Domestic Election Observers and the Integrity of Electoral Processes in the Americas

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What is the relationship between election observers and election integrity, and how does this relationship play out in the Latin American and Caribbean context? Election integrity, defined as elections that meet "agreed international principles, values and standards of elections applying universally to all countries worldwide throughout the electoral cycle, including during the pre-electoral period, the campaign, and on polling day and its aftermath" is critical to democracy (Norris, Frank et al. 2014, 46). Public perception of election integrity affects voter turnout (Birch 2010), the likelihood of protest, boycott or violence (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009), party competition (Donno and Roussias 2012) and the overall legitimacy of elected regimes. Yet, the literature is divided with regard to the impact of election observers on election integrity. Do election observers enhance the integrity of elections? Could election observation harm electoral integrity in some cases? Perhaps election observation has little or no perceptible effect. After all, many actors and institutions influence the conduct and success of elections.

This paper investigates the relationship between election observers and electoral integrity in Latin America with special attention to the role of election management bodies and domestic (sometimes also called national) election observers. With the earliest instances dating from 1962, Latin America has a longer ongoing experience with election monitoring than any other region in the world, making it an especially interesting region to study. In addition to widespread election monitoring throughout 1990s by the Organization of American States (OAS) and non-governmental organizations such as the Carter Center and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the region is one with early, extensive and ongoing participation by national or domestic

election observers. This allows us to consider potential differences between domestic and international observers in election integrity. The paper relies on an original dataset on election monitoring efforts in the Americas from 1978 to 2009. This dataset is described in detail in Appendix A. I also draw on other existing data sets, as explained below and in the appendix.

Some research finds that election observation has a positive impact on elections ((Middlebrook 1998; Tuccinardi and Balme 2013). More recent work takes a more nuanced stance, finding a positive impact of election observers on elections, but one that is limited at best. Judith Kelley, for example, argues that while international election monitors can help improve elections and increase turnover, the practice also "suffers from significant weaknesses that make it vulnerable to criticism and diminish its effectiveness." These weaknesses range from practical constraints to capacity issues to political interests that compromise international observers' neutrality. (Kelley 2012, 157). Simpser (2008), Kelley (2010), Simpser and Donno (2012), and others distinguish between high and low quality monitoring, recognizing that some international monitoring efforts are comprehensive, well-resourced, professional, transparent and neutral, while others are not. Furthermore, even the best election observation missions have limits. Simpser points to the difference between what is observable and what is verifiable and explains "there may be limits to what even good monitoring can achieve" (Simpser 2008, 221).

Other research suggests that election observation, whether domestic or international, can do more harm than good for election integrity. Inchino and Schundeln, studying the impact of domestic election monitors in Ghana in the pre-election period, find that observers are effective at reducing voter registration irregularities (in this case, inflation of the voter list), but they also displaced irregularities to areas where observers were not present. They suggest the solution of strategic or targeted observation in areas where fraud may be expected. Simpser and Donno (2012) develop the argument that election monitoring can be overprovided. Based on a cross national statistical analysis, they argue that very rigorous international monitoring can create unintended consequences that may in fact be more deleterious than ballot fraud. If fraud at the ballot box is deterred too successfully by monitors, incumbents may resort to " tactics of election manipulation that are more damaging to domestic institutions, governance, and freedoms...[such as]... rigging courts and administrative bodies and repressing the media (Simpser and Donno 2012, 501).

What is the relationship between election observation and electoral integrity in Latin America? Here, I am interested in two particular questions: are there differences between the actions and effects of domestic and international election observers? And do the structure and performance of election management bodies affect domestic election observation?

With regard to the first question, differences in international and domestic election observers have been theorized, but not empirically tested. International election observers are presumed to have three main strengths relative to domestic observers: they are a third-party presence (and therefore ostensibly neutral), they have a higher media profile to command attention to their work, and they can work in more repressive circumstances as they are less likely to be subject to state retaliation. Domestic election observers have other strengths: they are better positioned than "outsiders" to gather and understand information in that they face no language barriers and are fully familiar with the political context in which elections are being held (Nevitte and Canton 1997, 50). Domestic monitoring organizations are able to deploy many more observers than international groups for much lower costs, and are even beginning to ues crowd-sourcing techniques. And domestic election monitors have a rightful and direct stake in the integrity of the election process (a quality which can also lead to questions about their neutrality as interested actors).

With regard to the second question, election management bodies have direct effects on election integrity and perceptions of election integrity, but they also have indirect effects on integrity inherent in their relationship with domestic election observers. Birch (2008) finds that the formal independence of election management bodies has a negative effect on public confidence in electoral processes, counter to what one might reasonably hypothesize. She suggests that this counterintuitive finding may be due to the fact that formal independence is not always reflected in practice - formally independence EMB may be partisan or biased or perceived as such (Birch 2008). Rosas (2010) pursues this question in a study of Latin American election authorities and confidence in elections, and finds that autonomous EMBs are associated with higher confidence in elections among political elite, particularly legislators. He did not find a discernible influence on mass confidence (Rosas 2010, 87-88).

In previous work (Lean 2012), I have shown that the institutional context influences the success of domestic election observation. Both the legal framework for election observation and the capacity and the will of election authorities to include domestic election observers impact

domestic observation projects. Slow or cumbersome accreditation processes and access to information restrictions can disrupt or derail domestic observers. Thus, the goal of the paper is to advance our understanding of the relationship between election observers, particularly domestic election observers, and election integrity, with particular attention to the election management body as a potential mediating factor.

Background: Elections and election observation in the Americas

To understand the impact of domestic election observers on election integrity in Latin America, it is necessary first to understand the history of election observation efforts in the region, and to separate, analytically, our consideration of international from domestic efforts. In the next section, I briefly describe the evolution of international and domestic election monitoring in the region.

Elections are not new to Latin America. Following independence in the early nineteenth century, most countries in the region established liberal constitutional political systems in which elections were common and suffrage relatively widespread. However, election fraud and coercion of voters by landlords, clergy, and powerful politicians was equally widespread, leading scholars to characterize Latin America as a region of "elections before democracy" (Posada-Carbó 1996). Patterns of corrupt electoral politics continued well into the twentieth century. Improvements such as universal suffrage and the secret ballot were gradually introduced, but variably practiced. By the 1960s, many countries in the region had taken an authoritarian turn. Others became embroiled in revolutionary struggles which would lead to civil war. Elections were disrupted, or, if held, offered voters no real choice. But by the 1980s, regimes began to liberalize as the "third wave" of democracy swept across the region (Huntington 1991).[1] Between 1988 and 1991, "an unprecedented record in Latin American electoral history was reached: the celebration, for the first time, of presidential elections in all of the countries of the region, with

[1] Scholars mark 1978 as a turning point. In that year general elections were held in the Dominican Republic, elections to form a Constituent Assembly were held in Peru and a new constitution was adopted in Ecuador. Ecuador held elections in 1979, and Peru followed in 1980. The military regime in Argentina reinstated elections in 1983; Uruguay followed in 1984. Esquipulas Peace Accords paved the way for the end of civil war in Central America.

the single exception of Cuba"(Cerdas-Cruz, Rial et al. 1992, xviii). Since the 1990s, the regional return to electoral democracy has been maintained, albeit with some significant interruptions.[2]

The first instances of election monitoring in the Americas were diplomatic missions by representatives of the Organization of American States (OAS) to elections in member states in the 1960s and 1970s.[3] The early OAS missions were generally composed of just two or three observers, and their principle role was to provide a diplomatic presence in support of the electoral process, not to conduct a systematic audit (Pastor 1999, 127). This type of election observation probably did not enhance electoral integrity, at least as defined here, in that there was no attempt to enforce universal standards or observe the election process in its entirety, the early OAS missions nonetheless set a precedent for the development of a role for international observers in elections (Santa Cruz 2005, 46-49).

In the 1980s, as more Latin American and Caribbean countries held competitive elections, the nature of election monitoring began to change and the field of actors engaged in monitoring began to expand. The U.S. government began to provide political aid for elections under a new foreign policy rubric of democracy promotion (Carothers 1991, 198).[4] The U.S. pressured countries such as Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador to hold elections, provided assistance to help them do so (Carothers 1991, 208). Critics, including Herman and Broadhead (1992) and Robinson (1992; 1996), decried these efforts to promote elections whose winners seemed pre-determined by the host government and/or the foreign power interested in the outcome. These elections did not conform to universal standards and norms in many ways: not all political forces were free to compete; resources of the state were used to campaign for incumbents creating an uneven playing field; freedom of association, speech and of the press were curtailed.

[2] For a detailed description of democratic crises in the Americas since the 1990s, see two comprehensive works by Boniface: Boniface, D. S. (2007). The OAS's Mixed Record. Promoting Democracy in the Americas. T. Legler, S. F. Lean and D. S. Boniface. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press**:** 40-62. Boniface, D. S. (2010). Latin America's New Crisis of Democracy. CEPI Documentos de Trabajo. Mexico City, Centro de Estudios y Programas Internacionales, ITAM Mexico**:** 1-45.

[3] Between 1962 and 1982, OAS observers attended 17 elections in member states, including Costa Rica (1962, 1966, 1970, 1978, 1982), Dominican Republic (1962, 1966, 1970, 1978), Ecuador (1968), El Salvador (1980, 1982, 1984), Guatemala (1970, 1980), Honduras (1981) and Panama (1978).

[4] Public resistance to U.S. military involvement in Central America made the new strategy favoring political aid for elections over military aid politically expedient. See Smith, C. (1996). Resisting Reagan: The U.S. Central America Peace Movement. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Partly in reaction to U.S. government practices of supporting such "demonstration elections," U.S. advocacy organizations got involved. Small contingents of academics and activists under the auspices of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), the International Human Rights Law Group (IHRLG) and the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) mobilized to observe a series of politically-charged elections, including Honduras (1981), Argentina (1983), Grenada and Nicaragua (1984), El Salvador and Guatemala (1985) , Chile (1988 plebiscite and 1989 election) and Panama (1989) (IHRLG and WOLA 1985, ii; WOLA 1989).

Their efforts differed significantly from the early OAS diplomatic missions. Volunteers, usually self-funded, travelled to countries holding elections during the campaign period, and sometimes also for election day. They produced publicly-distributed and often quite critical reports (IHRLG and WOLA 1985; IHRLG and WOLA 1985; WOLA 1989). They paid special attention to the role of the U.S. government. For example, reporting on the 1985 election in Guatemala, the IHRLG/WOLA delegation stated: "We encountered no evidence of U.S. manipulation of the process in favor of any particular party. On the other hand, in the opinion of the observer delegation, U.S. government efforts to portray the election as completing the restoration of democracy within a greatly improved human rights atmosphere were unjustified" (IHRLG and WOLA 1985, 67).

These experiences, though small in scale, laid the groundwork for more systematic and meaningful international election observation. They helped establish the idea that to have an impact on election integrity, international election observation must be conducted with integrity, with attention to the motivation and conduct of observers and to standards for observation. In 1984, IHRLG published one of the first guides of conduct for international election observers, a document which continues to shape the practice of international election monitoring today (Garber 1984). These grassroots delegations also set a precedent for international collaboration with local civic associations and experts; indeed, they worked closely with many individuals and civic associations that would later become involved in domestic election monitoring.[5]

[5] Eric Olson, former director of the Mexico Program of the Washington Office on Latin America emphasized this point in an interview in Washington, DC, July 10, 2002. For an example from Guyana in 1980, see Hyde, S. D. (2011). The Pseudo-democrat's Dilemma: Why Election Observation Became an International Norm. Ithaca, Cornell University Press. p.80-81.

Meanwhile, with support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED),[6] a host of U.S. based nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) emerged and began to work democracy promotion. NED and its core party institutes, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) were created in 1983. The Carter Center established a group called the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government as a forum for democratic exchange among political elite from throughout the Americas in 1986. The International Foundation for Election Systems (now simply IFES), that specializes in pre-election technical assessments and electoral assistance to election administration bodies was founded in 1987. All of these non-governmental organizations began to organize international election observation missions in the Americas in the late 1980s.

In 1989, just as these non-governmental efforts were expanding, the practice of international election monitoring changed significantly. A provision of the Esquipulas II Peace Agreement committed signatories, including Nicaragua, to invite the United Nations (UN), the Organization of American States (OAS) and "third-party" states to send election observers to "bear witness that the electoral processes have been held in accordance with the strictest norms of equal access of all political parties to the media, as well as full guarantees for public demonstrations and other kinds of proselytizing propaganda" (Envio 2011). The international election observation effort in Nicaragua was massive. The UN, OAS and Carter Center sent large delegations arriving six months in advance of the 1990 elections. Twenty four other international organizations also participated: in total nearly 3,000 international election observers were present on election day (Envio 1990).

United Nations observers studied the state of the election campaign and reported concerns to both authorities and the opposition. The UN mediated as conflicts emerged, demanded dialog between government and opposition and coordinated with observers from the OAS and the Carter Center, recognizing the value of a consistent message from the international community. An OAS report explains that "the experience developed in Nicaragua marked the beginning of a new cycle of OAS international observation that was more ambitious than its predecessors in terms of size and scope, moved beyond a mere symbolic presence, and included

[6] Add note here on NEDXX? The NED was created in December 1983 as part of the democracy promotion initiative of the Reagan administration.

an analysis of diverse issues related to the quality of the electoral process"(OAS 2007, 5). This "second generation" election observation was much more likely to influence election integrity because of the attention to standards for free and fair elections and to the whole election process, not just election day.

However, the intensive model of international observation was not sustainable.[7] More and more countries were inviting international observers but long-term, large scale international missions could not feasibly be mounted for every election. The demand for more rigorous and comprehensive monitoring supported a new trend in election observation that was emerging around this time: nonpartisan domestic election monitoring. Some scholars predicted that, while there might be a role for international election observers in transitional or "first" elections, domestic election monitors would replace international observers for subsequent processes.

Figure 1 [ABOUT HERE]. The Expansion of Election Monitoring in the Americas, 1978-2009

Figure 1 shows the spread of elections and election monitoring in Latin America from 1978 to 2009. This figure shows a steady expansion in the number of national election processes held in the region, with some fluctuation reflecting election cycles. This rise reflects the regional return to democracy, and later the proliferation of constitutional referenda, recall elections and other national referenda. Election observation has continued well past the first or second elections of a transition to democracy, and most elections now are monitored. The practice of domestic monitoring starts in 1988, expands significantly in the mid 1990s and experiences a second wave of expansion around 2005. The rise of domestic election monitoring does not appear to replace monitoring by intergovernmental organizations, or otherwise significantly diminish international involvement, as proponents of domestic election monitoring may have intended. In the next section, I describe the regional experience of domestic monitoring in more detail.

Domestic election monitoring in the Americas

[7] In Nicaragua in 1990, the U.S. alone spent $9 million to support UN efforts, NED funded projects and the Carter Center delegation Robinson, W. I. (1996). Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, U.S. Intervention and Hegemony. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press..

The practice of domestic or national election observation began in the Philippines, with the *National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections* (NAMFREL).[8] NAMFREL conducted its first electoral observation during 1984 legislative elections and went on to play a key role in the transitional 1986 presidential election. NAMFREL volunteers gathered and reported the on-site results from 70% of the 95,000 polling sites in an effort to verify the accuracy of the official tabulation – the first-ever exercise in parallel vote tabulation (NDI 1996, 39). NDI sent a large international delegation and decided, based on that experience, to try to help spread the domestic election monitoring model and the parallel vote tabulation (PVT) methodology (Bjornlund 2004, 218). In Latin America, NDI began working with human rights organizations, journalists associations and social organizations linked to the Catholic church that were already actively pushing for improved elections. As a first step, NDI brought interested civic leaders from Chile, Panama, Paraguay and Haiti to the Philippines in 1987 to witness the NAMFREL model.[9] Each helped introduce domestic election monitoring in their home countries in subsequent years.[10]

The earliest domestic monitoring experiences in the Americas include Chile's *Civitas* (which would become *Participa)* and *Justicia y Paz* in Panama (1989). In 1990 short-lived groups in Nicaragua (*Via Cívica*) and Haiti (AHPEL) monitored elections but did not "stick" (see Lean 2007). In Mexico, a number of civic and human rights organizations mobilized to observe state and midterm elections beginning in 1991. They went on to form *Alianza Cívica* in 1994. Guyana's Electoral Assistance Bureau, founded in 1992, monitored elections that same year; and *SAKA* monitored elections in Paraguay in 1993. Beginning in the mid-1990s domestic election monitoring in Latin America and the Caribbean expanded rapidly. By 1998, Argentina, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela had also experienced domestic electoral observation, and new efforts had replaced earlier failed experiments in Haiti and Nicaragua. By 2006, Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala had joined the list.

In total, between 1988 and 2009, 24 different civic associations observed a total of 89 election processes in 17 countries in Latin American and the Caribbean. As of 2009, five

[8] On the origins of NAMFREL see Bjornlund, E. C. (2004). Beyond Free and Fair: Monitoring Elections and Building Democracy. Washington, DC, Woodrow Wilson Center Press. pp. 211-214.

[9] A 1987 NDI memo states that this NDI election observer mission was designed for the purpose of demonstrating the potential for civic groups to use an election process "to initiate peaceful democratic reform."

[10] For a detailed discussion of how NDI facilitated the spread of domestic election monitoring in Latin America, see Lean, S. F. (2012). Civil Society and Electoral Accountability in Latin America. New York, Palgrave Macmillan. p. 34-36.

countries have not had domestic election monitors present in any election: Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Uruguay and Trinidad and Tobago. Cuba, as with international monitors, permits no civic supervision of any sort for its National Assembly elections. Brazil, Costa Rica and Uruguay might permit domestic observers, however none have emerged. Trinidad and Tobago has regularly invited international election monitors, but election authorities have discouraged the formation of civic monitoring groups. By way of comparison, between 1988 and 2009, the OAS has sponsored 95 missions to the region. Among international organizations, the Carter Center was the next most frequent observer, with [check the number xxx] missions. Cuba and Uruguay are the only two countries in the region that have not hosted any international election observer delegation.

Conditions for International and Domestic Monitoring

Domestic and international election observers have substantial, but not perfect overlap in the Americas. [expand] Can we detect further differences between these groups? To better understand the conditions in which domestic and international observers monitor elections, I have correlated Freedom House scores in the year prior to an election with indicators of whether there was either international or domestic election monitoring. Figure 2 shows the percentage of elections at each level of democracy that are monitored by each type of organization.

Figure 2 [ABOUT HERE]
Conditions for International and Domestic Monitoring, 1988-2009

International election monitoring has a significant hump-shaped relationship with Freedom House scores the year before an election ($V=.303$, $p<.000$, $n=178$).[11] Internationals are most likely to choose to monitor elections in "partly free" countries (84% of those), and about equally likely to choose to monitor elections in "not free" or "free countries" (but choose those less of the time, in about 57% of cases). Conditions that foster domestic election monitoring appear to be somewhat different. DMOs infrequently monitor elections in countries considered

[11] I use Cramer's V to find the percentage of variance explained because of the curved relationship between the combined Freedom House scores and international monitoring.

"not free" (25% of cases) but are twice as likely (near 50% of cases) to monitor both "partly free" and "free" cases.[12]

What accounts for the differences between international and domestic monitoring across different levels of democracy? The hump-shaped relationship between level of democracy and international observation can be explained, on the lower end, by a threshold that exists for both invitation and acceptance. This reflects both readiness of state electoral institutions to be submitted to scrutiny and whether observer organizations consider political conditions to be (at some minimal level) conducive to monitoring. The convention requiring that international election monitors receive an official invitation can and does exercise constraint over which elections are monitored.

Not all countries invite international election observers – Cuba is one notable example. Mexico, too, has been extremely selective in issuing invitations to international observers (see Lean 2012 ppXX). Even if invited, international observers may decline to participate for a number of reasons, such as lack of time or resources to mount a useful observation. The UN and EU both report turning down requests for election observers due to lack of lead time (Commission of the European Communities 2000, 33; United Nations 2002). Finally, some organizations will not observe elections if conditions are judged too dangerous. IRI pulled an observer group out of Haiti just before local elections in 1997 due to political violence, and the Carter Center declined to observe the May 2002 general elections in Colombia because of security concerns. Thus, a threshold created by norms governing invitation and acceptance inhibits international observation in some "not free" cases.

This "low end" threshold for entry appears to be even higher for domestic election monitors than for international observers. Figure 2 illustrates that domestic monitoring organizations are significantly less likely to monitor election in countries ranked "not free" than in democratizing or democratic cases. This is presumably because political conditions influence their work greatly. Domestic election monitors, more so than international organizations, require guarantees of basic civil rights and political liberties to function.

Interestingly, domestic and international election monitors also vary in their propensity to monitor elections in countries considered to be already democratic. International election

[12] Note that domestic monitoring does not have a significant correlation with Freedom House scores. The difference between the likelihood of monitoring "partly free" and "free" cases is not high enough to produce a significant correlation for DMOs across all three levels of democracy.

monitors are less likely to monitor these cases than they are the "partly free" cases. DMOs, on the other hand, are just as likely to choose to monitor elections in "free" conditions as they are in "partly free" conditions. At higher levels of democracy, the institutional conditions that permit domestic monitoring presumably improve. If domestic election monitors continue to observe the election process, they could become institutionalized as a regular form of electoral checks and balances. Democratization is a long-term process of social and political development, and it is therefore important to promote the integrity of elections over the long term, even when indicators of democracy have improved. Domestic, not international, election observers are most likely to fulfill this role.

To summarize, for both international and domestic election monitoring, and more so for domestic monitors, election monitoring is most likely to happen in countries that have already achieved a certain probability of democratic improvement. Domestic monitors are much less likely to monitor elections where civil liberties and political rights are constrained, suggesting an important role for international observers in these cases. International observers focus most frequently on transitional or "strategic" elections, while domestic observers are just as likely to monitor elections in partly free and free conditions.

What of other differences between international and domestic election obsevers? Elsewhere I have shown that domestic election monitoring efforts in the Americas tend to be anywhere from 10 to 60 times larger in size than the average delegation organized by the OAS (Lean 2012, 46).[13] These numbers translate into a significant difference on the ground in the kinds of activities an organization can undertake, with domestic election monitors much more likely to monitor voter registration, media coverage throughout the campaign and campaign spending: key elements of election integrity as defined here. The size of mission of course also influences how many polling sites observers can visit on election day. DMO *Etica y Transparencia* in Nicaragua and *Transparencia* in Peru have in past been able to achieved a visible presence at over 90% of polling sites.

Expand here and connect to question of overprovision, displacement and election integrity.

[13] Between 1988 and 2009, the average peak size for OAS mission was 74 observers (with a range from 2-433). In contrast, the average peak size for DMOs was nearly 4,500 (with a range from 177-22,867). However, there is considerable missing data on the size of DMO observer teams. The low end estimate takes this missing data into account.

Election Management Bodies: Autonomy and Accreditation

Autonomy: Section under revision [*la sección sera agregada proximamente*]

Table 1. Autonomy and professionalism of EMBs [pending]

Accreditation: A legal framework for domestic observation is critical, as is the implementation of the same. In some states, official regulation for domestic election observation has been very slow to come. In El Salvador, for example, domestic election observers were not granted institutional recognition by the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* until 2006 (Iniciativa Social para la Democracia 2009, 2). Although several civic associations attempted to start projects of domestic election observation prior to that time, these efforts were not sustained. Trinidad and Tobago, similarly, have yet to legalize domestic election monitoring. In 2008 Kenneth Lynch, Commissioner of the Election and Boundaries Commission of Trinidad and Tobago "questioned the wisdom of involving civil society groups in election management, suggesting that this was the proper preserve of EMBs [election management bodies] alone" (ACEO 2008, 6).

In countries where a legal framework exists, DMOs still rely on state institutions to enable their full participation. Election authorities must be willing and able to implement rules that structure the electoral process and make reporting on that process a meaningful exercise. In the Dominican Republic in 1996, *Participación Ciudadana* requested accreditation for 14,000 volunteers, but the Electoral Board authorized less than one-tenth that number: 1,140 (Envio 2011, 109). For the 1996 general elections in Nicaragua, the *Consejo Supremo Electoral* created onerous requirements and imposed delays in accreditation that compromised the participation of DMO *Etica y Transparencia* (Canton and Nevitte 1998, 48). In El Salvador during the 2009 legislative and municipal elections, election board members and municipal election authorities denied domestic observers access to the polling stations during the vote count, contrary to election law (IUDOP press release January 20, 2009). During the August 2008 presidential recall referendum, observers with *Bolivia Transparente* who had been legally accredited were denied access by election officials and citizens at several locations (Bolivia Transparente 2008).

Figure 3. EMB Autonomy, Accreditation, and Domestic Election Observation [pending]

Discussion Figure 3.

Conclusion

Election monitoring in Latin America began before and has lasted throughout the region's "third wave" transitions and continued apace as of 2009. In the Americas domestic election monitoring follows, and to a certain extent, grows out of international efforts. Thus we should understand that the while the extensive practice of domestic election monitoring in the region is built out of substantial civic effort, but it is not a purely domestic form of politics.

Domestic and international election monitors exhibit important, complementary differences in the conditions under which they chose to monitor elections. Both domestic and international election monitors are likely to focus on countries that have already achieved a certain probability of democratic improvement. But domestic monitors are much less likely to monitor elections where civil liberties and political rights are constrained. This may be a positive in terms of the ability of domestic election monitors to enhance election integrity (connect to Simpser and Donno). On the other hand, the greater size and scope of activities that domestic election observers can carry out (in contrast to international missions) may be a plus or a minus. Larger and longer missions enable domestic observers to engage in integral monitoring of the entire election process, a plus for integrity. However, they may also "overprovide" monitoring, displacing fraud or moving manipulation into more deleterious realms. Here, the autonomy and professionalism of EMBs matters a great deal, as do the formal rules and informal practices of accreditation and recognition of domestic observers.

The evidence considered here suggests two main conclusions. First, that domestic election observers have greater potential overall to insure election integrity than international election monitors. Second, that this potential may only be met where election management is autonomous and professional, and where election administrators view election monitors as legitimate intermediaries in the drive for election integrity. Under these conditions, election observers and election administrators can together improve public perception of election integrity. And this, I would argue, is probably more important than whether election observers actually improve elections. It is perception that drives public and elite reactions to elections, and in turn influences such valuable outcomes as peace and the political legitimacy of regimes.

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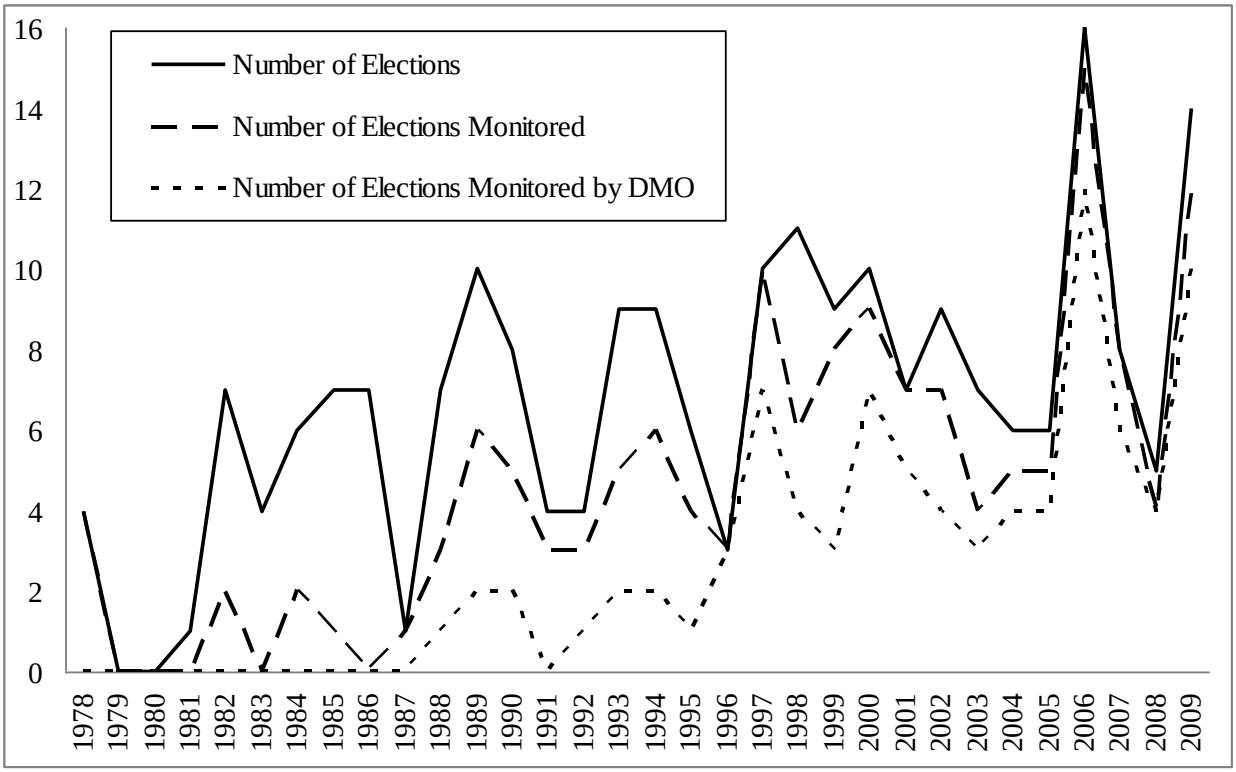
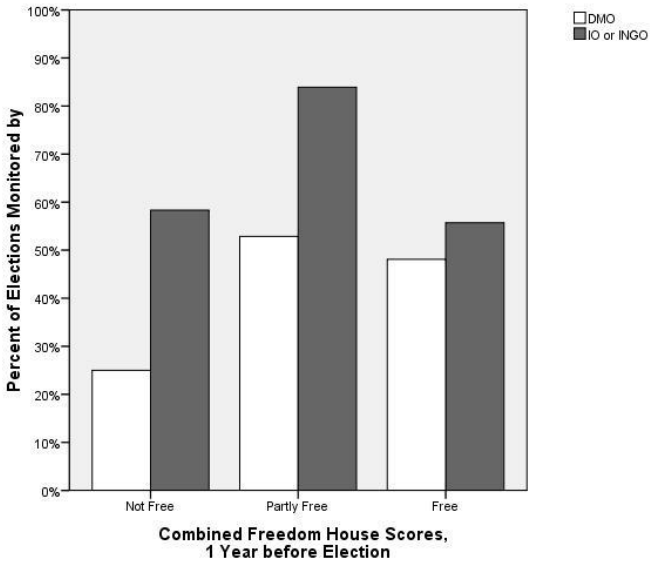
Figure 1. The Expansion of Election Monitoring in the Americas, 1978-2009



Source: Lean 2012, 39

Figure 2. Conditions for International and Domestic Election Monitoring



Appendix A: Dataset and Sources

The original dataset used in this research covers all federal-level elections, monitored and not, between 1978 and 2009 in twenty-three Latin American and Caribbean states with a population greater than 500,000. I chose 1978 as the entry point for data collection in order to capture the relationship between election monitoring and third wave democratization, as this year is widely recognized as the beginning of so-called "third wave" of democracy in Latin America. For the specific purposes of this paper I start many of the analyses in 1988, the year of the first domestic election monitoring experience in the Americas, as the goal is to compare the development and correlates of domestic efforts. The data extend through the end of 2009 to include the evolving practices of election monitoring over two decades.

The data are organized in two distinct ways: by election and by monitoring mission. When organized by election, the unit of observation is any national-level voting process (including presidential, legislative and parliamentary elections, elections for constitutional assembly, constitutional referenda and other referenda). When organized by monitoring mission, the unit of observation is any major international or domestic election monitoring mission, whether international or domestic. In either case, following Hyde (2011, 63), where there were two rounds of an election, these are treated as one observation since the presence of observers in the second round is normally determined by their presence in first round. Local and state elections are not included (although state and municipal elections are sometimes held concurrently with elections for national office).

I used several sources to develop a comprehensive list of electoral processes, including IFES Election Guide, Georgetown University's Political Database of the Americas, International IDEA's Voter Turnout Project and Adam Carr's Election Archive. I include all elections regardless of quality. Thus, Cuba's regular elections for National Assembly are counted despite the fact that these are not generally regarded as competitive. Other non-competitive or sham elections included in the data are Haiti 1988, Guyana 1985, Panama 1984, and Paraguay 1983 and 1988.

I identified international and domestic election monitoring missions through a comprehensive review of election monitoring reports archived in the OAS's Columbus Library and the F. Clifton White Resource Center at IFES, both in Washington, DC, review of the literature on election monitoring in Latin America, and of the websites of the *Acuerdo de Lima* and the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors. To identify DMOs, I also conducted an a review of the available literature, conversations with leaders of DMOs from Mexico, Peru, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Argentina and Bolivia and with NDI staff and consultants, and a systematic search for references to domestic observers in the reports of international organizations, I later crosschecked the international data with Judith Kelley's Quality of Elections Data (Kelley 2012). In total, election monitoring experiences of fourteen international and 23 domestic organizations are included, as are numerous cases of elections that were not monitored at all.

The fourteen international organizations in the data set include five intergovernmental organizations, the OAS, UN, EU/EP, CARICOM and the Commonwealth of Independent States; eight non-governmental organizations based in the US: NED, IFES, NDI, IRI, the Carter Center, IHRLG, WOLA, and the now-defunct Center for Democracy; and one sui generis group called the *Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad*, founded in El Salvador in 1993 as a joint effort among solidarity groups from the U.S., Canada, Europe and El Salvador.

I seek to include a complete universe of domestic monitoring organizations in the dataset. For the purpose of this study, I define these as independent civic associations whose work is national in extent, whose primary activity is election monitoring (or was at the time they were founded) and whose work seeks to be non-partisan. I was able to identify 23 domestic monitoring organizations that operate or at one point operated in the Americas.

Some groups that observe elections are not included in the data. I have chosen to exclude election observer missions of the Costa Rica based *Centro de Asesoria y Promoción Electoral* (CAPEL) because of the technical nature of this organization's work in relation to election management bodies.[14] I have also chosen to exclude some smaller international non-governmental actors from my analysis, including Common Borders, an NGO from British Colombia and Global Exchange, an NGO based in San Francisco, California. These small international delegations cooperate extremely closely with domestic civic counterparts. They train and deploy alongside domestic election observers, so in these cases leaving them out of the dataset avoids double reporting.[15] Highly localized international observation efforts, such as a sister-city delegation which observes an election in a single town, are not recorded in the dataset.

The dataset records several key measures of monitoring experience, including size and duration of mission and key activities (poll-watching, quick counts, media monitoring, and monitoring of use of state resources for campaign spending). This information was gathered from election reports released by the various organizations and obtained during field research, consulted online or located in hard copy in

[14] Founded in 1983 in Costa Rica, CAPEL is a program housed in the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIDH). CAPEL offers technical assistance in election management issues and other services to election administration bodies. In this capacity, CAPEL has sent 215 small missions to elections in twenty countries in the region plus Spain and Puerto Rico since 1985. CAPEL also serves as the Executive Secretariat of three different regional associations of election management bodies. I exclude CAPEL because its election missions are not oriented towards accountability goals. CAPEL serves as vehicle for exchange among election management bodies, rather than third-party oversight. Mission reports are part of election management and assessment processes. They are not made public, nor are they used for advocacy. Thus, I consider them too different to include in the analysis. For more information, consult CAPEL. (2010). "IIDH/CAPEL Misiones de Observación 1985-2010." Retrieved October 1, 2010, from <http://www.iidh.ed.cr/capel/index.htm> .

[15] This exclusion also applies to WOLA missions after 1990. In Mexico since 1994, Global Exchange and WOLA have integrated their observer missions in Mexico with Alianza Cívica, according to interviews with Eric Olson, former Director of the Washington Office on Latin America, Washington, DC, July 10, 2002 and Craig Adair, Global Exchange Mexico representative, Mexico City, March 17, 2003. Similarly, the policy of Canadian NGO Common Borders is to partner with a non-governmental organization in the host country, according to Steven Baileys, Director of Common Borders, interviewed in Lima, Peru, April 2, 2001.

various library collections. Interim reports, pre-election assessments, press releases and newsletters were also consulted. Primary information was supplemented with secondary sources such as case studies published as chapters of books or journal articles.[16]

To explore correlations between election monitoring and the nature of election management bodies, I draw on a variety of data, including data on election management from International IDEA, Hartlyn, McCoy and Mustillo's (2008) Index of Independence of Election Managament Bodies, and Judith Kelley's Quality of Elections Data, specifically, one variable "sr12cap" on "overall pre-election administrative capacity." Each of these sources has limitations for my purposes. The IDEA data reflects only the current status of the EMB and does not capture change over time. The Hartlyn, McCoy, Mustillo data goes only through 2003. And Judith Kelley's data ends in 2004. So the analysis for now is exploratory in nature.

To examine the conditions under which domestic actors observe elections, I use the Freedom House civil liberties and political rights scales for the year prior to an observed election.[17] The Freedom House data are available for all countries and years included in the dataset. The Freedom House data has some drawbacks. The coding rules are not explicit; some consider that the criteria for establishing country ratings have become more demanding over time; and the data show bias against Latin America's leftist governments, rating these as less democratic than comparable counterparts with right and center-right government (Bollen and Paxton 2000, 77). To mitigate these issues, instead of using raw scores, I use grouped scores that rate countries as “Free,” “Party Free,” or “Not Free.” I follow the grouping method used by Freedom House, in which each pair of political rights and civil liberties ratings is averaged and countries whose ratings average 1.0 to 2.5 are considered “Free”, 3.0 to 5.0 “Partly Free,” and 5.5 to 7.0 “Not Free.” The grouped scores are less sensitive to the problems enumerated above. The fact that my analysis uses only relatively recent Freedom House scores (beginning in 1987) also mitigates some of the potential bias in the rating of the Latin American cases.

[16] Key literature includes: Carothers, T. (1997). "The Observers Observed." Journal of Democracy **8**(3): 17-31, Elklit, J. and P. Svensson ibid."What Makes Elections Free and Fair." 32-46, Middlebrook, K. J., Ed. (1998). Electoral Observation and Democratic Transitions in Latin America. San Diego, Center for U.S.-Mexico Studies, University of California, San Diego, Bjornlund, E. C. (2004). Beyond Free and Fair: Monitoring Elections and Building Democracy. Washington, DC, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Hyde, S. D. (2011). The Pseudo-democrat's Dilemma: Why Election Observation Became an International Norm. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, Kelley, J. (2012). Monitoring Democracy: When International Election Observation Works, and Why It Often Fails. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.

[17] A detailed description of current Freedom House methodology can be found at http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2011/methodology.