations and discussed the potential trade-off between monitors' intentions of telling the truth, on the one hand, and the potential for fatal violence, on the other. As a final note, I offered some reflections on the future of election observation, in part on the appropriateness of having election observers also at elections in consolidated democracies.

The outcomes of this research, finally, suggest that what international election observers have to say matters. The findings strengthen the idea that they incentivise actors to electoral reactions that follow democratic norms, making it harder to challenge a good election and easier to protest a bad one. In that sense, I conclude that election observers are good at promoting democracy directly after an election. However, the link between an observer condemnation and additional violence suggests that they might make it 'too easy' to challenge bad elections since violence is unlikely to enhance the prospects for democracy. Thus, I also conclude that if observers are to hold on to their status as democracy promoters, this is an issue they must address head-on.

8.1 Where do we go from here?

At least two imminent issues arise at the conclusion of this research. The first relates directly to the usefulness of election observation, the second to the future of the practice. First, consider that we still know close to nothing about the long-term effects of election monitoring. The findings of this and previous research are election-specific, where it has been credibly shown that election observers likely have an impact during or immediately after a specific election. This, however, reveals little about the explicitly stated goal of many observer groups: to enhance elections, and thus democracy, over time.

Moving ahead, the big elephant in the room is thus whether or not election observers have any *long-term* impacts on (a) electoral quality and (b) the larger democratisation process. While actors evidently tend to act upon the statements of observers, do governments act upon them as well? Do the observers' recommendations translate into better prospects for democracy in the long run? And, if election monitoring is limited to short-term impacts – is that enough to justify the costs of and rationale behind the practice? This should be the primary focus for future research.

Second, and relating to the future of the practice, it is relevant to ask: where should observers go? Today, it is not only developing democracies that struggle with uncertainty regarding election quality. The digital era has in many aspects created extreme information environments where it is not information *pre se* but *good information* that is lacking. An omnipresence of alternative news and alternative facts

renders extreme information settings not that dissimilar to low-information environments, in which uncertainty dominates. Theoretically, however, the characteristics and dynamics of such extreme information environments need to be further explored.

Nonetheless, if observers can reduce uncertainty – which I have argued – they could have a role to play also in the consolidated democracies. Yet, to what extent would they, by providing information, increase trust in such social and political settings? And what about the unintended consequences – where actors seeking to saw mistrust make use of the observer presence, hinting that it indicates that the election will be filled with problems?

Evidently, more research on both the long-term effectiveness of, and future prospects for, the primary tool in the democracy promotion toolbox – international election observation – is required.

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Appendix A

Data description

TABLE A.1. *Descriptive statistics*

Variable	Obs.	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Condemnation	1111	0.221	0.415	0	1
Accept	2361	2.170	1.077	0	3
All Accept	2361	0.550	0.498	0	1
Non-Violent Protests	2361	0.071	0.257	0	1
Violent-Only Protests	747	0.244	0.430	0	1
Fatal Protests ^a	747	0.340	0.474	0	1
Non-Violent (sum)	747	2.525	11.167	0	135
Violent-Only (sum)	253	8.206	14.590	0	108
Fatal (sum)	747	1.901	8.082	0	150
History of Acceptance	2361	0.744	0.436	0	1
History of Violence	2361	0.346	0.476	0	1
Boycott	1896	0.146	0.353	0	1
Opposition Gain	1896	0.474	0.499	0	1
Pre-Election Concerns	1896	0.371	0.483	0	1
Pre-Election Violence	747	0.652	0.477	0	1
Pre-Election Violence (sum)	747	7.242	19.352	0	208
Serious Fraud	2361	0.230	0.421	0	1
Years of Education	1875	7.455	3.289	.426	13.61
GDP Per Capita log	2156	8.879	1.145	5.97	11.32
Polarisation	2297	-0.184	1.299	-3.686	4.126
Population Size log	2240	15.904	1.656	11.072	21.025
Year	2361	2001.808	11.252	1980	2020
Region	2361	2.594	1.244	1	5

Notes: ^aThis variable is labeled "Violence" in the empirical analysis (see the variable description in section 5.2.2).

TABLE A.2. Countries in full dataset

Afghanistan 9	Croatia 20	Iran 34	Mozambique 6	Spain 13
Albania 17	Cuba 6	Iraq 11	Myanmar 7	Sri Lanka 16
Algeria 16	Cyprus 22	Ireland 16	Namibia 7	Sudan 8
Angola 4	Czech Republic 11	Israel 15	Nepal 9	Suriname 8
Argentina 20	Czechoslovakia 4	Italy 10	Netherlands 12	Swaziland 9
Armenia 18	Dem. Rep. Congo 7	Jamaica 10	New Zealand 14	Sweden 11
Australia 15	Denmark 13	Japan 13	Nicaragua 7	Switzerland 10
Austria 23	Djibouti 14	Jordan 9	Niger 17	Syria 16
Azerbaijan 18	Dominican Rep. 16	Kazakhstan 17	Nigeria 14	Taiwan 18
Bahrain 9	Ecuador 21	Kenya 10	North Korea 8	Tajikistan 17
Bangladesh 10	Egypt 28	Kosovo 7	Norway 10	Tanzania 9
Barbados 9	El Salvador 22	Kuwait 15	Oman 6	Thailand 13
Belarus 17	Eq. Guinea 12	Kyrgyz Rep. 19	Pakistan 10	Timor 11
Belgium 11	Estonia 9	Laos 7	Panama 10	Togo 18
Benin 21	Ethiopia 6	Latvia 10	Papua N. Guinea 9	Tri. & Tobago 11
Bhutan 5	Fiji 9	Lebanon 6	Paraguay 9	Tunisia 14
Bolivia 11	Finland 21	Lesotho 7	Peru 17	Turkey 12
Bosnia and H. 8	France 31	Liberia 8	Philippines 14	Turkmenistan 15
Botswana 8	Gabon 18	Libya 2	Poland 26	Uganda 9
Brazil 17	Gambia 13	Lithuania 28	Portugal 22	Ukraine 24
Bulgaria 25	Georgia 22	Luxembourg 8	Romania 21	United Arab Em. 4
Burkina Faso 11	German D.Rep. 3	Macedonia 20	Russia 18	United Kingdom 10
Burundi 10	Germany 11	Madagascar 9	Rwanda 12	United States 21
Cambodia 7	Ghana 11	Malawi 10	Sao Tome and P. 18	Uruguay 12
Cameroon 15	Greece 16	Malaysia 9	Senegal 15	Uzbekistan 17
Canada 12	Guatemala 20	Maldives 19	Serbia 24	Vanuatu 11
Cape Verde 16	Guinea 13	Mali 26	Seychelles 16	Venezuela 14
Cen. Af. Rep. 17	Guinea-Bissau 16	Malta 9	Sierra Leone 11	Vietnam 9
Chad 11	Guyana 9	Mauritania 19	Singapore 13	Yemen 6
Chile 14	Haiti 19	Mauritius 10	Slovak Republic 18	Yemen Arab Rep. 1
Colombia 26	Honduras 10	Mexico 13	Slovenia 19	Yemen P. Rep. 1
Comoros 29	Hungary 16	Moldova 18	Solomon Islands 10	Zambia 10
Congo 20	Iceland 18	Mongolia 20	Somalia 3	Zanzibar 14
Costa Rica 13	India 11	Montenegro 14	South Africa 9	Zimbabwe 14
Cote d'Ivoire 18	Indonesia 13	Morocco 7	South Korea 18	

Notes: Subsequent number indicates national elections in dataset. Total number of countries: 174. Period: 1980-2020.

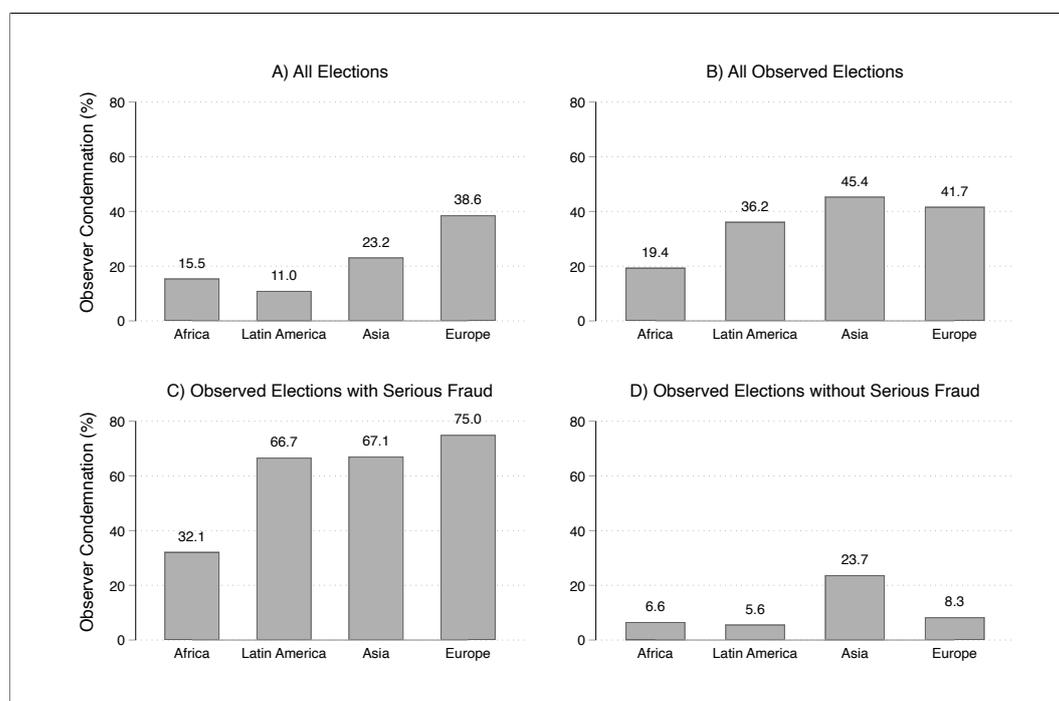


FIGURE A.1. Regional discrepancies among international observers' assessments

Notes: Election in the Oceania region excluded due to lack of observations.

Appendix B

Robustness checks

TABLE B.1. *Collinearity diagnostics: Table 6.1*

	VIF	1/VIF
Years of Education	4.883	.205
GDP Per Capita log	3.054	.327
Region	2.949	.339
Serious Fraud	1.446	.691
Pre-Election Concerns	1.44	.694
History of Acceptance	1.339	.747
Population Size log	1.222	.818
Opposition Gain	1.181	.846
Year	1.161	.861
Polarisation	1.067	.937
Mean VIF	1.974	

Notes: VIF stands for Variance Inflation Factor. The value offers a measurement of how much the square of a variable's standard deviation is inflated by other variables from 1 and up.

TABLE B.2. *Collinearity diagnostics: Table 6.2*

	VIF	1/VIF
Years of Education	4.46	.224
GDP Per Capita log	2.778	.36
region	2.743	.365
Population Size log	1.448	.691
Serious Fraud	1.37	.73
Pre-Election Concerns	1.296	.772
History of Violence	1.272	.786
Opposition Gain	1.233	.811
Year	1.116	.896
Pre-Election Violence	1.086	.921
Polarisation	1.077	.928
Mean VIF	1.807	

Notes: VIF stands for Variance Inflation Factor. The value offers a measurement of how much the square of a variable's standard deviation is inflated by other variables from 1 and up.

TABLE B.3. *Correlation matrix for variables in Tables 6.1 and 6.2*

	Condemn.	Boycott	Opposition Gain	Pre-El. Conc.	Pre-El. Violence	Serious Fraud	Years of Edu.	GDP PC log	Polarisation	Population Size log	Year	Region	H. of Violence	H. of Acceptance
Condemn.	1.00													
<i>Election controls</i>														
Boycott	0.13	1.00												
Opposition Gain	-0.15	-0.22	1.00											
Pre-El. Conc.	0.45	0.34	-0.29	1.00										
Pre-El. Violence	0.03	-0.09	0.02	0.04	1.00									
Serious Fraud	0.44	0.32	-0.31	0.44	-0.03	1.00								
<i>Country controls</i>														
Years of Edu.n	0.12	-0.12	0.01	-0.11	-0.02	0.04	1.00							
GDP PC log	-0.00	-0.11	0.12	-0.21	-0.04	-0.13	0.77	1.00						
Polarisation	0.00	0.17	-0.07	0.11	0.10	0.09	-0.17	-0.16	1.00					
Population Size log	0.14	-0.00	-0.01	0.12	0.26	0.07	-0.10	-0.02	0.07	1.00				
<i>Spatial/temporal dependence controls</i>														
Year	0.08	-0.04	0.02	0.04	0.06	-0.03	0.14	0.27	0.03	0.03	1.00			
Region	0.04	-0.12	0.09	-0.10	-0.01	-0.16	0.75	0.59	-0.08	0.03	-0.04	1.00		
H. of Violence	0.08	0.15	-0.07	0.26	0.10	0.12	-0.33	-0.44	0.25	0.39	-0.08	-0.20	1.00	
H. of Acceptance	-0.28	-0.22	0.16	-0.38	-0.01	-0.36	0.24	0.34	-0.09	-0.06	0.03	0.30	-0.22	1.00

Notes: Numers represent the Pearson correlation coefficients. A value of 1 indicates a perfectly positive correlation, -1 a perfectly negative correlation.

TABLE B.4. *Including elections in consolidated democracies:^a Replicating the All Accept models in Table 6.1*

	(1) All Accept	(2) All Accept	(3) All Accept	(4) All Accept
Condemnation	-1.557*** (0.537)	-1.386*** (0.524)	-1.303** (0.640)	-1.264* (0.658)
Serious Fraud		-1.959*** (0.660)	-1.946** (0.858)	-1.798** (0.810)
History of Acceptance			3.969*** (0.736)	4.028*** (0.870)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-1.832** (0.762)	-1.666** (0.811)	-1.445* (0.833)	-1.347 (0.899)
- Opposition Gain	1.252*** (0.316)	1.150*** (0.314)	1.407*** (0.344)	1.403*** (0.347)
- Pre-Election Concerns	-1.144*** (0.348)	-0.895*** (0.342)	-0.457 (0.393)	-0.384 (0.413)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.0296 (0.120)	0.0182 (0.122)	-0.101 (0.119)	-0.135 (0.150)
- GDP Per Capita log	1.407*** (0.399)	1.268*** (0.404)	1.561*** (0.375)	1.326*** (0.376)
- Polarisation	-0.371** (0.152)	-0.388** (0.157)	-0.406** (0.172)	-0.437*** (0.162)
- Population Size log	-0.100 (0.206)	-0.109 (0.216)	-0.122 (0.248)	-0.147 (0.231)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	No	No	No	Yes
Observations ^b	668	668	668	668
Number of countries	108	108	108	108
Pseudo R2	0.455	0.474	0.577	0.586
Percent correctly classified	81.59	83.53	87.57	87.87
ROC	0.912	0.919	0.949	0.951
AIC	562.6	547.2	455.5	453.3
BIC	715.8	704.9	617.7	629.0
Log Likelihood	-247.3	-238.6	-191.7	-187.7

Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^a Defined as states that have been continuously democratic for over 40 years; 23 countries detailed under section 5.1.

^b Adds 14 elections in 8 countries compared to the original models.

TABLE B.5. Replacing opposition gain with loser's vote share: Replicating the All Accept models in Table 6.1

	(1) All Accept	(2) All Accept	(3) All Accept	(4) All Accept
Condemnation	-1.400*** (0.518)	-1.245** (0.532)	-1.150* (0.591)	-1.229** (0.616)
Serious Fraud		-2.140** (0.871)	-1.882* (1.065)	-1.879* (1.066)
History of Acceptance			3.694*** (0.849)	3.714*** (0.918)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-2.380*** (0.689)	-2.344*** (0.726)	-2.476*** (0.867)	-2.506*** (0.914)
- Loser vote/seat share ^a	0.0580*** (0.0218)	0.0549** (0.0220)	0.0562*** (0.0189)	0.0464** (0.0196)
- Pre-Election Concerns	-1.184*** (0.450)	-1.015** (0.444)	-0.483 (0.556)	-0.421 (0.562)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.0603 (0.116)	-0.0251 (0.117)	-0.173 (0.118)	-0.171 (0.161)
- GDP Per Capita log	1.839*** (0.378)	1.703*** (0.382)	1.890*** (0.366)	1.755*** (0.354)
- Polarisation	-0.358** (0.154)	-0.377** (0.147)	-0.443*** (0.162)	-0.493*** (0.166)
- Population Size log	-0.0641 (0.207)	-0.0557 (0.208)	-0.0595 (0.211)	-0.0656 (0.207)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	412	412	412	412
Number of countries	98	98	98	98
Pseudo R2	0.495	0.513	0.609	0.613
Percent correctly classified	85.44	86.41	88.83	88.83
ROC	0.924	0.930	0.956	0.957
AIC	352.1	344.1	292.2	295.8
BIC	488.8	484.8	437.0	452.7
Log Likelihood	-142.0	-137.0	-110.1	-108.9

Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^aFor presidential and general elections, the variable reflects the vote-share of the second-most successful presidential candidate in the first round, drawing from the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et al. 2021a:77). For parliamentary elections, the variable reflects the share of seats won by the second-largest party (Coppedge et al. 2021a:81).

TABLE B.6. Replacing opposition gain with loser's vote share: Replicating the Violence models in Table 6.2

	(1) Violence	(2) Violence	(3) Violence	(4) Violence
Condemnation	0.346 (0.368)	0.385 (0.410)	0.528 (0.389)	1.493*** (0.546)
Serious Fraud		-0.166 (0.580)	0.0456 (0.438)	-1.274** (0.504)
History of Violence			2.285*** (0.459)	1.933*** (0.402)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-0.796 (0.530)	-0.747 (0.573)	-1.099 (0.692)	-0.694 (0.427)
- Loser vote/seat share ^a	-0.00361 (0.0140)	-0.00380 (0.0141)	-0.00445 (0.0167)	0.0297** (0.0148)
- Pre-Election Concerns	0.935** (0.423)	0.946** (0.424)	0.689* (0.416)	0.832** (0.381)
- Pre-Election Violence	0.552 (0.469)	0.531 (0.466)	0.786 (0.555)	-0.360 (0.404)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.309** (0.122)	-0.306** (0.124)	-0.349*** (0.126)	-0.250* (0.136)
- GDP Per Capita log	0.230 (0.348)	0.216 (0.349)	0.399 (0.360)	0.115 (0.329)
- Polarisation	0.280 (0.184)	0.281 (0.184)	0.258 (0.181)	0.246 (0.162)
- Population Size log	0.509*** (0.195)	0.509*** (0.194)	0.120 (0.193)	-0.0227 (0.176)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	No	No	No	Yes
Observations ^b	269	269	269	269
Number of Countries	83	83	83	83
Pseudo R2	0.231	0.232	0.324	0.292
Percent correctly classified	75.84	75.09	83.27	81.78
ROC	0.809	0.810	0.861	0.853
AIC	325.4	327.3	298.0	332.3
BIC	440.5	445.9	420.2	465.3
Log Likelihood	-130.7	-130.7	-115.0	-129.1

Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: ***
 $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^aFor presidential and general elections, the variable reflects the vote-share of the second-most successful presidential candidate in the first round, drawing from the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et al. 2021a:77). For parliamentary elections, the variable reflects the share of seats won by the second-largest party (Coppedge et al. 2021a:81).

^bSince the number of observations is almost half that of the main models, the results should be interpreted with caution.

TABLE B.7. *Controlling for election type and round: Replicating the All Accept models in Table 6.1*

	(1) All Accept	(2) All Accept	(3) All Accept	(4) All Accept
Condemnation	-1.502*** (0.547)	-1.333** (0.541)	-1.188* (0.648)	-1.181* (0.658)
Serious Fraud		-1.933*** (0.659)	-1.928** (0.845)	-1.876** (0.808)
History of Acceptance			3.933*** (0.729)	4.024*** (0.866)
<i>Election Type^a</i>				
- Legislative	-0.677 (0.435)	-0.510 (0.424)	-0.345 (0.506)	-0.000138 (0.565)
- Presidential	-0.538 (0.421)	-0.314 (0.415)	-0.477 (0.467)	-0.193 (0.503)
- Round	0.469* (0.268)	0.500* (0.264)	0.614** (0.294)	0.613* (0.317)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-1.734** (0.756)	-1.593** (0.793)	-1.448* (0.798)	-1.349 (0.861)
- Opposition Gain	1.302*** (0.339)	1.199*** (0.335)	1.381*** (0.353)	1.351*** (0.350)
- Pre-Election Concerns	-1.068*** (0.342)	-0.841** (0.343)	-0.444 (0.402)	-0.402 (0.417)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.0291 (0.124)	0.0181 (0.125)	-0.113 (0.119)	-0.150 (0.146)
- GDP Per Capita log	1.456*** (0.399)	1.311*** (0.400)	1.603*** (0.374)	1.322*** (0.377)
- Polarisation	-0.365** (0.154)	-0.381** (0.160)	-0.399** (0.172)	-0.452*** (0.161)
- Population Size log	-0.113 (0.210)	-0.122 (0.221)	-0.139 (0.249)	-0.159 (0.229)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	654	654	654	654
Number of countries	100	100	100	100
Pseudo R2	0.448	0.467	0.571	0.580
Percent correctly classified	83.33	83.94	87.46	88.07
ROC	0.909	0.916	0.947	0.950
AIC	560.7	546.6	456.7	454.8
BIC	726.6	716.9	631.5	643.1
Log Likelihood	-243.3	-235.3	-189.3	-185.4

*Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.1.*

^a*Legislative and Presidential are dichotomous variables, coded as 1 if the election falls into that category and 0 otherwise. The models omit general elections due to collinearity.*

TABLE B.8. *Controlling for election type and round: Replicating the Violence models in Table 6.2*

	(1) Violence	(2) Violence	(3) Violence	(4) Violence
Condemnation	0.666** (0.282)	0.721** (0.308)	0.979*** (0.318)	1.315*** (0.369)
Serious Fraud		-0.249 (0.419)	-0.0267 (0.292)	-0.933*** (0.325)
History of Violence			2.482*** (0.332)	2.174*** (0.360)
<i>Election Type^a</i>				
- Legislative	0.382 (0.369)	0.422 (0.368)	0.120 (0.402)	-0.400 (0.406)
- Presidential	0.0217 (0.356)	0.0765 (0.358)	-0.419 (0.447)	-0.730* (0.425)
- Round	0.291 (0.356)	0.285 (0.360)	0.421 (0.431)	0.870** (0.409)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-0.267 (0.365)	-0.243 (0.380)	-0.610 (0.417)	-1.116*** (0.384)
- Opposition Gain	-0.241 (0.302)	-0.284 (0.294)	-0.522 (0.318)	-0.992*** (0.309)
- Pre-Election Concerns	0.677** (0.335)	0.715** (0.330)	0.519 (0.316)	0.466 (0.334)
- Pre-Election Violence	0.950*** (0.313)	0.936*** (0.311)	1.155*** (0.356)	0.195 (0.312)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.220*** (0.0807)	-0.212** (0.0828)	-0.285*** (0.0790)	-0.345*** (0.121)
- GDP Per Capita log	0.0436 (0.261)	0.0123 (0.267)	0.314 (0.255)	0.554* (0.297)
- Polarisation	0.215 (0.133)	0.218* (0.132)	0.204 (0.126)	0.162 (0.114)
- Population Size log	0.534*** (0.143)	0.535*** (0.143)	0.153 (0.120)	-0.128 (0.134)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	428	428	428	428
Number of Countries	89	89	89	89
Pseudo R2	0.215	0.216	0.322	0.262
Percent correctly classified	74.53	74.77	80.84	77.57
ROC	0.799	0.799	0.863	0.831
AIC	501.4	502.9	446.2	502.5
BIC	643.5	649.0	596.4	664.8
Log Likelihood	-215.7	-215.4	-186.1	-211.2

Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^aLegislative and Presidential are dichotomous variables, coded as 1 if the election falls into that category and 0 otherwise. The models omit general elections due to collinearity.

TABLE B.9. *Testing different fraud controls: Replicating the full All Accept model (4) in Table 6.1*

	(1) All Accept	(2) All Accept	(3) All Accept	(4) All Accept	(5) All Accept
Condemnation	-1.207* (0.708)	-1.222** (0.619)	-1.386** (0.557)	-1.467** (0.614)	-1.592** (0.631)
<i>Fraud Controls</i>					
- Serious Irregularities ^a	-2.212*** (0.475)			-2.369*** (0.498)	-2.166*** (0.490)
- Serious Vote Buying ^b		-0.456 (0.454)		0.111 (0.518)	0.168 (0.528)
- Serious Registration Issues ^c			1.932 (1.442)	2.644* (1.467)	3.645** (1.496)
- Serious Fraud ^d					-1.667 (1.068)
<i>Election Controls</i>					
- Boycott	-1.126 (0.891)	-1.615* (0.888)	-1.553* (0.856)	-1.083 (0.850)	-0.910 (0.817)
- Opposition Gain	1.149*** (0.338)	1.468*** (0.329)	1.517*** (0.321)	1.223*** (0.307)	1.254*** (0.312)
- Pre-Election Concerns	-0.203 (0.493)	-0.467 (0.407)	-0.713* (0.406)	-0.342 (0.506)	-0.285 (0.523)
<i>Country Controls</i>					
- Years of Education	-0.148 (0.169)	-0.180 (0.154)	-0.196 (0.184)	-0.161 (0.204)	-0.124 (0.194)
- GDP Per Capita log	1.153*** (0.425)	1.315*** (0.378)	1.477*** (0.432)	1.298*** (0.456)	1.306*** (0.440)
- Polarisation	-0.584*** (0.190)	-0.451*** (0.162)	-0.405** (0.166)	-0.544*** (0.194)	-0.549*** (0.181)
- Population Size log	-0.113 (0.201)	-0.120 (0.226)	-0.155 (0.245)	-0.128 (0.204)	-0.144 (0.200)
- History of Acceptance	3.614*** (0.793)	3.898*** (0.857)	4.104*** (0.884)	3.747*** (0.801)	3.906*** (0.830)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	654	654	654	654	654
Number of Countries	100	100	100	100	100
Pseudo R2	0.613	0.567	0.572	0.623	0.629
Percent correctly classified	89.14	87.31	87.61	88.53	88.84
ROC	0.956	0.947	0.947	0.958	0.960
AIC	419.6	459.8	455.8	414.7	411.2
BIC	594.5	634.7	630.7	598.5	599.5
Log Likelihood	-170.8	-190.9	-188.9	-166.3	-163.6

Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^aDichotomous variable which equals 1 if intentional irregularities were systemic, widespread and/or common. Generated by compiling the two lowest levels of the V-Dem 'election other voting irregularities' ordinal variable (Coppedge et al. 2021a:66).

^bDichotomous variable which equals 1 if vote and/or turnout buying were systemic, widespread and/or common. Generated by compiling the two lowest levels of the V-Dem 'election vote buying' ordinal variable (Coppedge et al. 2021a:66).

^cDichotomous variable which equals 1 if a voter registry was either non-existing, not used or fundamentally flawed. Generated by compiling the two lowest levels of the V-Dem 'election voter registry' ordinal variable (Coppedge et al. 2021a:65).

^dThe same dichotomous variable used in the original models (see Table 5.2).

TABLE B.10. *Testing different fraud controls: Replicating the full Violence model (4) in Table 6.2*

	(1) Violence	(2) Violence	(3) Violence	(4) Violence	(5) Violence
Condemnation	0.650** (0.324)	0.805** (0.318)	0.817** (0.323)	0.652** (0.321)	0.651** (0.326)
<i>Fraud Controls</i>					
- Serious Irregularities ^a	0.606** (0.295)			0.755*** (0.281)	0.753** (0.300)
- Serious Vote Buying ^b		-0.223 (0.408)		-0.441 (0.442)	-0.442 (0.443)
- Serious Registration Issues ^c			-0.380 (0.541)	-0.406 (0.545)	-0.409 (0.558)
- Serious Fraud ^d					0.00837 (0.295)
<i>Election Control</i>					
- Boycott	-0.589 (0.365)	-0.506 (0.374)	-0.525 (0.374)	-0.605* (0.365)	-0.606* (0.364)
- Opposition Gain	-0.353 (0.293)	-0.491 (0.310)	-0.498 (0.313)	-0.363 (0.301)	-0.362 (0.306)
- Pre-Election Concerns	0.480 (0.350)	0.596* (0.355)	0.568* (0.336)	0.538 (0.357)	0.537 (0.354)
- Pre-Election Violence	0.994*** (0.365)	1.002*** (0.355)	0.994*** (0.358)	0.986*** (0.362)	0.986*** (0.362)
<i>Country Controls</i>					
- Years of Education	-0.373*** (0.0946)	-0.376*** (0.102)	-0.367*** (0.0987)	-0.379*** (0.100)	-0.379*** (0.105)
- GDP Per Capita log	0.224 (0.230)	0.175 (0.242)	0.167 (0.245)	0.203 (0.231)	0.204 (0.237)
- Polarisation	0.159 (0.115)	0.150 (0.119)	0.136 (0.118)	0.163 (0.115)	0.163 (0.116)
- Population Size log	0.280** (0.124)	0.246** (0.122)	0.248** (0.122)	0.286** (0.121)	0.286** (0.120)
- History of Violence	2.135*** (0.313)	2.286*** (0.337)	2.247*** (0.314)	2.220*** (0.333)	2.221*** (0.334)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	428	428	428	428	428
Number of Countries	89	89	89	89	89
Pseudo R2	0.349	0.344	0.344	0.352	0.352
Percent correctly classified	81.78	82.01	82.48	82.01	82.01
ROC	0.873	0.873	0.873	0.876	0.876
AIC	431.8	434.5	434.6	434.0	436.0
BIC	582.0	584.7	584.7	592.3	598.3
Log Likelihood	-178.9	-180.3	-180.3	-178.0	-178.0

Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^aDichotomous variable which equals 1 if intentional irregularities were systemic, widespread and/or common. Generated by compiling the two lowest levels of the V-Dem 'election other voting irregularities' ordinal variable (Coppedge et al. 2021a:66).

^bDichotomous variable which equals 1 if vote and/or turnout buying were systemic, widespread and/or common. Generated by compiling the two lowest levels of the V-Dem 'election vote buying' ordinal variable (Coppedge et al. 2021a:66).

^cDichotomous variable which equals 1 if a voter registry was either non-existing, not used or fundamentally flawed. Generated by compiling the two lowest levels of the V-Dem 'election voter registry' ordinal variable (Coppedge et al. 2021a:65).

^dThe same dichotomous variable used in the original models (see Table 5.2).

TABLE B.11. *Controlling for selection bias in observer presence: Heckman sample selection tests^a*

	All Accept		Violence	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Stage 1: Predicting Observer Presence^b				
<i>Country Level</i>				
- Consolidated Democracy	-1.070*** (0.248)	-1.112*** (0.248)	-4.968*** (0.199)	-5.126*** (0.255)
- GDP Per Capita log	-0.282*** (0.083)	-0.297*** (0.088)	-0.356*** (0.097)	-0.386*** (0.105)
Dependent on Int. Aid	0.406*** (0.143)	0.349*** (0.133)	0.623*** (0.173)	0.534*** (0.172)
<i>Election Level</i>				
- Previous Election Suspended		0.225 (0.163)		0.258 (0.209)
- First Multi-party Election		-0.403** (0.191)		-0.424* (0.241)
- Transitional Government		0.352** (0.175)		0.457* (0.256)
- Opposition Allowed		0.892*** (0.304)		1.044*** (0.316)
Stage 2: Predicting Dependents				
Condemnation	-0.461** (0.194)	-0.457** (0.218)	0.443** (0.180)	0.445** (0.179)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-0.506* (0.295)	-0.507* (0.273)	-0.297 (0.199)	-0.312 (0.195)
- Opposition Gain	0.529*** (0.151)	0.528*** (0.121)	-0.249 (0.171)	-0.251 (0.170)
- Pre-Election Concerns	-0.270 (0.183)	-0.259 (0.162)	0.318* (0.187)	0.309* (0.187)
- Serious Fraud	-0.775*** (0.280)	-0.772*** (0.291)	0.021 (0.154)	0.050 (0.153)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.037 (0.049)	-0.042 (0.059)	-0.200*** (0.051)	-0.199*** (0.053)
- GDP Per Capita log	0.290** (0.142)	0.294** (0.137)	0.173 (0.152)	0.190 (0.155)
- Polarisation	-0.145** (0.066)	-0.152** (0.060)	0.086 (0.060)	0.078 (0.061)
- Population Size log	-0.100 (0.077)	-0.105 (0.080)	0.137** (0.070)	0.136* (0.071)
- Pre-Election Violence			0.526*** (0.199)	0.516** (0.201)
- History of Violence			1.188*** (0.186)	1.172*** (0.205)
- History of Acceptance	1.567*** (0.312)	1.604*** (0.308)		
athrho	11.319*** (0.087)	11.015*** (0.693)	-0.405 (0.272)	-0.472 (0.356)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1167.00	1167.00	927.00	927.00
Number of countries	145	145	142	142
AIC	1715	1692	1365	1342
BIC	1932.20	1930.24	1567.48	1564.62
LL	-814.26	-799.16	-640.27	-625.17

Notes: Heckman probit models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^aThe Heckman sample selection test is used to correct biases from non-random samples. As observer presence is non-random – which, statistically, may be an issue for the analysis – the Heckman test is useful in order to account for potential selection bias in the models.

^bI use similar variables as identified in previous research on observer presence, like Hyde (2011:77), accounting for both the national environment and pre-election characteristics.

TABLE B.12. Accounting for potential endogeneity.^a Treatment effects models^b

	All Accept		Violence	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Stage 1: Predicting Condemnation^c				
<i>Election Level</i>				
- Turnover	-0.113 (0.105)	-0.073 (0.109)	-0.161 (0.133)	-0.096 (0.122)
- Serious Fraud	1.071*** (0.200)	1.069*** (0.200)	1.043*** (0.237)	1.034*** (0.236)
- Pre-Election Violence	0.077 (0.100)	0.063 (0.104)	0.290** (0.146)	0.273* (0.140)
<i>Country Level</i>				
- Dependent on Int. Aid		-0.143 (0.220)		0.033 (0.162)
- Transitional Government		-0.306 (0.206)		-0.501* (0.259)
- Threats of Cutting Int. Aid		0.074 (0.135)		0.026 (0.230)
Constant	-1.026*** (0.126)	-0.883*** (0.237)	-1.081*** (0.153)	-1.073*** (0.192)
Stage 2: Predicting Dependents				
Condemnation	0.478*** (0.113)	0.473*** (0.127)	0.527* (0.313)	0.569** (0.234)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-0.038 (0.054)	-0.034 (0.054)	-0.094 (0.057)	-0.098* (0.057)
- Opposition Gain	0.200*** (0.046)	0.201*** (0.046)	-0.033 (0.043)	-0.031 (0.043)
- Pre-Election Concerns	-0.058 (0.046)	-0.059 (0.046)	0.083 (0.056)	0.083 (0.055)
- Serious Fraud	-0.322*** (0.077)	-0.323*** (0.080)	-0.156 (0.124)	-0.171* (0.101)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	0.019 (0.016)	0.020 (0.015)	-0.065*** (0.015)	-0.064*** (0.015)
- GDP Per Capita log	0.026 (0.045)	0.022 (0.044)	0.046 (0.041)	0.042 (0.041)
- Polarisation	-0.024 (0.019)	-0.026 (0.019)	0.024 (0.016)	0.025 (0.016)
- Population Size log	0.017 (0.028)	0.018 (0.029)	0.030 (0.019)	0.031* (0.019)
- History of Acceptance	0.279*** (0.059)	0.278*** (0.060)		
- History of Violence			0.323*** (0.044)	0.319*** (0.043)
Constant	-0.519 (0.566)	-0.487 (0.565)	-0.585 (0.420)	-0.572 (0.427)
athrho	-1.183*** (0.301)	-1.180*** (0.339)	-0.651 (0.506)	-0.732* (0.386)
Insigma	-0.902*** (0.084)	-0.904*** (0.091)	-0.869*** (0.123)	-0.852*** (0.103)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	428	428	428	428
Number of countries	89	89	89	89
AIC	768.15	770.75	904.72	905.55
BIC	938.64	953.41	1075.21	1088.21
LL	-342.08	-340.38	-410.36	-407.77

Notes: Linear treatment effects regression with binary endogenous variable (condemnation) and robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^aIn the context of this research, endogeneity means that an observer condemnation is not issued at random but, instead, is endogenous to a number of different factors.

^bUsing maximum likelihood estimates, generated by the Stata 'etregress' command.

^cIn predicting an observer condemnation, I use similar variables that rendered significant in previous analysis on the issue by Kelley (2012:198) and Von Borzyskowski (2019b).

TABLE B.13. *The effect of an observer condemnation on different types of protests*

	(1) Non-Violent	(2) Only Violent	(3) Violent & Fatal	(4) All Protests ^a
Condemnation	0.452 (0.392)	0.833*** (0.292)	1.062*** (0.300)	1.079** (0.468)
<i>Election Controls</i>				
- Boycott	-0.245 (0.337)	-0.706* (0.422)	-0.732** (0.352)	-0.664 (0.421)
- Opposition Gain	-0.370 (0.309)	-0.625*** (0.241)	-0.745*** (0.289)	-0.449 (0.307)
- Pre-Election Concerns	0.807** (0.353)	-0.129 (0.310)	0.431 (0.307)	0.237 (0.326)
- Pre-Election Violence	0.567* (0.331)	-0.534* (0.296)	0.233 (0.310)	-0.703** (0.333)
- Serious Fraud	0.286 (0.392)	-1.016*** (0.322)	-0.856** (0.334)	-0.368 (0.407)
<i>Country Controls</i>				
- Years of Education	-0.116 (0.115)	0.132 (0.122)	-0.257** (0.101)	-0.181 (0.114)
- GDP Per Capita log	-0.423 (0.328)	0.463 (0.300)	0.346 (0.268)	0.0716 (0.324)
- Polarisation	0.389*** (0.137)	-0.101 (0.125)	0.0475 (0.140)	0.129 (0.153)
- Population Size log	0.726*** (0.171)	-0.469*** (0.132)	0.130 (0.128)	0.219* (0.117)
- History of Violence		2.504*** (0.475)	1.966*** (0.399)	
- History of Protests ^b	1.166 (0.837)			1.355*** (0.490)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	428	428	428	428
Number of Countries	89	89	89	89
Pseudo R2	0.250	0.199	0.204	0.154
Percent correctly classified	80.84	78.27	71.96	76.87
ROC	0.833	0.791	0.787	0.763
AIC	426.7	474.8	530.0	484.8
BIC	576.9	625.0	680.2	635.0
Log Likelihood	-176.3	-200.4	-228.0	-205.4

Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

^aThe variable is coded as 1 if the election experienced either a non-violent, violent or fatal post-election protest.

^bThis variable follows the coding of the 'History of Violence' variable, see the second-last paragraph in section 5.3.3, but is coded as 1 for countries with any types of protests, not only fatal ones.

TABLE B.14. *Assessing the casual chain: the effect of accepting results on post-election violence^a*

	(1) Violence	(2) Violence	(3) Violence
All Accept	-0.795** (0.331)	-0.689** (0.305)	-0.554 (0.456)
History of Violence		2.023*** (0.233)	2.229*** (0.324)
Condemnation			0.710** (0.323)
<i>Election Controls</i>			
- Boycott	-0.193 (0.268)	-0.428 (0.274)	-0.587 (0.378)
- Opposition Gain	0.195 (0.255)	0.0424 (0.267)	-0.348 (0.320)
- Pre-Election Concerns	0.572** (0.251)	0.507** (0.250)	0.524 (0.338)
- Pre-Election Violence	0.769*** (0.261)	0.795*** (0.280)	1.020*** (0.357)
- Serious Fraud	-0.00415 (0.294)	0.132 (0.285)	0.0710 (0.272)
<i>Country Controls</i>			
- Years of Education	-0.0942 (0.0931)	-0.135 (0.103)	-0.359*** (0.102)
- GDP Per Capita log	-0.225 (0.255)	-0.135 (0.209)	0.228 (0.240)
- Polarisation	0.129 (0.121)	0.128 (0.0984)	0.139 (0.121)
- Population Size log	0.700*** (0.134)	0.450*** (0.101)	0.272** (0.131)
Year Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	593	593	432
Number of Countries	102	102	89
Pseudo R2	0.235	0.316	0.349
Percent correctly classified	75.55	78.92	81.94
ROC	0.807	0.858	0.875
AIC	663.0	602.1	436.7
BIC	820.9	764.4	591.3
Log Likelihood	-295.5	-264.1	-180.3

*Notes: Binary logistic models with robust standard errors clustered by country (in parentheses). Significance levels: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.*

^a*The result of models 1 and 2 suggest that the casual chain holds (all accept being a significant predictor). The results in model 3, however, suggests that an observer condemnation is a stronger predictor of violence than actors' acceptance.*