# The Dictator's Dilemma at the Ballot Box

## Electoral Manipulation, Economic Maneuvering, and Political Order in Autocracies



# Masaaki Higashijima

The Dictator's Dilemma at the Ballot Box

Modern dictatorships hold elections. *The Dictator's Dilemma at the Ballot Box* explores the manners in which dictators design elections and the consequences of autocratic elections on political order. Dictators face a trade-off when designing elections: manipulated elections lose useful benefits that dictators can enjoy at the ballot box, but excessively transparent elections make it difficult to win big. With this electoral dilemma in mind, Higashijima argues that when the dictator has the capability of mobilizing public support through economic distribution, elections are less likely to be manipulated by blatant electoral fraud and pro-regime electoral institutions. Furthermore, when the autocrat deviates from the equilibrium of election design in dealing with the electoral dilemma, elections destabilize autocratic rule in the form of popular protests, coups d'état, and the opposition's election victories. The theory of autocratic elections developed in the book is tested on novel cross-national data of autocratic elections; various illustrations from autocracies around the globe; and structured, in-depth comparative case studies of the two Central Asian republics—Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

# THE DICTATOR'S DILEMMA
# AT THE BALLOT BOX

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Masaaki Higashijima

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*To Yuko*

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# Acknowledgments

This book is about elections in authoritarian regimes. It examines how autocrats design elections and what consequences these elections may have on political order. Theorizing about the relationship between electioneering strategies in modern autocracies, *The Dictator's Dilemma at the Ballot Box* points to the possibility that relatively free and fair elections may be an artifact of strategic decisions by autocrats who can surely win big without relying much on electoral manipulation. An autocrat's electoral advantage in institutional design, however, may also easily turn into regime instability when they fail to properly design elections.

The inception of this project dates back to my first visit to Almaty, Kazakhstan and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in December 2008, when I was a graduate student at Waseda University. Despite their numerous similarities after the collapse of the Soviet Union, both countries appeared to have drawn distinct regime trajectories in the eyes of a researcher just starting postgraduate study: Kazakhstan successfully consolidated authoritarian rule via elections, whereas Kyrgyzstan's regime stability was seriously undermined by elections. I chatted with citizens in taxis, restaurants, and cafés during my fieldwork to find that how they talked about their political leaders was saliently different: Kazakh citizens often expressed positive sentiments toward their president, while Kyrgyz citizens mostly complained about their political leadership. These observations via the lens of controlled comparisons led me as a nascent comparativist to realize a paradox: Modern dictators' fates may not only hinge upon the use of coercive measures but popular will might also be pertinent in explaining autocratic stability.

Ann Arbor, he also offered me an opportunity to hold a book conference at the WCED. The generous financial support of this conference by the CPS and WCED enabled me to invite a wonderful lineup of comparativists who provided lots of excellent feedback and helpful criticism in sharpening my arguments: Erica Frantz, Rob Franzese, Dustin Gamza, Mai Hassan, Allen Hicken, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Yuki Shiraito, Dan Slater, Alberto Simpser, and Michael Wahman. At the University of Michigan, I also learned a lot from Charles Crabtree, Iza Ding, Natalia Forrat, Hanisah Abdullah Sani, Nahomi Ichino, Ken Kollman, Noah Nathan, Nick Valentino, and Yuri Zhukov. Special thanks to Elizabeth Demers for supporting and guiding this project at the Press, and to Kevin Rennells, Anne Taylor, and Haley Winkle for expertly shepherding the book through copyediting and production. Shana Milkie did an amazing job with indexing, and Yuji Baba designed wonderful cover art for the book.

On the other side of the Pacific, where I was first fascinated by comparative politics as well as where I started my professional career as a comparative political scientist, I am indebted to many people. I am most grateful to Hideko Magara, Takayuki Ito, Masaru Kohno, and Ikuo Kume, my mentors at Waseda University. They all taught me how exciting and interesting studying politics is in their own ways. I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues at Waseda, especially Ryo Nakai, Masataka Oki, Shin Toyoda, Katsunori Seki, and Yuki Yanai, for their friendship and thought-provoking (and often endless) discussions. My current affiliation, Tohoku University, has been providing an ideal research environment since I arrived in Sendai in the summer of 2016. Among others, I would like to thank my Tohoku colleagues Kazunori Kawamura and Yoshikuni Ono for their earnest support. At the European University Institute, where I spent the year of 2015–16 as a Max Weber postdoctoral fellow, I obtained useful feedback from my cohort colleagues of the Max Weber Programme, as well as Stefano Bartolini, Adrian del Rio, Phillippe Schmitter, and Jan Teorell.

This book has also been shaped and improved through numerous conversations with many other scholars outside of the communities mentioned above. Hidekuni Washida and Joe Wright read the entire manuscript and provided excellent comments, which greatly contributed to improving the analyses in the book. Yujin Woo also read earlier versions of the manuscript a couple of times very carefully, provided great ideas on a diagram to effectively pinpoint my arguments, and helped me polish the book to reach its final version, which I greatly appreciate. I also would like to thank the two anonymous manuscript reviewers for providing excellent and careful feedback, which has greatly helped improve the book into its

Department of Public Administration at KIMEP University in Almaty and the Social Research Center at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek generously sponsored me in facilitating my fieldwork. I very much appreciate those institutes for providing logistical support for this project.

During my fieldwork, I received frequent suggestions, advice, and research assistance. I would like to thank Ruslan Imanaliev, Seitek Kachkynbaev, Meruert Makhmutova, Ellina Malina, Nurseit Niyazbekov, Sovet Sadyrsson, and Medet Tiulegenov for offering useful insights about the countries' politics and economy as well as introducing me to numerous politicians, researchers, and NGO activists. I also am grateful to the many politicians, researchers, and opposition leaders who agreed to have interviews with me, as well as to the citizens of both countries who talked frankly about what they think about politics in their countries. Kamila Mustafina, Gulden Suleimenova, Aizhamal Sydykova, Bermet Zhumakadyr, and Kalys Zhumakadyr provided valuable research assistance in the field. Outside of the field, Jeremy Boo, Hisashi Kadoya, Asuka Kashiwase, and Takaaki Minamii helped me collect and double-check cross-national data on autocratic elections, for which I greatly appreciate.

Last but not least, I would like to express my deep gratitude for my family. My parents, Kumiko and Toshiharu Higashijima, have always believed in me and supported my intellectual interests and exploration even though pursuing an academic career involves lots of uncertainty. They also continue to be role models for a dad of two kids. I owe them more than this note can possibly express. My parents-in-law, Akiko and Takehide Goto, have also been extremely supportive throughout this journey and have long been looking forward to the publication of this book. I now feel relieved that I can finally send a copy of this book along to them. My sons, Shuh and Soh, who were not yet born when I first flew to Central Asia, turned ten- and eight-years-old already. They have always been my source of energy as well as competent timekeepers who help me maintain a good balance between work and rest. My final thanks are to my wife, Yuko, whose support and love have sustained me since I aspired to stay in academia sixteen years ago, as well as during the long process in the making of this book. Since we first met, she has always been much more optimistic than me and whole-heartedly supported and enjoyed every endeavor in Tokyo, East Lansing, Almaty, Bishkek, Florence, Sendai, and Ann Arbor. I lovingly dedicate this book to her.

# Figures

# Tables

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AIST | Agrarian-Industrial Union of Workers |
| BN | Barisan Nasional |
| CA | closed autocracy |
| CPI | consumer price index |
| DDK | Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan |
| DPK | Democratic Party of Kazakhstan |
| DVK | Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan |
| EA | electoral autocracy |
| EET | effective electoral threshold |
| EOP | ethnic organizational power |
| FE | fixed effects |
| FIS | Islamic Salvation Front |
| FLN | National Liberation Front |
| GDP | gross domestic product |
| GMM | generalized method of moment |
| HDK | People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan |
| IEM | Index of Election Malpractice |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IRT | item response theory |
| IV | instrumental variable |
| KPK | Communist Party of Kazakhstan |
| MDC | Movement for Democratic Change |
| MMD | Mass Mobilization Data |
| NELDA | National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy |

| NGO | nongovernmental organization |
| NKK | People's Congress of Kazakhstan |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OLS | ordinary least squares |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| OSCE/ODIHR | OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights |
| OSDP | Nationwide Social Democratic Party |
| PAP | People's Action Party |
| PBC | political business cycle |
| PBR | party-based regimes |
| PEI | Perceptions of Electoral Integrity |
| PESAC | privatization and enterprise sector adjustment credit |
| PKK | Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan |
| PNEK | Party of People's Unity of Kazakhstan |
| PR | proportional representation |
| PRI | Institutional Revolutionary Party |
| PZPR | Polish United Workers Party |
| QED | Quality of Elections Data |
| RC | rehabilitation credit |
| RCPE | regular competitive parliamentary elections |
| RE | random effects |
| SDS | Union of Democratic Forces |
| SMD | single-member district |
| SNEK | Union of People's Unity of Kazakhstan |
| SPDK | Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan |
| SPK | Socialist Party of Kazakhstan |
| UMNO | United Malays National Organization |
| V-Dem | Varieties of Democracy |
| V-Party | Varieties of Party Identity and Organization |
| WDI | World Development Indicators |
| ZANU-PF | The Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front |

# Note on Translation and Transliteration

In part III, comparative case studies, I transliterated Russian words by using the simplified Library of Congress system where diacritics are omitted. In addition, I transliterated Kazakh and Kyrgyz names from their Russian spelling. All translations from Russian original documents and interviews are my own.

# PART I

## Puzzles and Arguments

# Introduction

> Is it better to be loved than feared, or to be feared than loved?
> —Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

## 1.1. Twin Puzzles of Autocratic Elections

Modern dictatorships hold elections.[1] In the early nineteenth century, authoritarian regimes hardly held national elections. Since then, the number of autocracies with elections has steadily increased. By the early 2010s, a vast majority of autocracies held either executive or legislative elections or both. Furthermore, nowadays more authoritarian regimes allow opposition parties to participate in elections than ever before in history. Just before the third wave of democratization, only one-fifth of authoritarian elections included opposition parties. By 2010, this type of electoral authoritarian regime proliferated, with approximately nine-tenths of autocracies holding elections. Autocracies with elections have now become the dominant authoritarian regime type, and authoritarian leaders take elections seriously in their bid to stay in power.

Amid the historic proliferation of autocracies with elections and particularly multiparty electoral competition, modern autocrats employ a vari-

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1. This book uses the terms "autocracy," "dictatorship," "authoritarianism," and "nondemocracy" interchangeably. By "dictators," "autocrats," and "authoritarian leaders," I refer to top political leaders who hold de jure supreme authority in nondemocratic regimes. I use the male pronoun to refer to these leaders, given the fact that, according to *Archigos* Version 2.9, 99.7 percent of political leaders in authoritarian regimes since World War II have been male.

ety of electioneering tools to "win" elections.[2] Under strong international pressure to hold elections, canceling or postponing elections involves significant cost. At the same time, not only losing elections but also winning with only a small margin may destabilize authoritarian rule. Under these circumstances, authoritarian leaders manipulate election results in various ways to win big.

The most typical tool of electoral manipulation is blatant electoral fraud, which may include banning the registration of opposition parties and candidates, rigging the ballot box, handpicking members of the electoral management body, and (non)violently intimidating voters and opposition candidates (Simpser 2013; Norris 2014). Even in the absence of such blatant fraud techniques, autocrats can still tinker with election results to make them more favorable by manipulating electoral institutions, through electoral system change, redistricting, and malapportionment (Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002; Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001). Even without tilting election results using these measures, some authoritarian leaders take advantage of economic policy instruments to buy political support from the citizenry through the distribution of patronage and club goods (Magaloni 2006; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018).

Although autocratic leaders enjoy greater discretion than their democratic counterparts over the employment of such electioneering strategies, an intriguing puzzle lies in the significant variation in the use of these manipulation techniques among authoritarian regimes. Following Machiavelli's answer to the question in the epigraph, some autocrats attempt to overcome elections by "force and fraud," using coercive, overtly fraudulent measures and highly pro-regime electoral rules to ensure their convincing election victory. For instance, in the 2000s, Zimbabwe's Mugabe resorted to relentless, blatant electoral fraud and maintained majoritarian electoral systems, both of which greatly contributed to his election victories. Similarly, Hafez al-Assad of Syria held facade elections during his tenure, where he did not allow opposition parties to participate in elections. In contrast, others reject these methods and instead attempt to win big by cultivating the "love and respect" of the people and by mobilizing resources to garner mass support. For example, in Indonesia, Suharto and his Golkar Party shifted their major electioneering strategy from blatant electoral fraud to extensive patronage distribution in the 1980s, which helped the Suharto regime to derive public support from large portions of the masses. Nursul-

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2. This book employs such terms as "electioneering strategies (measures)" or "electoral strategies" to refer to a series of strategies that autocrats use to increase their vote and seat shares (e.g., blatant electoral fraud, institutional manipulation, and economic maneuvering).

tan Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan, whose regime used a variety of electoral malpractices and pro-regime electoral rules during the 1990s, became less dependent upon blatant electoral fraud and even reformed the country's electoral system with high proportionality by the late 2000s. *Why do dictators, who are essentially weakly constrained by horizontal and vertical accountability, often refrain from engaging in blatant electoral fraud and manipulation of electoral rules?* Put differently, *how can we understand different patterns and combinations of electioneering strategies in contemporary authoritarian regimes?* This is the first puzzle explored in this book.

Dictators design elections differently,[3] but autocratic elections also bring about significantly different consequences.[4] In some cases, autocratic elections help autocrats consolidate their rule (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009), while, in other cases, autocratic elections induce political conflict between the dictator and ruling elites on the one hand (Wig and Rod 2016) and between the dictator and opposition forces on the other (Tucker 2007). One major form of political conflict is popular protest, which often undermines authoritarian stability and, in some cases, leads to autocratic breakdown. For instance, the color revolutions in the post-Soviet countries such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan during the mid-2000s all occurred immediately after elections, ousting autocrats through mass revolt (Kalandadze and Orenstein 2009; Kuntz and Thompson 2009; Bunce and Wolchik 2010). The other form of post-electoral political change is leadership turnover, either through coups or election victories by the opposition (Wig and Rod 2016; Huntington 1991). For instance, Sri Lankan prime minister Bandaranaike lost the elections in 1977 to increasingly popular opposition parties by a large margin. Similarly, Algerian president Bendjedid called the first multiparty election in Algeria's history in December 1991. This election brought a sweeping victory to the radical Islamic Salvation Front, triggering a military coup that dragged the country into a full-blown civil war. *Why, given that dictators have great discretion over their design, do auto-*

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3. Throughout this book, the manner in which dictators combine distinct electoral strategies (e.g., blatant electoral fraud, institutional manipulation, and economic maneuvering) is succinctly referred as dictators' "design" of elections.

4. In this book, I am interested in the effects of autocratic elections on political stability and dictators' survival but not on either autocratic regime breakdown (e.g., Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig 2017) or democratization (e.g., Lindberg 2006). Popular protests, coups, and sweeping electoral victories by the opposition all have the potential to induce political disorder and oust autocrats. However, I do not ask questions concerning whether the subsequent regime is ruled by a member of a different ruling group (autocratic transition) or whether the autocratic breakdown is followed by democracy (democratic transition) (cf. Geddes, Wright, and Franz 2014).

*cratic elections often pose risks to autocratic survival? Under what conditions do autocratic elections pave the way for the political transformation that undermines regime stability?* This is the second puzzle addressed in this book.

In sum, the book explores the manner in which authoritarian leaders design elections and the impact of those elections on autocratic political order. Identifying the electioneering strategies autocrats are inclined to use illuminates the ways that autocrats take advantage of their elections. By constructing a positive theory of autocratic elections, this book aims to help social scientists, policy makers, and the international election monitoring community to systematically understand how elections operate in dictatorships. In addition, the consequences of autocratic elections cannot be forecasted without studying how these elections are designed in the first place. Illuminating the causes and consequences of autocratic elections through a unified theoretical framework provides a better understanding of how authoritarian politics works in contemporary autocracies where holding periodic elections has almost become the norm.

## 1.2. Argument in Brief

To understand the manner in which autocrats design elections and the consequences of these elections, I posit a theory of elections in dictatorships. I first suggest that autocrats face a dilemma with respect to how much manipulation to employ during elections. On the one hand, overt electoral manipulation ensures winning big but undermines the credibility of election results; on the other hand, more subtle approaches enhance the benefits of elections but decrease the likelihood of scoring majorities. Given the constraint arising from this electoral dilemma, I then argue that dictators strategically decide their electoral strategies between electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering. A successful utilization of these two techniques increases the likelihood that elections will help to consolidate autocratic rule. A suboptimal combination of these methods paves the way for less stable authoritarian rule.

In authoritarian regimes where possibilities of political violence and repression are ubiquitous, both the dictator and his potential opponents face difficulties in forging peaceful relationships. For instance, in the presence of high political uncertainty, potential opponents may have trouble in correctly estimating the dictator's true intentions and capabilities. This may cause potential opponents to challenge the dictator in advance by, for example, attempting his assassination, plotting a coup, or mobilizing pro-

tests (Tullock 1987). From the dictator's perspective, high levels of uncertainty make it difficult to know the true preferences or capabilities of his opponents (Wintrobe 1998). This may lead the autocrat to resort to indiscriminate violence in order to preempt threats. Furthermore, overt repression may also magnify citizens' grievances against the regime, facilitating collective action by rebel groups (Goodwin 2001; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). Put together, by relying on repressive measures alone, the dictator is likely to face serious obstacles to the efficient governance of the country.

As a major institutional tool for dealing with these problems, autocratic leaders often take advantage of elections. By winning elections by large margins, autocrats demonstrate that the current regimes are backed by public support, rendering political legitimacy to themselves (Magaloni 2006). In addition, elections involve the counting of heads, providing dictators with an institutional opportunity to accurately gauge the geographical distribution of popular support and the competence of ruling elites through election results (Cox 2009; Blaydes 2011). Furthermore, elections force opposition parties to question whether to participate in elections, often providing the dictator with the opportunity to create political divisions among the opposition (Lust-Okar 2005).

Autocrats have difficult choices to make when designing elections. If a dictator manipulates an election, he increases his likelihood of winning big. Such manipulated elections, however, do not render the benefits that dictators are expected to enjoy through the election process. Rather, excessively manipulated elections generate similar costs of repression as those stated previously. However, a less manipulated election allows the dictator to exploit the above-mentioned advantages, although such elections also decrease the likelihood that the dictator will enjoy a landslide win. The failure to maintain an overwhelming victory in an authoritarian regime credibly reveals weaknesses of the authoritarian ruler, which may threaten regime stability. Simply put, authoritarian leaders face a trade-off between the certainty of winning big and the benefits of elections that come with less manipulation. I term this trade-off the *electoral dilemma*.

Can autocrats win big without the help of electoral manipulation? This book argues that *the distribution of mobilization capabilities between the dictator and other political elites determines the manner in which autocrats design elections* (Phase I in fig. 1.1).[5] Political elites are defined as domestic actors

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5. This book does not consider *when* dictators begin to hold national elections. Beyond the dictator's strategic choice, the timing of initiating elections is often heavily constrained by other factors and reasons, such as colonial heritage, the end of the Cold War, international diffusion of election norms, and the onset of civil war or unrest (for a similar discussion, see
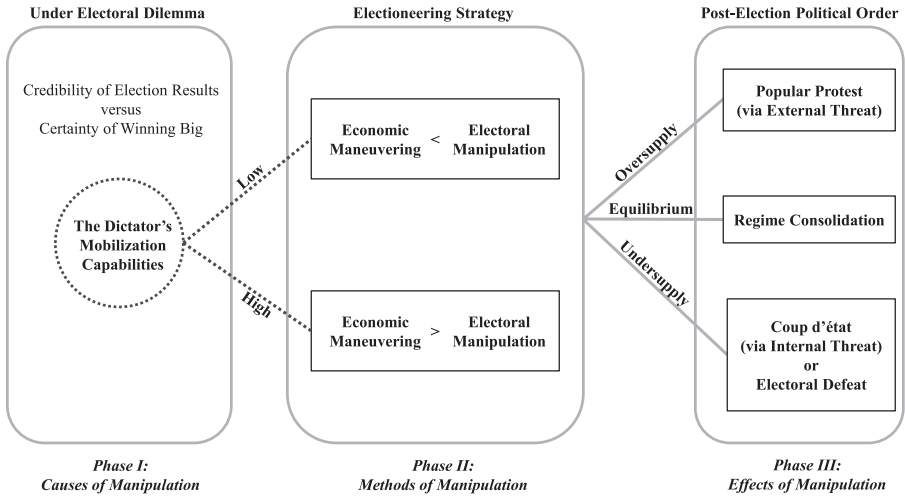
Fig. 1.1. Overview of the Argument

who utilize their financial, organizational, and other forms of capital for political purposes, in either ruling or opposition camps. They include legislators, ministers, local politicians, and opposition leaders and activists. The distribution of mobilization capabilities refers to the extent to which the dictator and other political elites hold resources, namely, abilities of economic distribution, to realize voluntary and noncoercive compliance by the general public. If the dictator is stronger than his potential opponents, that is, when a large gap exists between the dictator and other elites with regard to mobilization capabilities, the dictator can gain more supporters in an election, thus achieving absolute victory while exploiting the benefits of an election without manipulating the results. Conversely, if other political elites (ruling or opposition elites or both) possess greater resources

Simpser [2013: 26–27]). An important scope condition of this book is a focus on authoritarian regimes that have already decided to hold elections. Taking this decision as a given, my theory of autocratic elections illuminates when and why dictators engage in electoral manipulation through blatant electoral fraud or institutional manipulation. Empirically, I handle possible selection bias that might occur as a result of limiting the sample to authoritarian regimes with (multiparty) elections. For instance, in an analysis of blatant electoral fraud in chapter 3, I apply Heckman's two-stage model as a robustness check in which the first model predicts whether an authoritarian country holds elections and estimation results are utilized to correct for possible selection bias that could occur in the second-stage model, explaining the extent of blatant electoral fraud. The exploration of electoral system change in chapter 4 uses the same methodology to resolve the potential selection issue.

vis-à-vis the dictator, the dictator may not be able to effectively organize large-scale mobilization of support via economic distribution. In such a situation, the dictator is incentivized to manipulate the election and secure an overwhelming majority.

Dictators use a variety of measures to manipulate elections. Electoral manipulation refers to the means by which dictators deviate election results from public vote preferences in favor of the regimes. This book identifies two types of electoral manipulation: *blatant electoral fraud* and *institutional manipulation*. Blatant electoral fraud involves coercive election-rigging methods, including violent and nonviolent intimidation of voters and opposition candidates, extreme media bias favorable to the ruling party, the deregistration of opposition parties, and so on. Institutional manipulation favors the ruling party's share of parliamentary seats by influencing seat-vote elasticity through the manipulation of certain electoral institutions, such as electoral systems, electoral district boundaries, and district magnitude. For instance, in authoritarian regimes where the dictator and his party have a very high level of incumbency advantages, single-member district (SMD) systems enable the ruling party to occupy a greater share of seats with fewer votes. Such an institutional mechanism significantly biases election results in favor of the regime. In contrast, proportional representation (PR) systems require autocrats to mobilize more regime supporters to secure the same shares of parliamentary seats due to their proportionality.

My theory of autocratic elections anticipates that *dictators with greater mobilization capabilities are less likely to resort to blatant electoral fraud and more likely to adopt electoral institutions that promote proportionality*. Both blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation bias election results in favor of dictators and their parties. Both electioneering strategies help autocrats to score dominant victories, yet, to the extent that election results are artificially produced by force and fraud, the beneficial effects of elections are likely to be lost. Dictators who can secure public support can hold "less advantageous" elections by abstaining from the use of blatant electoral fraud in both presidential and legislative elections and by adopting proportional legislative electoral systems free from pro-regime seat bias. By designing such relatively free and fair elections, autocrats can effectively elicit the benefits of autocratic elections.

Instead of relying heavily on electoral manipulation, dictators with high mobilization capabilities are more likely to *manipulate macroeconomic policies before elections*, a process known as *economic maneuvering*. Dictators pursue this strategy, where they can, because it enables them to secure a clear victory while also ensuring the benefits of elections: demonstrating their

strengths, gathering information, and/or driving a wedge in the opposition camp. These benefits are likely to be lost if an autocrat prioritizes electoral manipulation over economic maneuvering. My theory of autocratic elections therefore predicts that dictators' mobilization capabilities influence the combination of electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering that will appear as the equilibrium of autocratic election design (Phase II in fig. 1.1).

How and when do these electoral strategies backfire on autocrats? This book contends that *when dictators deviate from the equilibrium of autocratic election design in dealing with the electoral dilemma, authoritarian elections destabilize authoritarian rule.* Two scenarios can emerge where elections destabilize authoritarian rule. In the first, a dictator engages in excessive electoral manipulation to such a degree that it harms the benefits of elections. This makes it difficult for opposition leaders to correctly estimate the dictator's true strength and makes it easy to capitalize on popular grievance, provoking popular protest. In the second scenario, a dictator undersupplies electoral manipulation according to his mobilization capabilities and the election results reveal the weaknesses of himself. Updated information on de facto regime weakness via election results, in some instances, encourages ruling elites to defect from the regime or stage a coup d'état and, in other instances, ends in a surprising electoral victory for the opposition (Phase III in fig. 1.1).

Exploring the origins and outcomes of autocratic elections under the framework of the electoral dilemma derives profound implications on our understanding of authoritarian politics. On the one hand, given that dictators strategically design their elections, this book suggests that the dictator's choice of electioneering strategies indicates the underlying status of power distribution between the dictator and other political elites in opaque authoritarian politics. Therefore, analyzing electoral manipulation in dictatorships is useful not only for election monitoring observers who wish to understand autocratic elections that have been recently increasing in numbers but also for the broader international community and democratic policy makers who wish to scrutinize the internal working of authoritarian regimes often masked by limited information.

On the other hand, beyond a naive, functionalist view of autocratic institution building, this book also suggests that autocrats may face strategic uncertainty when they design autocratic elections. As a result of such strategic uncertainty, autocratic elections, for which dictators have great discretion in institutional design, have the potential to undermine regime stability. By emphasizing the importance of discerning the uncertainty of

institutional design in dictatorships, this book suggests that post-electoral political turmoil occurs due to the gap between the dictator's actual mobilization capabilities and the designed elections. Thus, the key for the international society to forecast whether an autocratic election leads to post-electoral political turmoil is to accurately gauge the differences between the dictator's capabilities of deriving popular support and the manners in which he intends to design the upcoming election. Post-electoral regime instability is an artifact of strategic uncertainty in which autocratic elections are embedded.

## 1.3. Contributions

Besides the aforementioned broad implications that the theory of autocratic elections posits, this book contributes to three strands of political scientific literature: (1) authoritarian politics and institutions, (2) sources of regime performance, and (3) the menu of electoral manipulation. Here I review extant research on these topics and situate my arguments alongside them.[6]

### *Authoritarian Politics and Institutions*

Following the end of the Cold War, many countries in the developing world experienced regime transformation. The demise of the Soviet bloc enabled the United States and other Western countries to actively push authoritarian countries toward democratic transition. International organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) also assisted in a wide range of international activities to promote democratization in developing countries. These activities included the provision of foreign aid tied to political conditionality, election monitoring missions, human rights watchdogs, and economic sanctions. Despite such growing international pressure to democratize, however, many authoritarian regimes have survived. This puzzle revived the study of authoritarian politics.

In distinguishing democracy and autocracy, this book takes a minimalist approach by focusing on the existence of free and fair elections (Schumpeter 1950; Dahl 1972). Specifically, following previous studies on democratization and autocratic politics (Przeworski et al. 2000; Boix 2003; Svolik

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6. Regarding the book's contributions to more specific literature on each electioneering strategy and post-electoral political order, see the literature reviews presented in chapters 3–6.

2012; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014), I define an authoritarian country as "an independent country that fails to satisfy at least one of the following two criteria for democracy: (1) free and competitive legislative elections and (2) an executive that is elected either directly in free and competitive presidential elections or indirectly by a legislature in parliamentary elections" (Svolik 2012: 22).[7]

Based on this classification of democracy and autocracy, figure 1.2 presents time-series changes in percentages of democracies and autocracies around the world between 1946 and 2010. Although the number of democracies has grown since the late 1970s, more than 40 percent of all countries are still under authoritarian rule. Figure 1.3 takes a closer look at time-series changes in three types of authoritarian regime: autocracies with no elections, autocracies with noncompetitive elections, and autocracies with competitive elections. The number of autocracies holding competitive elections increased rapidly after the end of the Cold War. Although such electoral autocracies made up approximately 20 percent of all authoritarian regimes in 1975, this figure grew up to 70 percent in 2008. At the same time, autocracies with either noncompetitive elections or no elections at all decreased during the post–Cold War period. In 1975, each of these two authoritarian regime types constituted 40 percent of all authoritarian regimes. However, the end of the Cold War saw the end of the dominance of these two regime types. In 2008, only 17 percent of autocracies (the nine countries of Eritrea, Swaziland, Libya, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Myanmar, and China) did not hold elections, whereas only 10 percent of authoritarian elections did not allow multiple parties or candidates to participate in the electoral process (the five countries of Cuba, Syria, North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam).

Subsequent to the proliferation of the regimes referred to as "electoral authoritarian regimes" (Schedler 2013) and "competitive authoritarianism" (Levitsky and Way 2010), scholars began to explore the roles of nominally

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7. Throughout the empirical analyses presented in the book, I primarily use Geddes, Wright, and Frantz's (2014) *Autocratic Regimes Dataset*, which codes each regime as a democracy or dictatorship. Consistent with the aforementioned definition of dictatorship, Geddes, Wright, and Frantz empirically identify countries as autocratic when "the following occurred and the same basic rule and leadership group persist in subsequent years" (2014: 317): (1) an executive achieved power through means other than free and competitive elections, such as a coup; (2) after free and competitive elections, the government changed the formal and informal rules in such a manner that subsequent free and competitive elections were limited; and (3) free and competitive elections were held to choose the government; however, the military prevented one or more political parties from competing.
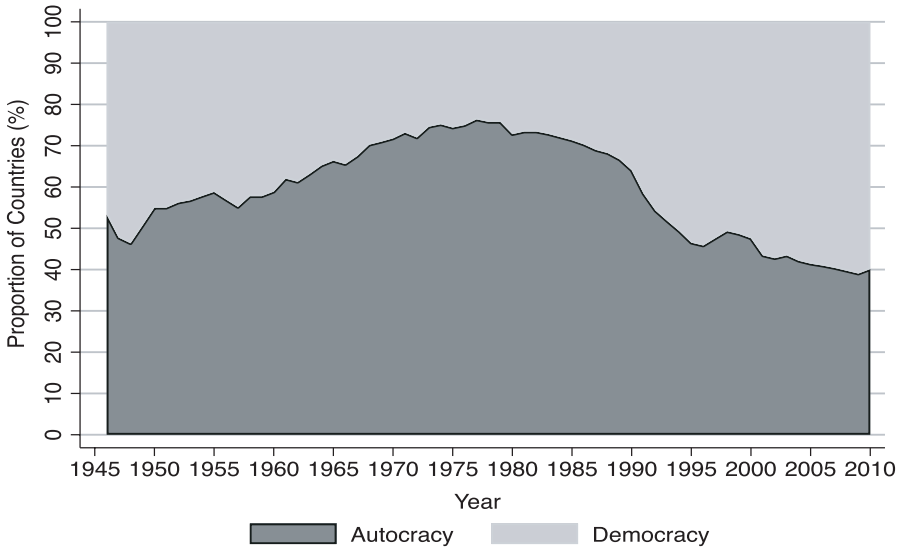
Fig. 1.2. Democracies and Autocracies in the World (1946–2010)
*Note:* The dichotomous distinction between democracy and autocracy is based on Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014: 317). According to their definition, a country is regarded as autocratic if it satisfies the following three conditions: (1) an executive achieves power through means other than free and competitive elections, such as coups; (2) after free and competitive elections, the government changes the formal and informal rules in such a way that subsequent free and competitive elections are limited; and (3) free and competitive elections are held to choose the government, but the military prevents one or more political parties from competing.

democratic political institutions in these regimes.[8] Many argued that parties, legislatures, and elections play significant roles in benefiting authoritarian rule.[9] Among others, studies of autocratic politics have highlighted

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8. Some scholars have focused on the politics of nondemocracies (Arendt 1951; Friedrich and Brzezinski 1965; O'Donnell 1973; Linz 1975; Collier 1979; Tullock 1987), yet their focus was largely on non-institutional aspects of autocratic rule. Important exceptions are Hermet, Rose, and Rouquie (1978) and Friedgut (1979), who explored the role of elections in communist countries and other authoritarian regimes in Europe and Africa. Huntington and Moore (1970) focused on the one-party rule that proliferated in the 1960s.

9. For exhaustive reviews on the roles of political institutions under dictatorships, see Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009), Magaloni and Kricheli (2010), Ezrow and Frantz (2011), Brancati (2014), and Frantz (2018). Besides elections and ruling parties discussed in this section, scholars have also studied the functions of legislatures in dictatorships. The legislature serves as a useful access point for political elites to various privileges, spoils, and policy concessions conferred by the regime (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Lust-Okar 2008; Blaydes 2011). As a result, such co-optation mechanisms allow dictators to maintain a firm grip on power. According to Schuler (2021), single-party legislatures help autocrats signal their dominance and
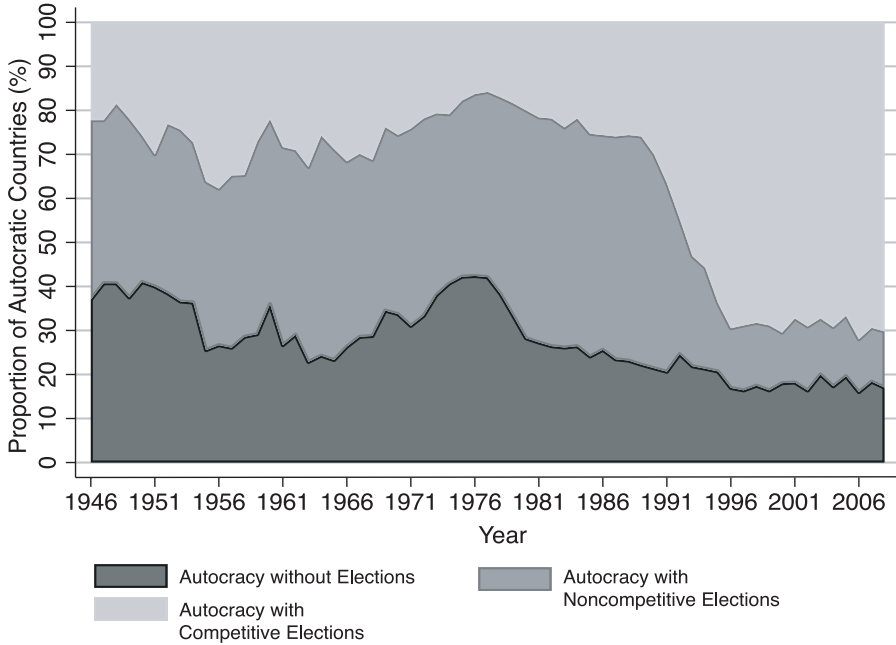
Fig. 1.3. Elections in Authoritarian Regimes (1946–2008)

*Source:* Data from Svolik (2012); Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014).

*Note:* A country is regarded as holding competitive elections if either legislative or executive elections allow multiple political parties and candidates. If legislative and/or executive elections are held with only one single party or candidate, then the country is defined as an authoritarian regime holding noncompetitive elections. If a country holds neither legislative nor executive elections, it is an authoritarian regime with no elections.

the role of elections in prolonging authoritarian rule. The literature points to three major functions of autocratic elections. First, elections help dictators demonstrate the regime's invincibility to potential opponents by winning big, or what this book refers to as the *demonstration effects* (Hermet, Rose, and Rouquie 1978: 12; Geddes 2006; Magaloni, 2006; Weeden 2008; Simpser 2013; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018). A dictator can demonstrate that his regime is unshakable by winning elections while obtaining an overwhelming majority, preventing potential opponents from launching coups, defecting from the regime, or leading popular uprisings. Researchers generally agree that winning big demonstrates regime strength, yet how

provide legitimacy. From the perspective of citizens, authoritarian parliaments may become a channel of political accommodation and an important source of material favors (Lust-Okar 2008).

they conceive of this is different. Magaloni (2006) and Geddes (2006) suggest that scoring a supermajority through relatively "honest" elections free from blatant electoral fraud signals regime strength, as such electoral victories over the opposition reflect the ruling party's popularity, and boosts its political legitimacy. In contrast, Simpser (2013) argues that even large electoral margins with excessive, blatant electoral manipulation help political leaders to consolidate power by signaling regime strength, as orchestrating blatant electoral manipulation requires costly mobilization efforts and the coordination of various political actors within ruling coalitions.

Elections may also become an important source of information about the competence and loyalty of ruling elites and the distribution of popular support, or what this book terms the *information-gathering effects*. Election results inform dictators of the local popularity of ruling elites, an important criterion for recruiting competent and loyal politicians (Blaydes 2011; Malesky and Schuler 2010; Reuter and Robertson 2011). "Elections help dictators overcome their problem monitoring local officials as well. . . . The failure of local people to turn out or vote for ruling-party candidates alerts regime leaders to officials' shirking or bad behavior and initiates investigation of local problems. By creating these incentives, local and legislative elections partially substitute for monitoring local officials, with citizens' votes serving as 'fire alarms'" (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018: 141). Furthermore, election results provide information regarding the distribution of public dissent against the regime and the popularity of opposition parties (Ames 1970; Cox 2009; Herron 2011), thereby improving the efficiency of governance. For example, Miller (2015) presents cross-national evidence that falling regime support at elections tends to be followed by increases in education and welfare spending by the regime to make policy concession toward the citizenry.

Autocratic elections also provide dictators with the opportunity to divide and conquer the opposition camp, termed as the *divide-and-rule effect* (Lust-Okar 2005). By formally allowing opposition parties and non-regime-sponsored candidates to participate in elections, autocrats prevent the opposition from coordinating their approach and action toward the regime. "By holding elections and setting rules regarding the legal eligibility of candidates and parties, dictators create 'divided structures of contestation' composed of outsiders who are not allowed to compete and insiders who become more invested in the regime" (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009: 405). Divisions among opposition parties and leaders are manifested in the opposition's multiple decisions regarding whether to boycott elections (Beaulieu 2014), whether opposition parties should form a pre-electoral

coalition (Gandhi and Reuter 2008), or whether to accept election results without resorting to post-election violence (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014).

Although these studies of authoritarian elections have advanced our understanding of authoritarian politics, they fail to adequately address at least three problems. First, the literature fails to take into account, within a single theoretical framework, the simultaneous costs and benefits of holding elections. Specifically, most of the extant literature does not consider the trade-off between the certainty of election victory and the credibility of election results. Although relatively free and fair elections enable autocrats to reap the benefits, such elections may also decrease the likelihood that autocrats can win with large margins. On the other hand, excessively manipulated elections undermine the benefits of autocratic elections. For instance, the demonstration and information-gathering functions are likely to be reduced if results are falsified through electoral manipulation techniques. If dictators lose the informational benefits of elections due to electoral manipulation, then elections become less useful tools to stabilize authoritarian rule. Similarly, extensively rigged elections are more likely to exclude the opposition, thus galvanizing the grievances of opposition forces, giving them an opportunity to unite to challenge the government (Bunce and Wolchik 2010).

Rozenas (2016) makes an important contribution to this issue. He focuses on a similar trade-off in authoritarian elections and argues that dictators whose security in office is threatened are more likely to hold less manipulated elections. Although the present book shares a similar view on autocratic elections, it differs from Rozenas's work in several important respects. For one, the theoretical focus of this book extends far beyond the determinants of blatant electoral fraud by taking into account the relationships between other electioneering strategies, such as electoral system change, economic maneuvering, and the consequences of autocratic elections on post-electoral political order. Also, Rozenas (2016) focuses on pre-election-day manipulation. However, election-day fraud is also another important dimension of electoral chicanery, given that autocrats face the same trade-offs on election day. In fact, many studies suggest that weak autocrats rely on election-day fraud, such as ballot stuffing, as a last resort to bias election results (e.g., Cheeseman and Klaas 2018: chap. 5). This study explores blatant electoral fraud during both pre-election and election-day phases, as both stages significantly influence the certainty of large electoral margins and the credibility of election results.

Second, due to an excessive emphasis in extant literature on the benefits

of elections, current autocratic election scholarship does not always identify the conditions under which authoritarian elections backfire on dictators. In fact, another strand of research strongly suggests that election periods pose a particularly serious threat to dictators by provoking coups and mass collective actions. For instance, observing the so-called third wave of democratization, Huntington (1991: 174) suggests that holding elections under authoritarian rule is an important first step for a dictatorship in its transition to democracy. Brownlee (2009) also argues that competitive authoritarian regimes are more likely to democratize than either hegemonic or closed authoritarian regimes. In the meantime, elections not only encourage democratization but also provoke popular protests, coups, and bloody civil wars. Tucker (2007) and Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski (2014) assert that fraudulent elections or acts of election violence are more likely to be followed by popular protests. Wig and Rod (2016) argue that in elections where opposition parties emerge in strength, ruling elites are more likely to attempt a coup d'état to punish low-performing incumbents. Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig (2017) and Lucardi (2019) find that election periods allow the opposition to alleviate collective action problems and, therefore, increase the likelihood of autocratic breakdown, compared to non-election periods.[10] However, while pointing out various forms of post-electoral political conflict, these studies also do not necessarily offer a clarifying theory of when and what types of political conflicts are more likely to occur after elections.

Third, the literature has mainly focused on the consequences of autocratic institutions, and specifically their effects on regime survival. As a result, most analyses have not seriously considered the origins of these institutions or their endogenous institutional building.[11] As Pepinsky (2014: 631) has rightly pointed out, "Institutions under authoritarian rule are vulnerable to manipulation because political actors believe that institutional manipulation can shape political outcomes in their favor, then it is also true that factors that explain the origins of (and changes in) dominant parties also directly affect those political outcomes." When it comes to autocratic elections, dictators may be willing to hold less-manipulated elections that generate beneficial effects only when they can survive those elections that may also increase the likelihood of political risk. In sum, inferring the causal

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10. Increased tensions during election time may lead to violent confrontations between government and opposition and may even trigger a civil war (Snyder 2000; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Hug 2012).

11. Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig (2017: 140) also note this problem and adopt an instrumental variable approach to estimate the impact of autocratic elections on regime breakdown.

effects of autocratic elections without taking into account the likely factors determining the origins of those elections leads to misleading conclusions about the net effects of autocratic elections on post-election political order.

To fill these gaps in the literature, this book proposes a new theory that illuminates the causes and consequences of autocratic elections. My theory of autocratic elections focuses on a dilemma faced by dictators when designing elections: Although electioneering through overt electoral fraud and pro-regime electoral rules enables autocrats to achieve a large victory at the ballot box, such elections lose the important benefits that elections bring to the victor. Conceptualizing the dictator's dilemma at the ballot box allows us to theorize both the costs and the benefits of holding autocratic elections simultaneously. I then argue that, under the constraints of the electoral dilemma, the extent to which a dictator can mobilize popular support determines how heavily he relies on manipulating electoral processes and election rules. Endogenizing autocratic electoral design as a function of the distribution of mobilization capabilities in an autocracy, my theory of autocratic elections unravels the origins of electoral institutions in authoritarian regimes. Finally, this book also suggests that elections are more likely to destabilize dictatorial rule when autocrats deviate from the equilibrium of autocratic electoral design in dealing with the electoral dilemma. Shedding light on the manners in which autocrats design elections, this book's theory enables us to identify the conditions under which autocratic elections backfire on autocrats in the form of coups, popular protests, and the opposition's stunning election victories.

Highlighting the importance of public support in authoritarian elections, my argument also speaks to broader authoritarian politics literature. Recognizing that the most imminent threat to dictatorships comes from inside, via regime elites, a large body of autocratic politics literature has emphasized the importance of illuminating the relationship between dictators and ruling elites (e.g., Tullock 1987; Svolik 2012; Blaydes 2011; Magaloni 2006, 2008). Some scholars also take into account the relationship between the regime and the opposition (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Gandhi 2008; Lust-Okar 2005). However, these recent studies do not necessarily shed light on the possibility that dictators directly appeal to the masses in order to weaken both internal and external threats. In contrast, classic literature on dictatorships drew attention to "the problem of authoritarian control" (Svolik 2012), namely, how dictators communicate with the masses and control them through (mostly) coercive measures, such as regime propaganda, state terror, and forced mass mobilization (Arendt 1951; Friedrich and Brzezinski 1965; Linz 1975). While building upon

recent literature that underlines interactions between dictators and political elites, this book also aims to bring the masses back into a theory of autocratic elections.[12] Specifically, I argue that an autocrat's ability to garner public support through noncoercive means is key in designing autocratic elections. In other words, this study suggests that, in addition to directly dealing with threats from the elite, garnering public support is important for dictators because, even in authoritarian regimes, it is from citizens that dictators draw legitimacy (Dimitrov 2009; Guriev and Treisman 2020). By solidifying public support, autocrats can effectively preempt threats from both ruling elites and the opposition.

## *Elections and Sources of Autocratic Regime Performance*

Under what conditions can autocrats induce political compliance from elites and citizens? To answer this pertinent question, comparativists have focused on economic, institutional, and organizational factors affecting regime performance. Here I discuss three strands of research related to regime performance and regime stability: (1) state resources, (2) organizational power, and (3) opposition strength, all of which are closely related to the distribution of mobilization capabilities between the dictator and the elites, the core explanatory concept of this book in theorizing the causes and consequences of autocratic elections.

### Financial Resources

The amount of financial resources that dictators possess has been regarded as an important factor of regime performance (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Greene (2007), for example, finds that the incumbent's dramatic resource advantages contributed to the long dominance of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) while marginalizing opposition parties in Mexico.

Previous studies have focused on natural resource endowments as a major source of financial resources, finding that natural resources prolong authoritarian rule by enhancing a dictator's ability to increase public spending (Smith 2004; Ulfelder 2007; Morrison 2009; Wright, Frantz, and Geddes 2013).[13] The arguments and findings of this book are consistent

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12. Recently, Guriev and Treisman (2020) have explored sources of mass support in authoritarian regimes by utilizing cross-national survey data.

13. Scholars have long debated the negative consequences of natural resources. A great deal of literature on the resource curse has argued that natural resource wealth prolongs authoritarian rule (Morrison 2009; Wright, Frantz, and Geddes 2013), prevents democratiza-

with those of the oil curse literature: I emphasize that natural resources are a primary source of dictators' regime performance. However, connecting this literature to the design of autocratic elections, I argue that, due to the very fact that dictators can buy extensive popular support through the distribution of natural resource wealth, such windfall incomes ironically permit dictators to hold relatively "open" elections with PR systems and less blatant electoral fraud. In this sense, my argument resonates with the revisionist interpretation of the resource curse (e.g., Haber and Menaldo 2011; Paler 2013), which suggests that natural resources do not necessarily harm political transparency. Since petroleum is a useful tool for dictators to sustain public support via wealth distribution, authoritarian leaders can take advantage of the benefits of relatively free and fair elections. Therefore, elections held in oil-rich autocracies where dictators have an incentive to distribute economic favors may stabilize autocratic rule, demonstrating that the dictator is not feared by the people but loved by them.

## Organizational Power

Scholars pointed to the importance of organizational power in the form of state and parties to explain autocratic regime performance (Levitsky and Way 2010; Slater 2010). By institutionalizing credible collective decision-making and extensive grassroots party organizations, dominant parties help autocrats mobilize electoral support and prolong authoritarian rule (Huntington 1968; Geddes 1999; Brownlee 2007; Magaloni 2008; Svolik 2012; Boix and Svolik 2013). Resonating with these works, Morse (2019) argues that credible ruling parties, which are "generally quite large, institutionalized and autonomous, internally democratic, and [have] longstanding ties with broad segments of the population," (18) help electoral autocrats to win big without cheating big. Similarly, strong states increase elite cohesion and effectively organize mass support for authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2010; Slater and Fenner 2011). Along this line, Seeberg (2021) contends that electoral autocrats with high levels of state capacity

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tion (Ross 2001, 2012), damages political transparency (Mahdavi 1970; Beblawi and Luciani 1987), slows down economic growth (e.g., Sachs and Warner 1995; Ross 2012), undermines state capacity, and fuels civil conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Humphreys 2005). Much of this research concludes that natural resources negatively influence political and economic development in developing countries. Recent studies, however, make caveats to such resource curse arguments, suggesting that several conditions must exist for natural resources to be a real curse, such as ownership structures (Jones Luong and Weinthal 2011; Andersen and Ross 2014), better information on how to use windfall revenues (Paler 2013), and the allocation of natural resource wealth in the state budget (Bodea, Higashijima, and Singh 2016).

can win elections because those rulers can rely on local agents and institutions by controlling the media and restricting election monitors.

While building upon these works, this book departs from broad discussions on organizational power and regime stability and unpacks the relationships between organizational power and electioneering strategies. At the same time, going beyond the exclusive focus on blatant electoral fraud in the literature, I shed light on other prominent electioneering strategies that dictators employ, such as institutional manipulation and economic maneuvering. In doing so, I theoretically and empirically explore the conditions under which strong organizational power leads to autocratic elections with less fraud and high seat proportionality. Specifically, I suggest that strong organizational power itself may not necessarily determine the degree of electoral manipulation: How autocrats utilize those organizations for electoral support may be significantly different depending upon financial resources that dictators possess. When they lack financial resources to distribute, strong states and parties may become instruments of coercion and repression; when they hold a colossal amount of financial resources, strong states and parties may turn into instruments orchestrating efficient material distribution. As Slater (2010: 11) succinctly noted, "The predictable provision of selective incentives or public goods requires the prior existence of a robust political center."

## Opposition Strength

Previous research has also suggested that opposition strength is another key factor affecting autocratic regime performance. In particular, a united opposition puts strong pressure on autocrats not to manipulate elections, paving the way for the transition to democracy. In particular, researchers highlight the importance of pre-election opposition coalitions. Howard and Roessler (2006) argue that competitive authoritarian regimes are more likely to liberalize election outcomes when opposition coalitions are formed prior to elections. Donno (2013b) contends that pre-election coalition making is positively correlated with the likelihood of democratization by elections in competitive authoritarian regimes. Magaloni's (2010) formal model of election fraud shows that endorsing a single presidential candidate and coalescing makes free and fair elections more likely, leading to democratic transitions.

My argument differs from these studies in two ways. First, my theory does not seek to explain when democratization occurs in the wake of autocratic elections. In other words, asking whether autocrats hold relatively free and fair elections is different from asking whether such elections suc-

cessfully lead to democratic transitions thereafter (Wahman 2013). As I show in this book, relatively free and fair elections in autocracies may be held precisely because autocrats are assured that they will win such elections rather than feeling threatened by opposition pressure. Furthermore, less-manipulated elections and subsequent opposition victories may lead to the activation of coup threats, resulting in the emergence of another autocracy. Therefore, by carefully separating these two distinct questions, I explore the conditions under which autocrats allow relatively free and fair elections in the first place. I then identify when autocratic elections backfire on dictators in the form of coups, opposition victories, and protests, without asking whether such political change leads to democratization.

Second, for the most part, these studies focus on competitive authoritarian regimes where pre-election opposition coalition making is frequently observed and credible because coalition building significantly increases the likelihood of opposition victory (Donno 2013a: 105). However, in competitive autocracies where opposition victory and democratization are more likely than other authoritarian regimes (Brownlee 2009), opposition parties may have a strong incentive to form pre-election opposition coalitions, as this may make a difference (van de Walle 2006; Wahman 2013). In other words, competitive autocracies may be "the most likely scenario" where the effect of pre-electoral opposition coalitions is observed. Furthermore, it is also reasonable to assume that, under the electoral dilemma, hegemonic and closed authoritarian regimes also strategically calculate the extent to which they need to manipulate elections, depending on the strengths of the opposition. For instance, when dictators believe that opposition parties are too weak to gather even a small portion of votes, they may consider not playing a heavy-handed role in election manipulation, and closed autocracies may start to think about allowing the opposition to participate in future elections. Focusing on opposition coalition making makes sense as a measure of opposition unity and strength in the context of competitive autocracies. Yet, a more general measure of the opposition's mobilization capabilities may be useful in explaining electoral manipulation in a wider sample of authoritarian regimes. My empirical analyses find that strong opposition, measured by the recent history of anti-government collective action during non-election periods, is positively correlated with the use of blatant electoral fraud and electoral systems producing pro-regime seat biases. The results resonate with another prominent perspective that dictators resort to extensive electoral manipulation when the opposition threatens his electoral dominance.[14]

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14. For instance, see Lehoucq and Molina (2002).

## *The Menu of Electoral Manipulation*

This book also contributes to the burgeoning literature on "the menu of manipulation" (Schedler 2002) by identifying what electioneering strategies authoritarian incumbents are more likely to employ and when they will employ them. Autocrats hold a rich set of manipulation techniques in various institutional areas such as courts, legislatures, local politics, media, and associations (Schedler 2013). Also with regard to autocratic elections, scholars have revealed various electoral strategies that political leaders rely on to extend their rule, such as electoral cheating, violent and nonviolent intimidation, and election violence (e.g., Hyde 2007; Birch 2012; Kelley 2012; Little 2012; Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014; Simpser 2013; Rozenas 2016; Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2019); manipulation of electoral rules (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001; Pripstein Posusney 2002; Jones Luong 2002; Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002; McElwain 2008; Gandhi and Heller 2018), gerrymandering and malapportionment (Thomson 2013; Boone and Wahman 2015; Ong, Kasuya, and Mori 2017; Washida 2018; Wong 2019); and pre-electoral economic distribution (Shi and Svensson 2006; Brender and Drazen 2006; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018), including patronage provisions (e.g., Stokes 2005; Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. 2012) and pork barrel spending (e.g., Cox and McCubbins 1986; Dixit and Londregan 1996; Golden and Picci 2008).

Each of these studies draws attention to a single electioneering strategy without considering the relationship between alternative strategies. However, it is reasonable to assume that autocrats should consider the advantages and disadvantages of each electoral strategy and choose an optimal set of techniques to maximize the likelihood of holding onto power. To fill this gap, scholars have recently begun exploring the conditions under which political leaders choose one electoral strategy over another. For instance, regarding the relationship between overt electoral fraud and electoral systems, Birch (2007) and Fjelde and Hoglund (2016) have found that majoritarian electoral systems are more likely to be accompanied by higher levels of electoral cheating and electoral violence. Using a dataset of municipal elections in Russia, Szakonyi (2019) argues that deregistration of opposition candidates is a substitute for more blatant forms of electoral fraud, such as ballot stuffing. By engaging with these emerging studies on the selection of electioneering techniques, this book focuses on the relationship between two broad categories of electioneering strategy: electoral manipulation (i.e., blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation) and pre-electoral economic maneuvering. Under what conditions are political leaders inclined to rely on one rather than the other? By offering

an answer to this pertinent question, this book illuminates what electoral strategies authoritarian leaders are likely to use to win big at elections and when they will use them.[15] In so doing, this research contributes to scholarly discussions on electioneering in the developing world.

## 1.4. Research Design, Key Empirical Findings, and the Organization of the Book

This book consists of three parts: theory (chap. 2), cross-national statistical analyses (chaps. 3–6), and comparative case studies (chaps. 7–8). In the first part, chapter 2 presents a theory of authoritarian elections. This part of the book first details the electoral dilemma faced by autocrats and classifies autocratic elections according to degrees of electoral manipulation and electoral margins. Second, I then specify two important electioneering strategies—electoral manipulation (i.e., blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation) and economic maneuvering—and clarify the advantages and disadvantages of each. Third, I go on to focus on the distribution of mobilization capabilities between the dictator and other political elites as a key determinant influencing the design of authoritarian elections. In so doing, I derive empirical implications that explain four important aspects of authoritarian elections: blatant electoral fraud, institutional manipulation, economic maneuvering, and post-election political conflict. This chapter concludes with a preliminary cross-national investigation demonstrating that the distribution of mobilization capabilities is correlated with a dictator's and his party's electoral margins in presidential and parliamentary elections. Specifically, I suggest that the distribution of mobilization capabilities can be empirically captured by (1) discretionary financial resources available to the dictator (natural resource endowments), (2) disciplinary political organizations that prevent ruling elites from exploiting financial resources (dominant parties and ethnicity-based networks), and (3) the opposition elites' capacity to mobilize the masses.

The second part of the book provides cross-national evidence on elec-

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15. Although which specific tools of electoral manipulation dictators use, and when they use them, is an intriguing research program in its own right (e.g., when dictators prioritize ballot stuffing over election violence), this book does not set out to explain the relationship between those specific means within the category of electoral manipulation. Theorizing about the benefits and costs of two broadly defined tools of electioneering strategies—electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering—this book aims to explore the relationship between the two. That said, an additional analysis of blatant electoral fraud in chapter 3 partially addresses this issue by disaggregating electoral fraud into several specific methods.

TABLE 1.1. Scope Conditions of Cross-National Statistical Analyses

| Chapter | Dependent variable | Empirical operationalization | Sample | Election type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Electoral margins | Victory margins of the dictator and his party | Autocracies with multiparty elections (electoral autocracies) | Executive and legislative elections |
| 3 | Blatant electoral fraud | Latent measure of overt fraud | Autocracies with elections (both closed and electoral autocracies) | Executive and legislative elections |
| 4 | Institutional manipulation | Electoral system types (effective electoral threshold) | Autocracies with multiparty elections (electoral autocracies) | Legislative elections |
| 5 | Economic maneuvering | Fiscal surplus/deficit | All autocracies | Executive and legislative elections |
| 6 | Post-electoral conflict | 1. Popular protests 2. Leadership turnover | Autocracies with elections (both closed and electoral autocracies) | Executive and legislative elections |

toral manipulation, economic maneuvering, and post-election political order. Table 1.1 shows scope conditions and empirical foci of the book's cross-national statistical analyses. This cross-national analysis part primarily aims to test the external validity of my arguments by investigating correlations between the dictator's mobilization capabilities, electioneering strategies, and post-electoral political order.[16] Chapter 3 explores the conditions under which autocrats resort to blatant electoral fraud as a form of electoral manipulation. Based on my theory of autocratic elections, I test whether the three elements of mobilization capabilities are correlated with blatant electoral fraud. The analysis includes both closed and electoral

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16. Regarding the relationship between cross-national statistical analysis and case studies, this book does not take the so-called nested analysis approach (Lieberman 2005). In the nested analysis style of research design, researchers first conduct a cross-national analysis and then choose a single typical case or two to illustrate causal mechanisms assumed in theory. By contrast, this book adopts a research design in which case studies are based on structured comparisons with the most similar system design to demonstrate the internal validity of the main arguments. I then extend its empirical focus to other authoritarian countries via cross-national statistical investigations to confirm the theory's external validity (Rohlfing 2008; Harbers and Ingram 2020: 1123–24).

autocracies that hold any form of election, with a focus on both executive and legislative elections.[17] Specifically, my cross-national statistical analyses indicate that dictators with abundant natural resources and weak opposition permit elections to be freer and fairer by relying less on blatant electoral fraud, such as election violence, electoral cheating, and undemocratic restrictions on electoral law. Furthermore, the negative impact of natural resources on electoral fraud increases when dictators have dominant parties and large, less fractionalized dominant ethnic groups, both of which enable autocrats to discipline ruling elites and streamline economic distribution to the masses.

In addition to committing blatant electoral fraud, autocrats can also manipulate electoral institutions according to their political needs. Chapter 4 investigates the determinants of electoral system choice in parliamentary elections under electoral authoritarian regimes. I first discuss the benefits and costs of both SMD and PR systems based upon the idea of the electoral dilemma in dictatorships, suggesting that SMD systems help dictators maintain the certainty of winning big via pro-regime seat premiums, whereas PR systems are useful to divide and rule the opposition and improve voter turnout by improving the credibility of the electoral processes. Based upon this trade-off, I argue that dictators with abundant natural resources or those facing weak opposition adopt PR systems to lock in autocrats' dominance, whereas weak dictators rely on SMD systems to maintain overwhelming electoral victories. Using newly collected cross-national data on electoral systems in electoral authoritarian regimes (i.e., autocracies with multiparty elections), I demonstrate that both natural resource wealth and a weak opposition increase the likelihood that dictators will choose PR systems. Furthermore, the correlation between natural resources and PR systems becomes stronger if autocrats are supported by dominant parties.

Chapter 5 presents cross-national evidence of the dictators' economic maneuvering, namely, political business cycles (PBCs). The theory of autocratic elections predicts a trade-off between electoral manipulation and the maneuvering of economic policy: autocrats who can mobilize public support via the provision of pork and patronage rely less on manipulating election results by blatant fraud and electoral rules producing pro-regime seat bias. Using a sample including all types of authoritarian countries (i.e., closed autocracies and electoral autocracies), I conduct cross-national sta-

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17. Closed autocracies are also included in this analysis, because excluding opposition parties is also an important method of blatant electoral fraud. I will discuss this in more detail in chapter 3.

tistical analyses using original fiscal balance datasets and autocratic elections to test whether elections in autocracies relatively free from electoral manipulation are positively correlated with fiscal deficits. Specifically, I find that election year fiscal deficits are more likely to occur if autocratic elections (1) allow opposition parties to participate, (2) involve less blatant electoral fraud, and (3) adopt PR systems.

Chapter 6 empirically investigates the political consequences of autocratic elections. Autocratic elections backfire when they deviate from the equilibrium of autocratic election design in dealing with the electoral dilemma. I argue that there are two post-election scenarios when autocratic elections backfire on the dictator. On the one hand, when autocrats undersupply electoral manipulation, elections reveal de facto low popularity of the dictator, paving the way for ruling elites to launch a coup or for opposition parties to unexpectedly win elections. On the other hand, when autocrats oversupply electoral fraud relative to their mobilization capabilities, the quality of the election deteriorates, and thus the election cannot work as a credible tool to demonstrate a regime's strength, consequently encouraging post-election protest movements. In contrast, when an autocrat successfully gauges the extent of electoral manipulation according to the amount of mobilization capabilities he possesses, autocratic elections minimize both threats. Through cross-national statistical analysis of autocracies with elections, I present two main findings: the more underused electoral manipulation is, the more likely autocrats are to face leadership turnover in the aftermath of elections; and the more overused electoral manipulation is, the more likely autocrats are to face popular protests in the post-electoral period.

The third part of this book presents comparative case studies of two Central Asian republics, Nazarbaev's Kazakhstan (1991–2007) and Akaev's Kyrgyzstan (1991–2005). These case studies provide a rare opportunity to rigorously elucidate the causal links that my theory of autocratic elections anticipates. Both countries share much in common with regard to history, society, international circumstances, economy, and political institutions. However, the developments of their autocratic regimes followed distinct paths, which offer an ideal laboratory to compare the two countries with the method of differences (Przeworski and Teune 1970; Slater and Ziblatt 2013).

Both countries are former Soviet republics, and this historical legacy means that, at the time of independence, both had similarly autonomous regional elites (Jones Luong 2002). In addition, both forged strong patron-client relationships between politicians and citizens, known as "patronal-

TABLE 1.2. Two-Way (Time-Series and Cross-Sectional) Controlled Comparison:
Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

| | Presidential vote share | Ruling parties' vote share | Blatant electoral fraud (Kelley's [2012] QED) | Electoral systems (effective electoral threshold) | Post-electoral protests |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Chapter 7: Kazakhstan** | | | | | |
| 1995 | NA | 52.20% | 6 | 37.5 (SMD) | 0 |
| 1999 | 81.00% | 49.00% | 9 | 33.5 (SMD + PR) | 2 |
| 2004 | NA | 75.00% | 7 | 33.5 (SMD + PR) | 3 |
| 2005 | 91.15% | NA | 7 | | 0 |
| 2007 | NA | 100% | 5 | 7 (PR) | 0 |
| **Chapter 8: Kyrgyzstan** | | | | | |
| 1995 | 72.40% | 22.00% | 7 | 37.5 (SMD) | 0 |
| 2000 | 76.40% | 20.00% | 8 | 32.62 (SMD + PR) | 14 |
| 2005 | NA | 53.00% | 9 | 37.5 (SMD) | 140 (autocratic breakdown) |

*Note:* Extent of blatant electoral fraud is measured based on Kelley's (2012) *Quality of Elections Data*, with higher values denoting more extensive electoral fraud. Electoral systems are measured by the effective electoral threshold, with higher values indicating more majoritarian electoral systems. Post-electoral protests are derived from Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung's (2018) *Electoral Contention and Violence dataset*, which counts the number of popular protests after an election.

ism" (Hale 2015) and "patrimonial communism" (Kitschelt et al. 1999). The societal makeup of both countries includes multiple ethnic groups, and political leaders were forced to take ethnic problems seriously immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, following independence, the two republics faced the daunting task of simultaneously engaging in political reform and the transition to a market economy. Both countries then implemented equally radical economic reforms, and both experienced democratic backsliding after initial democratization efforts. Internationally, both countries have Russia and China as regional partners while also being geographically distant from the West. A couple of years after independence, the political institutions of both countries were alike, with similar electoral systems, very weak ruling party institutions, parliaments with active opposition parties, and de facto decentralized state structures. With both countries taking similar turns toward authoritarianism in the mid-1990s, their constitutions were revised through referenda and came to formally stipulate strong presidential powers and weak parliaments.

However, elections in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan came to have strik-

ingly different consequences for post-electoral political order by the middle of the 2000s. In Kazakhstan, elections helped Nazarbaev consolidate his rule by widening electoral margins in the absence of large-scale protests. In contrast, elections gradually eroded Kyrgyzstan's authoritarian stability, and the 2005 elections eventually led to massive popular protests and the breakdown of the Akaev regime.

Furthermore, the manner in which the dictators of these two countries designed elections differed significantly. For example, the extent of blatant electoral fraud in Kazakhstan prior to the 2007 elections was lower than that in Kyrgyzstan in the 2005 elections. This presents an intriguing puzzle on how the government won big without increasing the level of electoral fraud in Kazakhstan. In addition, prior to the 2005 legislative election, Kyrgyzstan switched to a pure SMD electoral system, whereas Kazakhstan, before the 2007 legislative election, reformed to a pure PR electoral system with a single nationwide electoral district. Table 1.2 shows differences in electoral performance, electoral manipulation, and post-electoral protests between the two countries. How can we understand the variations in the use of electoral manipulation techniques between the two countries?

In addition to exploring striking differences in elections and political order between the two countries in the 2000s, each case study also involves in-depth within-case comparative analyses. Analyzing each regime from a temporal perspective, we find that each country also exhibits intriguing over-time variations in this book's variables of interest. For instance, during the 1990s, Kazakhstan experienced more extensive blatant electoral fraud, but by the middle of the 2000s, this became less salient. The country also inherited an SMD-based system from the Soviet Union and made some modifications thereafter, but by 2007 it changed to a pure PR electoral system. Kyrgyzstan experienced no post-electoral protests during the 1990s; however, protests emerged during the 2000 and 2005 elections, triggering the so-called Tulip Revolution. Besides the cross-sectional differences between the two countries, table 1.2 also documents intertemporal changes in electoral performance, electoral manipulation, and post-electoral protests within each country. Within-case analysis provides an illustration of why these changes happened, while controlling for other possible country-specific confounders that are difficult to eliminate in a simple one-shot cross-sectional comparison between the two countries. In sum, by combining the between- and within-case study perspectives via the controlled comparison, the case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan deeply delve into the processes by which dictators' mobilization capabilities shape the causes and consequences of autocratic elections.

These case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are based on the fieldwork I conducted in Central Asia between December 2008 and July 2014. I spent a total of eight months in Almaty and Astana in Kazakhstan and in Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan. In addition to secondary sources and election monitoring reports from the two Central Asian republics, the case studies use unique quantitative data gathered at the Statistical Agencies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, various local publications, and qualitative data collected from thirty-four semi-structured interviews conducted with politicians, opposition leaders, NGO activists, and local researchers in both countries.

Chapter 7 investigates the case of post-Soviet Kazakhstan, where a dictator successfully consolidated his regime by strengthening pre-election economic maneuvering in the face of less fraudulent elections and a proportional representation electoral system. During the 1990s, Kazakhstan experienced numerous instances of electoral malpractice. However, by the middle of the 2000s, President Nursultan Nazarbaev had become less inclined to use blatant electoral fraud and even decided to switch from an SMD electoral system to a PR system. Focusing on growing natural resource wealth, increasingly strong state and party organizations, and weakening opposition, I demonstrate that the president's decision to shift electoral strategies from heavy-handed electoral manipulation to extensive, pre-electoral economic maneuvering was realized in order to achieve election victories with large margins.

In chapter 8, I present a case study of Kyrgyzstan to illustrate how the failure to strategically manipulate elections leads to popular protests. In stark contrast to Nazarbaev, President Akaev of Kyrgyzstan faced massive popular protests during the 2005 parliamentary elections, and he was ultimately forced to leave office. Why did the 2005 elections backfire on the president? As with the case of Kazakhstan, I describe how the distribution of mobilization capabilities changed from independence until the collapse of the Akaev regime in 2005. I first show that, while Akaev was relatively successful in mobilizing public support during the 1990s by using financial resources and clan alliances under relatively free and fair elections, shrinking financial resources, decentralized political organizations, and growing opposition all encouraged him to be more inclined to practice blatant electoral fraud by the early 2000s. I also show that excessive electoral manipulation and the announcement of the ruling party's electoral victory in the 2005 parliamentary elections sparked popular protests by opposition supporters who were united in a belief that the regime should not be strong enough to earn such an overwhelming election win.

In chapter 9, I discuss the broad implications of the book. While autocratic elections are not the only aspect of authoritarian politics, they are a useful tool at the disposal of autocrats to consolidate their rule. In this chapter, I discuss how this book's findings contribute to our understanding of the role of international society in improving electoral integrity and economic policy making in authoritarian regimes. Finally, this chapter suggests possible policy implications while addressing the limitations of the theory. It concludes with recommendations on future research directions.

# A Theory of Autocratic Elections

The essence of these tactics is some voluntary but irreversible sacrifice of freedom of choice. They rest on the paradox that the power to constrain an adversary may depend on the power to bind oneself.

—Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*

The rich never fight, poverty dulls the wit.

—Japanese proverb

## 2.1. Introduction

Elections are a double-edged sword for authoritarian leaders. Elections are expected to mitigate fundamental problems in authoritarian rule, but they also generate crucial risks such that threats to autocratic rule are triggered in practice. Given that no two autocrats have identical resources and capabilities for dealing with these risks, autocrats design elections differently according to their needs and priorities. The varying methods that autocrats use to manipulate election results lead to distinct outcomes on the post-electoral political order.

This chapter comprises two parts. The bulk of the chapter outlines the logic behind the causes and consequences of autocratic elections. I begin by reviewing some fundamental problems of authoritarian rule. I then identify the ways in which autocratic elections contribute to solving these problems, while also suggesting that autocrats face an important trade-off between the certainty of winning big and the credibility of election results.

After highlighting this electoral dilemma, I then go on to argue that the extent to which authoritarian leaders can mobilize popular support via noncoercive measures is key to explaining variations in electoral manipulation across dictatorships. I theorize about the advantages and disadvantages of two electioneering strategies, namely, electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering. My theory of autocratic elections anticipates that dictators with high capabilities of garnering mass support via economic distribution (what this book refers to as "high mobilization capabilities") are more likely to hold partly free and fair elections. Conversely, when such mobilization capabilities are low, autocrats cannot help but rely on electoral manipulation, such as blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation.

Some autocratic elections backfire on dictators and destabilize autocratic rule. I argue that autocratic elections destabilize political order when dictators deviate from the equilibrium of autocratic election design. On the one hand, when autocrats overestimate their capability to mobilize the masses and consequently hold excessively free and fair elections, autocratic elections reveal the weaknesses of the regime, thereby leading to the realization of within-regime threats or a stunning election victory for opposition parties. On the other hand, when autocrats underestimate their mobilization capabilities and excessively employ electoral manipulation methods, then autocratic elections provide the opposition with an opportunity to coordinate anti-government collective action. In short, different types of dictators' mistakes result in distinct forms of political conflicts in the aftermath of elections. By contrast, when authoritarian leaders successfully design elections based on accurate assessments of their mobilization capabilities, they are able to maximize the benefits of authoritarian elections while minimizing the likelihood of post-electoral political conflicts.

Last, the remaining part of this chapter provides an empirical assessment of the correlates of the distribution of mobilization capabilities between the dictator and other political elites. Specifically, I present cross-national evidence on the relationship between mobilization capabilities and electoral performance. I propose that dictators' mobilization capabilities vis-à-vis other political elites are well measured by focusing on three components: (1) the dictator's discretionary financial resources, (2) the regime's formal and informal organizations that discipline ruling elites and effectively reach the masses, and (3) the opposition's capability to mobilize mass support. I demonstrate that these cross-national measures for the distribution of mobilization capabilities are useful indicators that adequately predict dictators' margins of victory in both presidential and legislative elections.

## 2.2. Fundamental Problems of Autocratic Rule and
## the Roles of Elections in Dictatorships

Scholarship has suggested that political leaders in dictatorships in which repression prevails and political freedom is severely circumscribed face at least three complications, which I term the *fundamental problems of authoritarian rule*. The first two problems result from information shortages, whereby both the dictator and the potential opponents face challenges in gleaning the opposite side's intentions and capabilities. From the dictator's point of view, the lack of political transparency makes it difficult to know what people really think about the regime. In authoritarian regimes, both elites and citizens are reluctant to reveal their true preferences because doing so risks making them targets of state repression (Kuran 1991; Wintrobe 1998). However, without reliable sources of information, the dictator experiences difficulties in achieving efficient governance.

From the perspective of the potential opponents, it is difficult to accurately gauge the autocrat's true intentions and capabilities. Such uncertainty may encourage opponents to preempt threats by rebelling as a result of miscalculating their relative strengths vis-à-vis the dictator, thus resulting in political turmoil. Strengthening the military is among the most frequently used measures to credibly demonstrate a dictator's power to potential opponents; however, overheavy reliance on the sword threatens a leader's tenure by enhancing opportunities for coups d'état (Svolik 2012). Thus, this measure is not a perfect solution.[1]

The third problem derives from the possibility that repression and a lack of political transparency will urge potential opponents to take radical actions to achieve their goals. Without institutionalized channels through which people's demands and preferences are transmitted to decision makers, opponents may find it reasonable to employ violent, anti-system measures as a last resort. Excessive reliance on repression and indiscriminate violence may also fuel grievances among the population, which makes it easier for the opposition to coordinate anti-government collective actions (Goodwin 2001; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007).

Taken together, excessively relying on violence and repression is not a smart option for dictators to hold onto power. With this in mind, the autocratic politics literature has identified various ways in which authoritarian leaders mitigate the fundamental problems of authoritarian rule. For

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1. Regarding the causes and consequences of coercive institutions in dictatorships, see Greitens (2016).

example, autocrats may relax their tight control over the media such that a partly independent media effectively monitors inner elites' performance and corruption and/or identifies citizens' grievances, thereby improving their hold on governance (Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009; Stockmann 2013; Lorentzen 2014); they may allow opposition parties to attend the legislature so that they can remain informed about the opposition's policy preferences and accordingly provide policy concessions (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Gandhi 2008); and they may encourage loyal lawmakers in the parliament to raise important policy issues in their regions to gauge citizens' grievances (Truex 2016). Other possible measures include institutionalizing a dominant party to facilitate credible power sharing between themselves and ruling elites (Magaloni 2008; Myerson 2008; Boix and Svolik 2013); exhibiting more tolerance of criticism against government policies while also censoring internet posts or other communications calling for collective action (King, Pan, and Roberts 2013); or decentralizing governance as a means to more accurately grasp the preferences and demands of local elites and the citizenry (Montinola, Qian, and Weingast 1994; Treisman 1999).

A major tool used by dictators to deal with the challenges generated by authoritarian rule is to take advantage of elections. As reviewed in the previous chapter, autocratic elections can mitigate such problems in the following three ways. First, election results inform dictators' strengths by demonstrating their electoral mobilization (i.e., *demonstration effects*; e.g., Magaloni 2006; Simpser 2013). By scoring overwhelming election victories, authoritarian leaders send a signal that their regimes are invincible, thereby deterring ruling elites from defecting, launching coups, and leading regime breakdowns. Second, election results are also useful for assessing the competence and popularity of ruling elites and the opposition (i.e., *information-gathering effects*). Elections enable autocrats to gauge the ruling elites' competence as well as the opposition's popularity by observing their respective abilities to mobilize constituents (Little 2012). Armed with such electoral information, autocrats are able to decide who among ruling elites deserves to climb the ladder of career promotion within regimes (Blaydes 2011), as well as where to best allocate state resources for reward and repression purposes (Cox 2009; Miller 2015). Third, competitive, regime-sponsored elections in autocracies may contribute to hindering coordination in the opposition camp, as the opposition must then decide whether or not to participate in the elections, which often helps dictators drive a wedge between moderate and radical opposition forces (i.e., *divide-and-rule effects*; Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001; Lust-Okar 2004).

Therefore, autocratic elections are expected to yield several important benefits through which dictators can ameliorate the problems that arise when they exclusively rely on heavy-handed measures. However, autocratic elections also entail significant risks; consequently, dictators need to carefully design them depending on their needs and priorities. In the following subsections, I theorize about the varying measures that authoritarian leaders strive to balance the above-mentioned costs and benefits when designing autocratic elections.

## 2.3. The Electoral Dilemma in Dictatorships

The core benefits that dictators seek through elections may vary across authoritarian regimes; however, regardless of which electoral benefits the dictator emphasizes, the bottom line is that holding authoritarian elections involves a significant trade-off. Free and fair elections enable dictators to make the most of the above-mentioned benefits, which in turn help mitigate the fundamental problems of authoritarian rule. However, free and fair elections also decrease the likelihood of overwhelming victories for autocratic leaders, which in turn reveals the weaknesses of the regime and, thus, becomes another source of potential destabilization. In particular, revealing the weaknesses of a regime in this manner activates threats from above (inner elites) in the aftermath of the elections. By contrast, if autocrats are afraid to hold free and fair elections and, thus, extensively manipulate the electoral process, then elections not only become useless as a tool to solve the fundamental problems of autocracy but also increase the likelihood of an eruption of post-electoral mass protests. Simply put, autocrats face a trade-off between the *certainty of winning big* and the *credibility of election results*. Herein, I term this conundrum the *electoral dilemma* of dictatorships, arguing that the design of autocratic elections is a manifestation of how autocrats address this problem.

On the one hand, electoral manipulation enhances the certainty of the dictator's electoral victories. Ceteris paribus, the likelihood that dictators successfully obtain an overwhelming victory increases, as they manipulate elections in extensive ways through measures such as violence, ballot stuffing, and manipulation of electoral rules. Electoral "misconduct increases its vote share. The benefits of this are obvious in close electoral races with an uncertain outcome. But even in hegemonic contexts, cheating pays. . . . It contributes to large margins of electoral victory, which in turn create an aura of invincibility that deters future opposition challengers" (Donno

2013a: 33). Indeed, using cross-national data on blatant electoral fraud and electoral margins, Simpser (2013: 67–72) showed that blatant electoral fraud tends to yield larger margins of victory in developing countries.

On the other hand, electoral manipulation may undermine the credibility of election results. The likelihood that election results are perceived as an accurate reflection of the dictator's popularity decreases when authoritarian leaders resort to extensive electoral manipulation. When it is certain that the dictator's overwhelming electoral victories largely result from extensive electoral manipulation, elections are likely to lose some of the benefits that I identified above. First, extensively manipulated elections may no longer send a credible signal of the extent to which voters uphold the regime, thus undermining the demonstration effects. For instance, when dictators can easily obtain 100 percent of the vote (by not permitting opposition or using electoral violence and cheating), then the election results do not reflect their true popularity. In such predetermined plebiscite elections, citizens become indifferent and/or cynical about the electoral process and its results, as in the Soviet Union (White 1988: 13; Tedin 1994). By contrast, if dictators can win by a large margin without resorting to electoral manipulation, then the election results serve as a costly signal of their latent popularity, which effectively deters challenges from potential opponents. For instance, Norris (2014: chap. 6) demonstrated that blatant electoral fraud undermines people's legal compliance and confidence in governments. In addition to vote shares, electoral manipulation also dampens voter turnout, which is another indicator of gauging the regime's electoral performance (Magaloni 2006; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018: 141). If elections are no more than shams, then voters may be disincentivized to participate in the electoral process, whereas less manipulated elections are conducive to mobilizing voters. Consistent with this observation, Birch (2010) empirically showed that high levels of electoral integrity are positively correlated with citizens' propensity to vote.

Second, committing extensive electoral manipulation hinders dictators' ability to gather reliable information on other actors through election results, thus damaging the information-gathering effects of elections.[2]

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2. It might be possible for dictators to at first observe a "true" electoral performance via elections and then manipulate it when they announce the results to the public through a central election committee. However, such ballot box tampering methods are likely to undermine the image of regime invincibility and even spark popular protests, which are highly dangerous for dictators (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Tucker 2007). For instance, Harvey and Mukherjee (2020) show that administrative fraud, which is a relatively cheaper way of electoral fraud than voter intimidation and extra-legal mobilization, is more likely to provoke popular protests.

When electoral manipulation is used to bias the results in favor of the dictator, the results do not reflect the de facto distribution of political support among the public. Such electoral manipulation makes it difficult to accurately glean voters' preferences and gauge public support for opposition parties, thus undermining the basis on which they can reward or punish voters.[3] Indeed, Seki (2015) demonstrated that elections boycotted by opposition parties in Milošević's Serbia were less likely to be followed by post-electoral allocations of public employment according to party strengths, indicating that less competitive elections hinder the information-gathering function. Candidates from ruling parties often compete in elections wherein governments prohibit the participation of opposition parties, such as the cases of Vietnam and Uzbekistan. Even in such facade elections, manipulation complicates the quality of electoral information by making it difficult to estimate the competence of ruling elites through election results. In this respect, Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2018: 141) succinctly described the relationship among electoral fairness, local officials' policy competence, and the information-gathering function of autocratic elections:

> [Electoral] [c]ompetition thus puts pressure on local officials and deputies to refrain from exploitation and brutality toward constituents and compete on behalf of their areas in the national scramble for schools, clinics, paved roads, and whatever else is given out. They need to deliver some benefits and provide some local public goods in order to ensure turnout, votes for the ruling party, and participation in ruling-party rallies. The need to deliver benefits to voters gives ambitious officials and candidates incentives to convey the needs and problems of their districts to central leaders and build clientele networks to reach the grassroots.

Third, manipulated elections weaken the divide-and-rule function of autocratic elections, as they encourage the opposition camp to agree on taking anti-system approaches. Noncompetitive elections completely exclude opposition parties, thereby increasing their propensity to risk radical actions, in contrast to multiparty competitions wherein some of

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3. This is particularly true in the case of blatant electoral fraud, which obscures the true distribution of votes (and seats in the case of legislative elections), thereby damaging the information-gathering function. By contrast, institutional manipulation (i.e., electoral system change, gerrymandering, and/or malapportionment) that biases seat shares in the parliament remains visible in the distribution of vote shares across political parties for the dictator (and often for the opposition).

the opposition may decide to gain political influence through regime-sponsored political institutions (Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2012). Indeed, Gandhi and Vreeland (2004) demonstrated that authoritarian legislatures lacking multiple parties contribute to the increased risk of violent conflict. Even when autocrats permit competitive elections, heavy reliance on electoral manipulation techniques increases their vote shares, while reducing those of opposition parties. A broader spectrum of the opposition is tempted to abstain from excessively manipulated elections, as they sense that the costs of their participation outweigh the potential benefits. Electoral manipulation may have an effect of unifying the opposition parties that decide to join the elections, as coordinating their campaigns is one of the few strategies to secure seats in manipulated elections.[4] Finally, electoral manipulation may also often turn into a focal point on which the opposition coordinates their collective action (Tucker 2007). In sum, relying on excessive electoral manipulation may provoke large-scale anti-regime collective action, which is often led by a unified opposition.

Taken together, excessive electoral manipulation undermines the beneficial effects of autocratic elections by damaging the credibility of the election processes and election results. Specifically, electoral manipulation impairs (1) the *demonstration effects* of conveying the dictator's popularity to ruling elites and the opposition, (2) the *information-gathering function* that informs the dictator of ruling elites' and the opposition's popularity, and (3) the *divide-and-rule effects* that make the coordination among the opposition difficult. These three effects are magnified as elections become freer and fairer. In contrast, elections become relatively useless when they are significantly manipulated because (1) both inner elites and the opposition are unable to accurately estimate the popularity of the dictator, (2) dictators can no longer gauge the popularity and competence of ruling elites and the opposition, and (3) the opposition is more likely to unite and take collective anti-regime action. Put differently, misinformation among political actors, arising from electoral manipulation, increases the likelihood of political conflict (Beaulieu 2014): dictators may be inclined to think that it is easier to quell public dissent than is possible in reality, and potential opponents may be tempted to protest due to their underestimation of the dictator's strength.

Conversely, when dictators refrain from employing extensive electoral manipulation and thereby increase the credibility of the results, elections

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4. Related to this point, see chapter 4 regarding the effects of majoritarian electoral systems on forming opposition coalitions.

generate the expected effects that thereafter help autocrats mitigate the fundamental problems of authoritarian rule. For instance, using a global sample, Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig (2017) demonstrated that competitive autocratic elections tend to make dictatorships resilient to regime breakdown in nonelectoral periods. However, partly free and fair elections also set a higher hurdle to obtain an overwhelming majority, as dictators need to devise alternative means to produce the number of votes that could have been gained through electoral manipulation. The failure to craft an overwhelming election victory reveals regime weakness, which could lead to activating the defection of ruling elites and the risk of coup (Wig and Rod 2016), or excessively free and fair elections may bring stunning election victories to opposition parties (Huntington 1991).

## 2.4. The Game of Autocratic Elections: The Dictator, Ruling Elites, and the Opposition

With this electoral dilemma in mind, the theory of autocratic elections centers on the interactions among three main actors: the dictator, ruling elites, and the opposition. The dictator decides the extent to which an election is manipulated, which then produces a particular election result (i.e., the winner in presidential elections and the distribution of seats in legislative elections), following which ruling elites and the opposition decide whether or not to revolt on the basis of the information gleaned from the electoral manipulation and the election result.

### *Electoral Motivations of the Dictator*

Dictators seek to stay in power. To maximize their prospect of political survival using elections as a tool, dictators consider two factors (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2018). The first consideration is to win elections. In particular, autocrats need overwhelming electoral victories, as marginal election victories may not be sufficient for their political survival. In authoritarian regimes that are upheld by the widespread belief that dictators and their parties hold extremely favorable resources and advantages, election victories with very small margins let people update their belief to conclude that the regimes are weaker than expected. In this light, as Simpser (2013) forcefully argued, authoritarian rulers must win elections with large margins so that they are able to project their might on both electoral processes and election results.

Second, autocrats may also aim to overwhelmingly win elections in such a manner that electoral processes and voting results are not heavily driven by manipulation. Winning big with less electoral manipulation makes it possible for dictators not only to simply survive the elections but also to enhance the benefits of autocratic elections, which are useful for mitigating the fundamental problems of authoritarian rule. By not resorting to extensive electoral manipulation, autocrats are able to exploit the three benefits of autocratic elections; they can effectively discipline both ruling elites and the opposition on the basis of the demonstration effects (provided autocrats win big), streamline resource allocation on both ruling elites and the opposition through the information-gathering function, and divide and conquer the opposition camp.

### Electoral Motivations of Ruling Elites and Opposition Leaders

Authoritarian political leaders face two significant threats through which they may be violently removed, which Svolik (2012) refers to as "the twin problems of authoritarian rule." The first threat derives from inner elites ("problem of authoritarian power sharing"), whereas the second is sourced from below, namely, mass revolts, which are mostly led by opposition leaders ("problem of authoritarian control"). Under some conditions, election time has a potential of invigorating either (or both) of these threats. Following elections, both ruling elites and opposition members decide whether or not to revolt. To challenge the dictator, ruling elites launch a coup, whereas opposition elites organize mass protests.

Importantly, the motivations leading both actors to revolt after elections are strikingly different. For ruling elites, the dictator's failure to win big is consequential. Ruling elites consider whether they will be able to enjoy rents under the current regime. When the dictator successfully survives elections with large margins, then it is reasonable for the ruling elites to continue supporting the incumbent because it is less likely that the regime will collapse in the foreseeable future. Conversely, when the dictator only marginally wins elections or unexpectedly loses to opposition parties, inner elites are more likely to think that the autocrat will not be able to sustain the current regime. Therefore, they have an incentive to plot a post-electoral coup d'état to replace the incumbent (Wig and Rod 2016). Here, by "coup d'état," I refer to a forced removal of an authoritarian ruler by any regime insider (e.g., members of the dictator's inner circle, the government, or the security apparatus), not limited to military coups (Svolik 2012: 4). For instance, in the 1982 Guatemalan presidential

elections, Ángel Aníbal Guevara, the hand-picked successor of the former unpopular president Romeo Lucas García, won the elections with only scoring about 39 percent of total votes. The election results provided other military officers with an opportunity to oust the new president by a post-electoral coup.

In contrast, opposition leaders care more about the extent of electoral manipulation and organize mass protests when elections have been heavily manipulated. The likelihood that opposition parties successfully gain political influence after elections increases as elections become freer and fairer; for example, in legislative elections, opposition parties may be able to gain some portions of seats through which they can derive policy concessions from the dictator (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). Even in presidential elections, a strong electoral performance makes them highly visible and subsequently increases their bargaining power within the regime. Therefore, a broader range of opposition parties may decide to participate in partly free elections instead of organizing mass protests. Indeed, Trejo (2014) suggested that popular protests led by the opposition tended to decrease as elections became liberalized under the Institutional Revolutionary Party's (PRI) rule in Mexico.

The opposition's propensity to orchestrate popular protests increases when elections are heavily manipulated for the three reasons related to the demonstration and the divide-and-rule effects of elections. First, comparing their strength with an announced election result brought by electoral manipulation, the opposition may update their belief that the regime has become so weakened that the autocrat used electoral manipulation as a last resort to stay in power. This may reduce the demonstration effect of elections and lead the opposition to take to the streets. Second, because manipulated elections bias results extremely in favor of the dictator, elections no longer serve as an institutional channel by which to co-opt some portion of the opposition. Electoral manipulation stimulates a broader spectrum of the opposition camp to conclude that it is preferable to take to the streets for organizing anti-regime mass protests than to carry out election campaigns within the framework of regime-sponsored elections. Third, extensive electoral manipulation turns elections into a focal point on which the opposition coordinates their anti-regime collective actions by denouncing the dictator's excessive use of electoral manipulation. For example, in Madagascar's 2001 elections, the incumbent president Didier Ratsiraka utilized massive electoral fraud against an increasingly popular opposition candidate, Marc Ravalomanana, during the electoral process. The incumbent's announcement that he obtained a majority in the elec-

tions sparked large-scale popular protests, leading the country to the brink of a civil war. Owing to these three reasons, extensive electoral manipulation increases the likelihood of mass revolt.

In sum, when electoral manipulation is limited, the dictator is able to exploit the benefits of elections while also decreasing their chance of winning elections in an overwhelming fashion. The ruling elites care more about the dictator's electoral margins than about the extent of electoral manipulation, which implies that small electoral victory margins increase their propensity to plot a coup d'état. By contrast, the opposition cares more about the extent of electoral manipulation and decides to organize mass protests when the dictator excessively employs that strategy.

### Four Scenarios of Autocratic Elections

Classifying autocratic elections on the basis of the discussion above, table 2.1 summarizes four possible scenarios of autocratic elections. In the upper right quadrant, where electoral margins are large with extensive electoral manipulation, ruling elites' threats are less imminent, mass revolts are more likely, and the dictator cannot enjoy the benefits of elections (**Scenario I**). In the lower right quadrant, where electoral margins are small despite extensive electoral manipulation, marginal election victories activate coup threats from ruling elites, mass revolts are also imminent, and the dictator can neither survive elections nor enjoy their benefits (**Scenario II**).[5] The upper left quadrant denotes that the dictator scores an overwhelming victory without electoral manipulation, which enables the dictator to obtain the benefits of elections as well as deter ruling elites from launching a coup and the opposition from protesting (**Scenario III**). In the lower left column, where electoral manipulation is limited but there is a small margin of victory, coups are likely to occur after elections, whereas popular protests are unlikely. In this case, the dictator experiences some challenges getting through the election; however, upon surviving the election, he is likely to enjoy some of the benefits that elections bring (**Scenario IV**).

A cross-national comparison of autocratic elections corroborates these observations as well as the assumptions of the actors' preferences. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate the distribution of autocratic elections across the four different scenarios according to the level of fraud and the type of elec-

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5. In this scenario, mass protests may be organized by opposition elites or former ruling elites who defected from the extant regime. In addition, the occurrence of mass protests may also increase the likelihood that ruling elites decide to launch a coup given the dictator's high unpopularity further signaled by popular protests.

TABLE 2.1. Main Actors, Electoral Margins, and Electoral Manipulation

| Election margins | Electoral manipulation | |
| | Limited | Extensive |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Large | Dictator: **Survive election**; **benefits of election** <br> Ruling elites: **Stay in regime** <br> Opposition: **Not protest** <br><br> **Scenario III** | Dictator: **Survive election**; **little benefits of election** <br> Ruling elites: **Stay in regime** <br> Opposition: **Protest** <br><br> **Scenario I** |
| Small | Dictator: **Not survive election**; **benefits of election** <br> Ruling elites: **Plot a coup** <br> Opposition: **Not protest** <br><br> **Scenario IV** | Dictator: **Not survive election**; **little benefits of election** <br> Ruling elites: **Plot a coup** <br> Opposition: **Protest** <br><br> **Scenario II** |

toral system, respectively. For two major forms of electoral manipulation, namely, blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation (discussed in the next section), autocratic elections are evenly distributed across the four different quadrants (figs. 2.1a and 2.2a, respectively), thus validating the classification of autocratic elections according to electoral margins and electoral manipulation. Importantly, post-electoral leadership turnover via coups or stunning election victories tends to occur in cases of small election margins (below the mean, or approximately 45 percent margins), irrespective of the level of fraud or the electoral system (figs. 2.1b and 2.2b), whereas post-electoral popular protests are associated with extensive electoral manipulation (i.e., blatant electoral fraud and majoritarian electoral systems producing pro-regime seat bias; figs. 2.1c and 2.2c, respectively).

Of course, the worst-case scenario for a dictator is when they fail to win big despite engaging in extensive electoral manipulation (**Scenario II**). In fact, figure 2.1 tells us that autocrats tend to experience both popular protests and leadership turnover in this scenario.

It is questionable which case would be preferable when the dictator can only take either one of large margins with extensive electoral manipulation (**Scenario I**) or small margins with limited manipulation (**Scenario IV**). In such cases, it is important to think which peril (within-regime or opposition threats) is more imminent for the dictator. According to Svolik (2012: 4–5), approximately two-thirds of dictatorships collapse from inside, thus indicating that coup threats from ruling elites are generally more imminent than opposition threats. Therefore, dictators may be more tempted to increase the level of electoral manipulation to "add" more votes to magnify
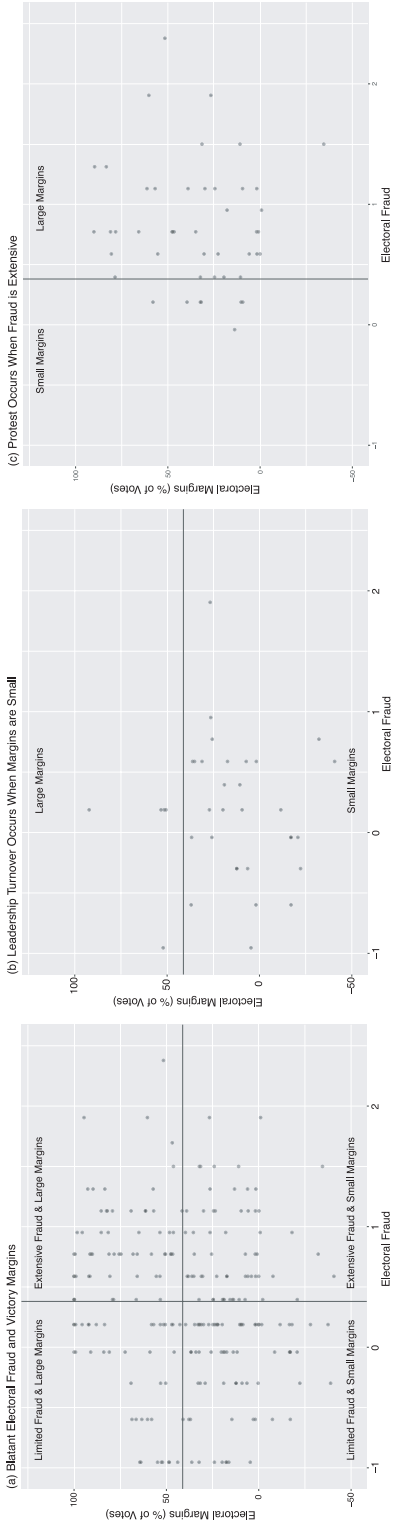
Fig. 2.1. Blatant Electoral Fraud and Electoral Margins in Authoritarian Regimes

*Note*: The data include both presidential and parliamentary elections in electoral dictatorships. The horizontal axis represents the extent of blatant electoral fraud, with higher values meaning more extensive fraud. The vertical axis stands for electoral margins (the difference in shares of votes between the winner and the runner-up in executive elections and the difference in shares of votes between ruling and opposition parties in the case of parliamentary elections). The reference lines represent the means of electoral margins and blatant electoral fraud in the sample. Figure 2.1a suggests that autocratic elections are almost evenly distributed across the four quadrants. Figure 2.1b shows that leadership turnover occurs when electoral margins are small, regardless of the extent of electoral fraud, whereas figure 2.1c indicates that protests happen in cases of extensive blatant electoral fraud, irrespective of electoral margins.
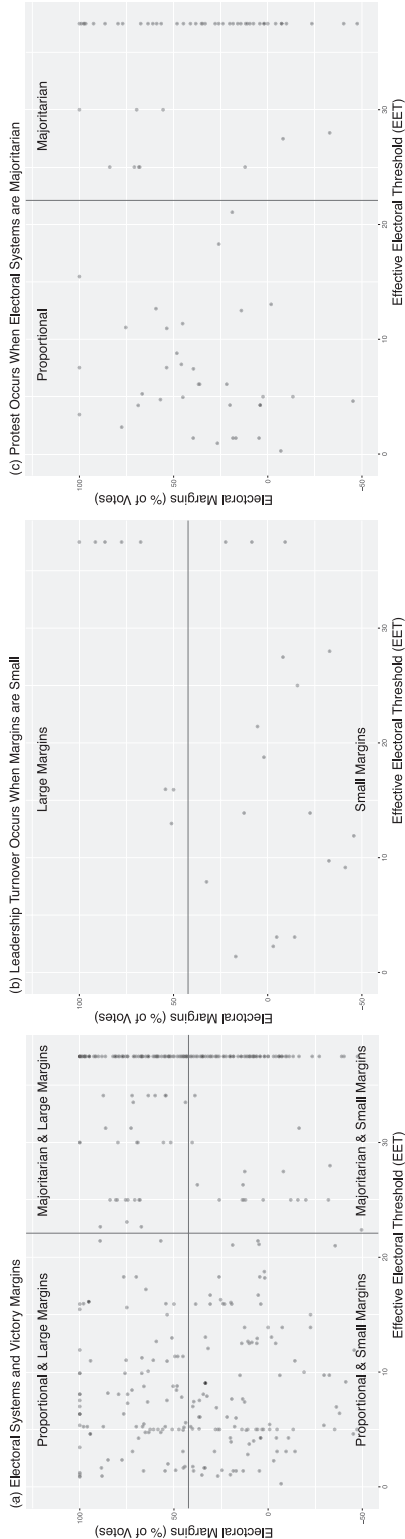
Fig. 2.2. Institutional Manipulation and Electoral Margins in Authoritarian Regimes

*Note*: The data include parliamentary elections in electoral autocracies. The horizontal axis represents electoral system types, with higher values meaning more majoritarian electoral systems (the pure SMD system corresponds to EET = 37.5%). The vertical axis denotes electoral margins (the difference in shares of seats between ruling and opposition parties). The reference lines represent the means of electoral margins and electoral system types. Figure 2.2a suggests that autocratic elections are almost evenly distributed across the four quadrants. Figure 2.2b shows that leadership turnover occurs when electoral margins are small, regardless of electoral system types, whereas figure 2.2c indicates that protests happen when electoral systems are more majoritarian, irrespective of electoral margins.

margins when they anticipate that they will not be able to achieve overwhelming election wins because the failure of winning big credibly reveals the weakness of the regime to the ruling elites.

Most importantly, table 2.1 also suggests that authoritarian leaders can make the most of elections in consolidating their rule when they win elections with large margins without resorting to extensive electoral manipulation (**Scenario III**). Figures 2.1 and 2.2 indicate that there are not a small number of autocratic elections categorized into this type, and such elections tend to not result in either post-electoral leadership turnover or popular protests. This leads us to a pertinent puzzle: *How is it possible for autocrats to increase the prospect of winning big without employing extensive electoral manipulation?*

## 2.5. The Dictator's Tools at the Ballot Box: Electoral Manipulation and Economic Maneuvering

Authoritarian leaders hold a variety of electioneering strategies. How does it become possible for autocrats to win big without manipulating vote counts? In providing the key to solving this puzzle of authoritarian elections, I distinguish between two types of electioneering strategies that authoritarian leaders may employ, namely, *electoral manipulation* and *economic maneuvering*. I then go on to argue that economic maneuvering, such as pre-electoral patronage and pork barrel distributions, contributes to winning big while losing fewer of the benefits of autocratic elections.

By *electoral manipulation*, I refer to a series of coercive and institutional measures that favor the manipulator by *making election results[6] deviate from the aggregate of citizens' vote preferences*. Typically, electoral manipulation takes the form of *blatant electoral fraud*, which involves coercion such as political exclusion, repression, and overt fabrication of votes, thereby biasing election results in favor of the autocrats and their parties (chap. 3). Examples of blatant electoral fraud are extensive, including the deregistration and exclusion of opposition parties from electoral processes; limits on eligibility of running for elections by gender, ethnicity, and/or religion; violent and nonviolent intimidation toward voters and the opposition; the packing of election management bodies; ballot box tampering; and proxy and multiple voting. Although the fraudulent methods used to rig elec-

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6. This means winners in presidential elections and distribution of seats in legislative elections.

tion results vary, what all of these blatant electoral fraud measures have in common is that coercion plays a major role in biasing election results in favor of the manipulators (Simpser 2013).[7] In line with Simpser (2013), I regard these fraudulent manipulation techniques as in the family of blatant electoral fraud, to theorize about the relationship between this form of electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering,

Electoral manipulation may also be manifested as the manipulation of electoral systems, boundaries of electoral districts, and district magnitude. *Institutional manipulation* does not involve coercive means but nonetheless deviates election results from the genuine summation of popular votes by manufacturing the rules of seats-votes elasticity in favor of the manipulators. For instance, single-member district (SMD) systems allow dictators' parties to boost shares of parliamentary seats relative to those of votes, in contrast to proportional representation (PR) systems wherein legislative representation is allocated according to the proportions of votes that each party obtains (chap. 4). In so doing, autocrats are able to enjoy significant seat premiums by adopting SMD systems. Dictators may also employ the manipulation of electoral districts such that more seats are allocated to governing parties. Gerrymandering is one such institutional manipulation technique. By redistricting, dictators craft ruling party majorities in as many electoral districts as possible by splitting votes for opposition parties into separate districts (Wong 2019; Washida 2018). By manipulating district magnitude, autocrats are also able to overrepresent their parties by disproportionally assigning seats to their strongholds. By enhancing the value of votes in the ruling party's strongholds, high levels of malapportionment help dictators win big (Boone and Wahman 2015; Ong, Kasuya, and Mori 2017). Ultimately, PR systems with a single nationwide electoral district are the least likely to be manipulated through gerrymandering and high levels of malapportionment, as seats are proportionally allocated on the basis of votes and both electoral districts and the value of votes are not manipulable. As electoral systems become closer to pure SMD forms wherein the average district magnitude is 1, dictators can more flexibly manipulate the distribution of seats in the legislature through those measures.

In addition to blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation, autocrats may use economic policies to win elections with large margins. Economic maneuvering is the manipulation of fiscal policy instruments prior to elections for the purpose of cultivating political support from the

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7. Other scholars have discussed possible differences between tools of electoral fraud. For instance, Schedler (2013) differentiates between manipulation that is a clear violation of democratic norms and manipulation that is covert and less drastic.

citizenry (i.e., largely synonymous with political business cycles [PBCs]). Economic maneuvering is also an electioneering strategy for dictators; however, it significantly differs from electoral manipulation in the sense that it does not fabricate numbers in election results but rather *directly affects citizens' intentions to vote by distributing material benefits*. Economic maneuvering is a form of targeted benefits in the sense that it entails distributing benefits to certain social groups prior to elections; moreover, it is politically (electorally) motivated because it aims to increase electoral support from the members of the targeted groups. In these respects, economic maneuvering is distinct from the distribution of national public goods and programmatic policies, which are mostly oriented toward policy needs and, thus, are implemented without favoring certain groups for the purpose of earning votes (Hicken 2011).

At the same time, economic maneuvering can entail both *clientelism/ patronage distribution* and *pork barrel politics/club goods provisions*. Clientelism, or patronage, refers to targeted distribution in which the political leader "offers material benefits only on the condition that the recipient returns the favor with a vote or other forms of political support" (Stokes et al. 2013: 13).[8] A typical example is pre-electoral salary increases and bonus provisions for public employees while also using hierarchical relationships in workplaces to ensure their votes for ruling parties. Expanding the number of public employment posts, subsidy amounts, and other goods prior to elections can be categorized as patronage distribution so long as it premises effective monitoring mechanisms that enforce beneficiaries' votes for the governing party, including clientelistic linkages between landowners and peasants (Ziblatt 2009; Joshi and Mason 2011), corporations and employees (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014), party cadres and the rank and file (Zeng 2019), and/or ethnic entrepreneurs and their co-ethnics (Wantchekon 2003). Election-day vote-buying practices involve exchanges of relatively small handouts and ballots between politicians and voters in monitoring environments and, thus, are also viewed as clientelism patterns (e.g., Conroy-Krutz 2017).

In contrast, pork barrel politics, or club goods provision, entails the distribution of goods and services to certain groups but does not presuppose the quid pro quo relationship between material benefits and political support embodied in clientelism.[9] That voters will give their political support after pork delivery is not fully guaranteed; the politician merely expects

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8. In this book, I use the terms "clientelism" and "patronage" synonymously.

9. In this book, I use the terms "club goods provisions" and "pork barrel politics" interchangeably.

that "pork can add votes for the benefactor to the extent that the largess boosts voter goodwill toward the candidate and party" (Stokes et al. 2013: 12). The economic benefits of pork barrel and club goods provision are directed to certain collectivities, such as geographic constituencies, ethnic groups, and social classes. Examples include the provision of nonexcludable goods, such as infrastructural improvements and expansion, new public facilities (e.g., hospitals and schools), and other social spending (e.g., pension, education, and health), that target specific geographic areas and social groups without relying on credible patron-client relationships. Goods provisions listed above as examples of patronage (e.g., salary increases, bonuses, and public employment) may also be sources of pork, unless they are implemented with credible clientelistic linkages. The conceptual difference between these two types of goods provisioning is clear; however, in reality, empirically distinguishing them is notoriously challenging (Golden and Min 2013: 76), as the demarcation criteria rest not upon what goods are delivered but rather upon the strengths of patron-client relationships, which are difficult to consistently measure across time and space.

Table 2.2 summarizes the features, subtypes, and specific examples of electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering. This categorization of electioneering strategies is an ideal type, and in reality the dictator's use of electioneering strategies is often mixed depending upon the distribution of mobilization capabilities, as the next section will closely discuss. Two dimensions are used to compare the characteristics of each electioneering strategy: (1) the extent to which it benefits voters' welfare and (2) the extent to which it helps dictators retain the benefits of autocratic elections.

First, electoral manipulation does not materially benefit voters. Some forms of blatant electoral fraud might entail the provision of material benefits to voters when hiring fraud brokers (e.g., election violence perpetuators and local agents organizing double voting). But, in contrast to economic maneuvering techniques, electoral manipulation does not usually require large-scale financial resources to mobilize by adopting expansionary macroeconomic policies. In cases of institutional manipulation, political leaders may require consent from some ruling elites to change the electoral rules; however, the decisions generally do not involve large-scale economic transactions with citizens.

Conversely, both clientelism and pork barrel politics center on the provision of material benefits to voters, which presumes the manipulator's control of financial resources. Clientelism may enable manipulators to economize their resources for deriving public support due to its monitor-

TABLE 2.2. Electoral Manipulation and Economic Maneuvering

| Electioneering strategy | Subtypes | Materially benefit voters? | Beneficial effects of elections? | Specific examples |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Electoral manipulation* | Blatant electoral fraud | Less | Least | Exclusion of opposition parties, limits on voting rights, election violence, intimidation, packing election management bodies, ballot stuffing, multiple voting, etc. |
| | Institutional manipulation | Least | Less | Electoral system change (SMD vs. PR), gerrymandering, malapportionment |
| *Economic maneuvering* | Clientelism and patronage | More | More | Provisions of public employment, bonuses, goods, and services (contingent upon voting for the benefactor) |
| | Pork barrel and club goods provision | Most | Most | Provisions of infrastructure, facilities (hospitals and schools), and other public services targeting certain groups and regions (not contingent upon political support) |

ing structures; however, pork barrel and club goods provisions require the distribution of more resources to yield a similar level of popular support because the provisions are not contingent upon votes. Regardless of the approach, economic maneuvering brings about tangible benefits to voters, thereby contributing to enhancing mass political support.

Second, as discussed in the previous sections, electoral manipulation undermines the benefits of autocratic elections. Blatant electoral fraud is likely to negatively influence all three beneficial effects of autocratic elections. Institutional manipulation creates a pro-regime gap between shares of seats and votes, which negatively affects both the demonstration and the divide-and-rule effects.

Conversely, economic maneuvering is less likely to undermine the ben-

eficial effects of autocratic elections. By providing voters with patronage and pork on the eve of elections, economic maneuvering mobilizes mass support and thereby increases the likelihood that autocrats score an overwhelming election victory. Importantly, such a massive victory is achieved with hardly any coercive and institutional measures directly manipulating electoral processes and fabricating election results. In such cases, the election results manifest a more accurate reflection of public support than those with heavy electoral manipulation.

As pork barrel and club goods provisions do not involve a quid pro quo relationship, the enhanced electoral support gained from those benefits derives from the most genuine mass support of all the electioneering strategies identified in table 2.2. In other words, pork barrel beneficiaries more or less voluntarily declare their political support for the autocrat. In this context, the PBC literature contends that voters receive fiscal and monetary policy manipulation as a signal of government competence and a clue for their voting decisions (e.g., Rogoff and Silbert 1988; Brender and Drazen 2005).

Electoral support produced through clientelism and patronage provisions might be a less accurate indicator of genuine mass support because it involves some level of coercion (i.e., sometimes the relationship between patrons and clients is so tight that clients who do not vote for patrons may be marked for punishment). That being said, unlike in cases of blatant electoral fraud, voters are still able to receive material benefits in exchange for their political loyalty, which induces quasi-voluntary compliance for autocrats. In fact, Kramon's (2016) careful study revealed that even vote buying serves as credible information for African voters to glean politicians' intentions to provide them with resources in the future. Patronage enables dictators to win big with less need for electoral manipulation. In so doing, patronage distribution contributes to improving the beneficial effects of autocratic elections.

To summarize, the comparison between electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering suggests that there might be a trade-off between these two distinct electioneering strategies. When autocrats are able to rely mainly on economic maneuvering, they are less likely to employ electoral manipulation. Conversely, when autocrats cannot afford to employ economic maneuvering, then they turn to electoral manipulation to win big, while sacrificing the benefits of autocratic elections. In this context, the next important question to ask is, *Under what conditions does economic maneuvering become an attractive option for authoritarian leaders to mobilize mass support?*

## 2.6. The Distribution of Mobilization Capabilities
## and Autocratic Election Design

The extent to which dictators are able to mobilize mass support by the distribution of economic favors determines the degree of electoral manipulation, such as blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation. By *mobilization capabilities*, I refer to *actors' resources and abilities to garner mass support through the combination of financial resources and organizational strength*. With this definition in mind, I argue that the distribution of mobilization capabilities in an autocracy is determined by the following three factors: (1) *the amount of discretionary financial resources* that the dictators have at their disposal; (2) the formal and informal *disciplinary organizations* that enable the dictator to discipline ruling elites and thus streamline the distribution of financial resources to the masses; and (3) *the opposition's capabilities to garner mass support*, which in turn weakens the dictator's mobilization capabilities. In other words, dictators' mobilization capabilities are not only determined by their own discretionary financial resources but also influenced by their organizational relationships with ruling elites on the one hand and with the opposition on the other.

Figure 2.3 outlines the relationship among the dictator's mobilization capabilities, electoral manipulation, and economic maneuvering. The distribution of mobilization capabilities is determined by the three aforementioned factors. The extent to which the dictator can mobilize mass support through pork and patronage then influences their choice of electioneering strategies. Dictators with high mobilization capabilities become less dependent upon electoral manipulation, and the resulting relatively free and fair elections should produce a large pre-electoral economic distribution. Conversely, dictators with low mobilization capabilities are obliged to rely on electoral manipulation, and the manipulated elections do not require economic maneuvering prior to elections. Note that here I do not assume binary choices of electioneering strategies—electoral manipulation or economic maneuvering—but by assuming their extents as gradation I explore continuous relationships between them. For instance, if autocrats have intermediate levels of mobilization capabilities, they are more likely to rely on mixed strategies of some electoral fraud, electoral systems with moderate disproportionality, and a fair amount of pre-electoral economic maneuvering. Below, I discuss each subcomponent of the distribution of mobilization capabilities to illustrate how each contributes to enhancing or reducing the dictator's mobilization capability.

| Type of Dictators | Electoral Manipulation | Economic Maneuvering |
|---|---|---|

Distribution of Mobilization Capabilities (MC)

**MC is Higher** (high electoral performance)

- Little Blatant Fraud
- Proportional Systems

More Likely (larger fiscal deficits in election years)

**MC is Lower** (low electoral performance)

- Much Blatant Fraud
- Majoritarian Systems

Less Likely (smaller fiscal deficits in election years)

- Discretionary Financial Resources
- Disciplinary Organizations
- Opposition Strengths

Fig. 2.3. Distribution of Mobilization Capabilities and Choices of Electioneering Strategies

### Discretionary Financial Resources

Dictators' financial resources significantly affect their capability to engineer economic maneuvering. The extent to which financial resources are available for dictators is assessed along two dimensions: amount and arbitrariness. Intuitively, we can expect that dictators with rich financial resources are able to conduct economic maneuvering because they can afford to distribute goods prior to elections; however, resource volumes do not solely determine their availability. Resources also need to be discretionary in the sense that dictators are able to use them for their own political purposes. For instance, fiscal revenues that are generated through taxation may be less available to autocrats because they are more likely to be a focus of close scrutiny by taxpayers who desire fair uses of their taxes and otherwise demand representation (Bates and Lien 1985; Levi 1988; North and Weingast 1989). Similarly, foreign donors' economic aid, which also has the potential of enriching state coffers, is often tied to political reform conditions set by the donors, thus constraining dictators' discretion over resource allocation (Dunning 2004; S. Bermeo 2011; Dietrich and Wright 2014). Therefore, although foreign aid is one form of windfall income that may remain obscured from citizens' attention, its use needs to be more or less accounted by international donors. Conversely, natural resources such as oil, natural gas, and minerals are more likely to serve as a source of free-hand financial resources for autocrats. Because such revenues are financed by the sale of state-owned assets, that is, natural resource wealth, they are less susceptible to either public or international pressures than tax revenues and foreign aid. Owing to this feature, financial gains enriched by natural resource wealth are also highly opaque; dictators often establish their own

national oil companies to secretly operate those resources (Ross 2012), which makes it much easier for dictators to use natural resource wealth for their own political and electoral purposes.

Dictators with discretionary financial resources can afford to shift their electioneering strategies from politically risky electoral manipulation to financially costly economic maneuvering. By mobilizing economic resources for electoral purposes, autocrats are able to strengthen patronage distributions to their potential supporters as well as provide pork targeting specific regions and social groups. By providing economic favors to voters, economic maneuvering encourages citizens to declare support for the autocrats. In particular, the marginal effects of economic maneuvering on increasing public support increase when economic resources are channeled through clientelistic linkages, thereby making it easier for political leaders to ensure votes in their favor in return for patronage (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Hicken 2011; Stokes et al. 2013). Even if economic maneuvering takes the form of pork barrel distribution, it still contributes to increasing public support for the autocrat by conveying a credible signal of regime competence and invincibility (Kramon 2016). Owing to the high levels of public support, dictators can refrain from employing electoral manipulation methods and rather rely more on economic maneuvering techniques. In so doing, they are able to achieve a large margin of election victory without sacrificing the benefits of autocratic elections.

### *Disciplinary Organizations*

Autocrats' discretionary financial resources are not the only factor affecting their choice over electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering. Regardless of which electioneering strategy dictators rely on, they need agencies to which they can delegate the implementation of these electoral strategies. For example, even if dictators hold abundant financial resources and, thus, economic maneuvering is an available strategy, it may not always be the case that the invested resources actually "trickle down" to the masses.[10] In other words, after the dictator's delegation of economic resources to ruling politicians for the purpose of delivering benefits to citizens, the funds may be embezzled by either those ruling elites or (particularly)

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10. The same holds for electoral manipulation. When the autocrat holds a small amount of discretionary financial resources, he must rely on electoral manipulation. However, to orchestrate nationwide blatant electoral fraud and implement electoral system reforms, the autocrat needs brokers (i.e., ruling elites) who implement electoral fraud as agencies and/or may need consent from them over the plan of the electoral system reform.

middle-level politicians who work as brokers mediating between the dictator and the citizens. Furthermore, as previously discussed, dictators cannot help relying on the distribution of pork or club goods when clientelistic linkages are weak; however, these forms of economic maneuvering do not presuppose the quid pro quo relationships whereby economic favors are delivered in return for political support. In such situations, citizens may be more tempted to free ride and vote for other parties or abstain from voting altogether after receiving benefits. Put more simply, ceteris paribus, economic maneuvering may become more effective in mobilizing mass support when it is practiced in the form of patronage rather than pork.

The effectiveness of economic maneuvering is, thus, influenced by formal and informal organizations through which autocrats can ensure political exchanges between votes and goods.[11] Autocrats are able to magnify the marginal effects of economic maneuvering on garnering political support from the citizenry by taking advantage of those disciplinary organizations. Building upon Levitsky and Way's (2010: 54–68) concept of organizational power, I propose that the strength of such organizations may be observed along two dimensions, namely, cohesion and scope. "Cohesion" refers to the level of compliance within the organizations. When cohesion is high, autocrats can be certain that their orders will be smoothly carried out by both high-level officials and rank-and-file bureaucrats.[12] Conversely, when cohesion is low, autocrats cannot be certain of compliance by either high-level officials or the rank and file. "Scope" refers to the effective

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11. Here, by suggesting that disciplinary organizations may affect the dictator's use of electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering, I do not posit a functionalist view arguing that autocrats can construct these disciplinary organizations to aim at changing their electioneering strategies. In fact, strengths of state capacity and ethnicity-based networks are often influenced by historical path dependency, and research suggests that the construction of the dominant party needs significant commitments of the autocrat, ruling elites, and grassroots supporters (Reuter and Remington 2009; Reuter 2017; Meng 2021). What I suggest here instead is that if these disciplinary organizations already *exist*, then these may result in significant differences in how autocrats employ manipulation techniques by enabling them to discipline both ruling elites and the masses.

12. This does not necessarily mean that when cohesion is high, the dictator always has "despotic power" whereby they can arbitrarily decide policy without consulting with other ruling elites. For instance, as in the case of dominant-party regimes, collective decision-making procedures embedded in the party may hinder the dictator's ability to propose his most preferred policy and thereby oblige the devising of an alternative that is acceptable for the other ruling elites. The ruling elites of such collective leadership regimes also cannot easily engage in predatory behavior and, therefore, accept the proposed policy and follow the dictator's orders. In other words, as previous literature has argued (Geddes 1999; Brownlee 2006; Magaloni 2008), collective leadership is better at managing elite conflict in dominant-party regimes, thereby enhancing the cohesiveness of ruling coalitions.

reach of the organizations or to the degree to which they penetrate into the national territory and civil society, which is also referred to as "infrastructural power" in the autocratic politics literature (Mann 1984; Slater 2003). When the scope is wide, organizations encompass a large proportion of the masses and usually have large memberships and activist bases, which enables them to "maintain a permanent and active presence across the national territory—down to the village and/or neighborhood level— and, in some cases, they penetrate the workplace and much of civil society" (Levitsky and Way 2010: 64). When dictators control such disciplinary organizations, they can streamline the distribution of goods and services, thereby enhancing the effect of economic maneuvering on garnering public support and in turn reducing the need to employ electoral manipulation.

There are a couple of formal and informal disciplinary organizations that possibly bring about high cohesion among ruling elites and a broad scope encompassing a wide range of citizens. One such example of formal organizations in authoritarian regimes is the dominant party, which plays two major roles (Bodea, Garriga, and Higashijima 2019). On the one hand, the institutionalization of collective decision-making within the dominant party enables autocratic leaders to make credible power-sharing deals with other ruling elites (Magaloni 2008; Svolik 2012; Boix and Svolik 2013): collective leadership prevents the dictator from abusing power and monopolizing policy while simultaneously hindering the ability of other ruling elites to exploit state resources and policies for their own sake. In this context, Gehlbach and Keefer (2012: 622) posited that "collectively-organized supporters are better able to impose a variety of checks on leaders and to impose sanctions for predatory behavior that would not otherwise be possible." Further, the institutionalization of a dominant party lengthens governing elites' time horizon through the provision of future opportunities for career promotion (Magaloni 2008). In so doing, dominant parties contribute to the cohesion of ruling coalitions. On the other hand, the dominant party's extensive grassroots organizations enable dictators to reach the masses by utilizing its dense networks, thereby ensuring high levels of scope. In particular, when it controls highly institutionalized mass organizations, the dominant party is able to effectively monitor party members such that the organizations serve as relevant clientelistic linkages between the dictator and the masses (Magaloni and Kricheli 2010). Together, dictators and dominant parties have enormous levels of organizational power (Levitsky and Way 2010).

The state apparatus is another example of a formal disciplinary organization. Indeed, Levitsky and Way (2010) regarded both ruling party strength

and state capacity as two significant dimensions measuring the dictators' organizational power.[13] When the scope of the state apparatus is broad, the state grasps the national population and its borders and penetrates deep into the society through services such as social welfare, taxation, and security. When cohesion is high, state institutions, political appointments, and budget structures are highly centralized such that ruling politicians in the center, local officials, and bureaucrats are all loyal to the dictator and follow orders as the autocrat's agents in their territories. Conversely, when cohesion is low, then these ruling elites are highly autonomous in their strongholds such that they may not necessarily adhere to the dictator's orders following the delegation of policy implementation. For instance, as chapter 7 explores, Kazakhstan had a relatively weak state apparatus during the 1990s, whereby local ruling politicians were highly autonomous actors, de facto fiscal decentralization was salient, and governor appointments were primarily determined by consideration of regional cleavages. However, by the mid-2000s, the country had become much more centralized: the president had deprived local officials of autonomous power, had rapidly made regional governments dependent on fiscal transfers from the central government, and had appointed his close allies as governors.[14]

Dictators' informal ethnicity-based networks can also serve as disciplinary organizations.[15] Dictators' ruling coalitions often consist of certain ethnic groups, which are often referred to as "politically dominant ethnic groups" (Wimmer, Min, and Cederman 2009).[16] When the dominant ethnic group's cohesiveness is high, autocrats' ruling coalitions are composed of a smaller number of ethnic groups and their homogeneity makes it easy for dictators to police opportunistic behavior among ruling elites (Fearon and Laitin 1995). Conversely, dictators' ability to discipline ruling elites in other ethnic groups is blocked when ruling coalitions are more diverse, thereby resulting in less cohesiveness. Ethnicity-based networks with broader scopes cover a wider range of the national population; as dominant ethnic groups' size is larger, it is easier for dictators to

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13. Levitsky and Way (2010) primarily focused on the coercive roles of dominant parties and state apparatus. However, in the context of elections, these organizations could also work as organizations through which dictators streamline economic maneuvering to the citizenry.

14. Investigating the case of Kenya, Hassan (2020) shows that rulers utilized the strategic management of state elites and bureaucrats to preempt internal and external threats.

15. Herein, I define the terms "ethnic group" and "ethnicity" as the nominal members (membership) of an ascriptive category, such as race, language, caste, tribe, or religion (Chandra 2004: 2).

16. Wimmer, Min, and Cederman (2009) define politically dominant ethnic groups as the ethnic groups that occupy most senior political posts, such as legislators and cabinet members.

reach more citizens by utilizing extensive ethnic networks (Fearon 1999; Chandra 2004; Habyarimana et al. 2008). Because ethnic diversity prevents efficient goods provision (Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly 1999; Franck and Rainer 2012), dominant ethnic groups with a broad scope may promote the effectiveness of economic distribution.

Dictators who are armed with these formal and informal organizations are able to streamline economic maneuvering, thereby amplifying its positive effects on popular electoral support. Because ruling elites are cohesive, they are less likely to exploit the resources that the dictator delegates to them to mobilize for electoral purposes. Owing to the broadness of organizational scope, the dictator can effectively reach potential supporters while also ensuring that they vote for the autocrat and his ruling party. Simply put, high levels of organizational power enable dictators to utilize the patronage-type economic maneuvering rather than the pork type, which makes economic maneuvering more cost-effective than electoral manipulation.

However, note that dictators do not always use disciplinary organizations for the purpose of streamlining economic distribution. Although disciplinary organizations contribute to magnifying the efficiency of economic maneuvering, dictators may be also able to use them to effectively steal elections by way of electoral manipulation. For instance, as Levitsky and Way asserted, "Strong parties help win elections. . . . Winning them usually entails some mix of voter mobilization and fraud, both of which require organization. Mass parties provide an infrastructure for electoral mobilization. . . . Parties also help *steal* votes. Ballot-box stuffing and other forms of fraud require coordination, discretion, and discipline among numerous lower-level authorities—which party organizations provide" (2010: 63; italics added). In particular, when dictators lack the financial resources to mobilize sufficient public support, they have greater incentive to utilize disciplinary organizations to effectively manipulate election results. In contrast, dictators who have abundant discretionary resources to distribute are more incentivized to use such organizations for economic maneuvering. Put differently, the purpose for which dictators use disciplinary organizations may be conditioned by the extent to which they possess discretionary financial resources in the first place.

## Opposition's Capabilities for Mobilizing the Masses

Discretionary financial resources and disciplinary organizations are only one dimension of dictators' mobilization capabilities. The opposition's

strength is another important factor in determining the distribution of mobilization capabilities in an autocracy. Electoral competition in authoritarian regimes is usually tilted toward dictators and their ruling parties because they have the resources and organizations to maintain overwhelming election victories. Therefore, opposition parties hardly win elections.[17] However, the strength of opposition forces influences the electoral margins by which dictators win elections. In this sense, the opposition's strength affects the dictator's calculus over electoral manipulation.

Strong popular opposition has the ability to mobilize supporters. They may have economic resources through which they can conduct effective campaigning, hire party officers, and buy off public support for elections and protests; they may have a broad organizational scope to lead large-scale protests and demonstrations; or they may be cohesive in the sense that they are unified as a monolithic opposition force in which leaders coordinate popular movements and election campaigning. In contrast, weak opposition is unable to mobilize citizens. They may lack economic resources, they may be seriously divided and fragmented into various opposition forces, or they may encompass only a fraction of the society as party members.

When the opposition is strong, dictators are forced to complement economic maneuvering with electoral manipulation in order to maintain overwhelming election victories. Suppose that the dictator's mobilization capabilities (i.e., the amount of discretionary financial resources and organizational power) remain at a certain level. The level of economic maneuvering needed to win big when the opposition is weak may be insufficient to secure the same level of election victory over a strong opposition because opposition parties are likely to gain more votes. In this situation, dictators have greater incentives to complement the votes lost because of the opposition's strength with electoral manipulation in order to win elections by large margins. In other words, the stronger the opposition, the more dependent the dictator on electoral manipulation. Conversely, when the opposition is weak, the dictator can allow relatively free and fair elections without heavily depending on electoral manipulation.

What the above subsections suggest is that, ceteris paribus, dictators with high mobilization capabilities vis-à-vis other political elites are less likely to employ electoral manipulation techniques such as blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation. Because autocrats with high mobilization capabilities can marshal public support through economic

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17. For the conditions under which opposition parties stunningly win autocratic elections, see the next section and chapter 6.

maneuvering, they have fewer incentives to employ electoral manipulation methods that could undermine the beneficial effects of autocratic elections. In the resulting relatively free and fair elections, dictators with high mobilization capabilities are more likely to gear toward economic maneuvering to win elections with large margins. Conversely, autocrats with low mobilization capabilities have no choice but to stick to electoral manipulation and sacrifice the benefits of autocratic elections. Economic maneuvering is less likely to occur in such manipulated elections.

Based on these predictions, I derive three empirical implications from my theory of autocratic elections. Each implication is tested on cross-national statistical analyses (chaps. 3–5), and then causal links are illustrated through comparative case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (chaps. 7 and 8).

> *Empirical Implication I:* Dictators' high (low) mobilization capabilities lead to a decrease (increase) in blatant electoral fraud (chap. 3).
>
> *Empirical Implication II:* Dictators' high (low) mobilization capabilities lead to proportional representation (majoritarian) electoral systems (chap. 4).
>
> *Empirical Implication III:* Autocratic elections with lower (higher) levels of electoral manipulation are more (less) likely to experience economic maneuvering (chap. 5).

Now that we have derived testable hypotheses regarding the causes of autocratic elections, the next section explores the other puzzle of autocratic elections: *When do autocratic elections destabilize authoritarian rule?*

## 2.7. Unintended Consequences of Autocratic Elections: Post-Electoral Political Conflicts

My theory of authoritarian elections thus far has assumed that dictators appropriately determine the proportions of electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering in light of their mobilization capabilities. As a result, a certain combination of electioneering strategies appears as an equilibrium of autocratic election design. However, history tells us that not a few authoritarian leaders have deviated from such an equilibrium when designing elections. Indeed, investigating the causes of democratic transitions, Treisman (2020) finds that 67–85 percent of all the democratization cases since 1800 have been triggered by the dictators' mistakes and

misperceptions under political uncertainty. Although my focus here is not on democratic transitions, his observation is also relevant to post-electoral political conflicts in dictatorships. Some dictators overestimate their ability to garner mass support and to hold free and fair elections, and then they find themselves failing to win big or even stunningly losing elections to opposition parties (Myanmar 1990), thereby inviting coups from members of ruling coalitions (Bangladesh, 1978; Guatemala, 1981; Algeria, 1991) or ending up conceding to democratization via elections (Poland, 1989). Other dictators underestimate their mobilization capabilities and, thus, excessively employ electoral manipulation, thereby provoking large-scale popular protests (e.g., the color revolutions in the post-Soviet states in the 2000s and Madagascar in 2002).

I argue that when autocrats fail to match the level of electoral manipulation according to their mobilization capabilities, elections destabilize authoritarian regimes. Such dictators' mistakes may occur for at least two reasons. First, autocrats make nonoptimal decisions in designing elections from "a mistake of information" where autocrats "have incorrect or imprecise beliefs" based upon faulty information (Treisman 2020: 795). Due to such paucity of information, the dictator may be in strategic uncertainty under the interaction with ruling and opposition elites. And such strategic uncertainty makes it difficult to accurately gauge the de facto distribution of mobilization capabilities between the dictator and those elites, leading to the undersupply or oversupply of electoral manipulation.

Second, dictators' mistakes in designing elections may stem from "a mistake of calculation" where, "despite accurate and precise beliefs, actors optimize incorrectly" (Treisman 2020: 795). In other words, mistakes may be brought about by the matter of agency: in spite of enough understanding on the distribution of mobilization capabilities, the dictator himself dives into holding excessively free and fair elections that are likely to cause leadership turnover or aggressively manipulate the electoral field that results in provoking protests.

Despite these different sources of dictators' mistakes, however, the failure to strike a balance between electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering under the electoral dilemma paves the way for authoritarian instability. I suggest that there are two pathways through which autocratic elections invite regime instability. At one extreme, authoritarian leaders become so overconfident that they consider themselves to be highly popular among the public. For instance, the military regime in Myanmar held the first competitive elections in three decades in 1990. Leading up to the election, "the ruling junta was confident that the status quo would

remain in place. . . . There were 235 political parties and 2,209 candidates registered across the country. This led it to assume that the share of votes for the opposition would be split, thus lowering the percentage a promilitary party needed for victory. . . . The opposition generally lacked funds and organizational structures" (Morgenbesser 2016: 106). Assuming that the opposition was too weak to be competitive with the ruling party, the military regime held excessively free and fair elections in which voting conditions were free from misconduct and the election management body accurately counted, tabulated, and reported the votes. As a result of their mistake under strategic uncertainty, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy achieved a shocking landslide victory, winning 392 of the 485 contested seats in the National Assembly. After the opposition's stunning election victory, the military regime refused to recognize the results and either arrested opposition MPs or forced them into exile.

When dictators overestimate their mobilization capabilities and fail to win big in free and fair settings, autocratic elections increase the risk of inner threats by ruling elites. As table 2.1 shows, low electoral performance in free and fair elections credibly reveals the dictator's weaknesses, thus encouraging ruling elites to suspect that the current regime cannot sustain itself for long and spurring them to challenge the dictator. This is precisely what happened in the 1991 Algerian elections and 1981 Guatemalan elections, when military officers ousted low-performing incumbents who were reform minded and held excessively free and fair elections.

Another likely scenario of excessively free and fair elections is that a stunning opposition victory leads to the incumbent's replacement by a new government. When the dictator accepts the election results and other ruling elites do not overthrow the losing regime by a coup d'état, autocratic elections turn into the moment that political power transitions to the winning opposition party. Not a few authoritarian regimes experienced stunning election results that paved the way for regime change, including Brazil (1974), Turkey (1983), Chile (1988), and Poland (1989). In this context, Huntington (1991: 174) explained that "elections are the way democracy operates. In the third wave they were also a way of weakening and ending authoritarian regimes. . . . Democratization was brought about by authoritarian rulers who, for one reason or another, ventured to hold elections, and by opposition parties who pushed for elections and participated in them."

At the other extreme, authoritarian leaders excessively manipulate elections, which increases the risk of rising opposition threats in the form of mass protests. As discussed in the previous section (see table 2.1), excessive electoral manipulation escalates the risk of post-electoral mass protests in

two ways. First, because electoral manipulation decreases the likelihood of the opposition gaining at least some political influence within the current regime through elections, a broad range of the opposition agrees to resort to taking more radical approaches, such as anti-government protests. Second, the opposition can exploit the fact that the government resorted to excessive electoral manipulation, which in turn makes it easier for the opposition to overcome collective action problems and organize popular protests under the banner of denouncing the dictator's antidemocratic actions. In addition to these two mechanisms, excessive electoral manipulation may also incite the opposition's belief that the regime is so weakened that the dictator cannot avoid using excessive electoral manipulation, thereby emboldening the opposition to challenge the dictator by organizing mass protests.

Figure 2.4 summarizes the relationship between electoral manipulation and post-electoral political order. On the one hand, dictators are more likely to fail to win elections overwhelmingly when they undersupply electoral manipulation relative to their mobilization capability. The revelation of regime weaknesses in the elections increases the risk of internal threats and, thus, triggers a coup, or excessively free and fair elections lead to the opposition's election victory. On the other hand, external threats are more likely to be activated when dictators oversupply electoral manipulation. The opposition is more likely to be unified to take anti-regime actions, thus resulting in post-electoral mass protests. When dictators manipulate elections in accordance with their mobilization capabilities, they can minimize such post-electoral risks and the political order is not destabilized in the aftermath of autocratic elections. Therefore, the fourth empirical implication can be expressed as follows:

> ***Empirical Implication IV:*** When dictators fail to properly face the electoral dilemma, elections backfire on them. Specifically, the oversupply of electoral manipulation fuels popular protests, whereas the undersupply of electoral manipulation leads to leadership turnover through coups or the opposition's stunning election victory (chap. 6).

## 2.8. Operationalization and Preliminary Analysis: Mobilization Capabilities and the Correlates of Victory Margins

Before proceeding to subsequent chapters to test the empirical implications, I clarify the empirical operationalization of mobilization capa-
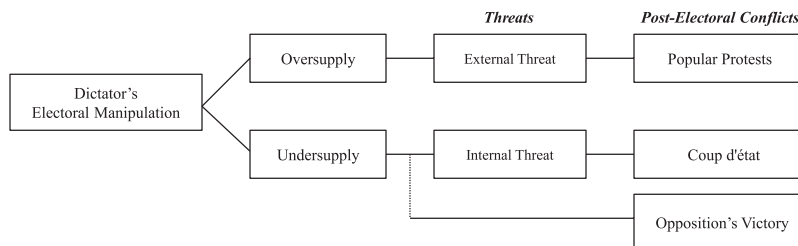
Fig. 2.4. Electoral Manipulation and Post-Electoral Political Order

bilities in cross-national analyses. I then explore an important link that will form the basis of the subsequent analyses: dictators' mobilization capabilities are positively associated with their margins of victory. While illustrating the correlations between the measures of mobilization capabilities and victory margins, I also discuss the validity of the measurement approaches.

### *Measuring the Distribution of Mobilization Capabilities*

The previous subsections identified the three dimensions that tap into the dictator's mobilization capability vis-à-vis the potential opposition: (1) the dictator's discretionary financial resources, (2) ruling organizations that discipline ruling elites, and (3) opposition strengths. It is a daunting task to measure the distribution of mobilization capabilities between the dictator and the potential opposition in authoritarian contexts. I use natural resource wealth as a proxy for the dictator's discretionary financial resources, and I focus on dominant-party organizations and ethnicity-based networks to denote disciplinary ruling organizations. Opposition strength is measured by the history of anti-government collective action in non-electoral periods. Let us first discuss the validity of these proxies of mobilization capabilities in the context of cross-national statistical analyses.

### Capital-Intensive Natural Resources: Oil and Natural Gas

The first dimension of mobilization capability is the amount of the dictator's discretionary financial resources. This book focuses on forms of natural resource wealth that require enormous capital to extract, such as oil and gas, as a relevant proxy for this measurement.[18] Although auto-

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18. Although oil-abundant countries are not a majority of authoritarian countries, 62 per-

crats may be able to mobilize other monetary resources, these natural resources are the best proxy to capture the dictator's discretionary financial resources for the following three reasons. First, it is well known that, ceteris paribus, oil and gas significantly improve the government's ability to distribute pork and patronage to citizens. Numerous studies have shown that natural resource wealth contributes to increasing the levels of social spending and strengthening patronage distribution (Jensen and Wantchekon 2004; Desai, Olofsgard, and Yousef 2009; Morrison 2009). Because authoritarian leaders can use these natural resources to placate citizens' economic dissatisfaction, a large body of previous studies has also demonstrated that abundant natural resources are conducive to prolonging authoritarian rule (Ross 2001; Smith 2004; Ulfelder 2007; Wright, Frantz, and Geddes 2013).[19]

Second, oil and gas are capital-intensive resources and, thus, require vast amounts of investments (i.e., property, plants, and equipment), which is mostly possible only for the government to manage. In other words, this feature of oil and gas makes it difficult for nonstate actors such as the opposition and rebel groups to utilize them for their own political purposes, as opposed to lootable natural resources, including minerals like diamonds and gold (Snyder and Bhavnani 2005).

Third, the operations and budgets of these capital-intensive natural resources are highly opaque (Ross 2012), and thus it is advantageous for dictators to use them for electoral purposes, in contrast to other sources of revenues, such as tax and international aid, which are subject to domestic and international constraints. On the one hand, the use of tax revenues tends to be more carefully monitored by citizens, and these revenues are, therefore, more difficult for political leaders to squander than revenues generated by oil and gas. The secrecy of using natural resources allows dictators to distribute them for their political gain (Ross 2012: 59–62). On the other hand, foreign aid is another form of nontax revenue that is not exposed to the public views;[20] however, autocrats need to be sensitive to

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cent of autocracies (1945–2010) produce natural resources (i.e., oil and gas) and 22 percent of them have oil resources that value more than US$500 per capita.

19. Recent literature argues that natural resources neither undermine political accountability (Paler 2013) nor retard democratization (Dunning 2008; Haber and Menaldo 2011). Although it still remains controversial whether petroleum is detrimental to political transparency, the bulk of cross-national evidence at least demonstrates that resource abundance tends to prevent authoritarian breakdown and helps incumbent dictators survive by subsequently increased public spending.

20. Some studies show that foreign aid contributes to strengthening authoritarian rule

international reputation regarding how they utilize such funds to deepen political and economic reforms (S. Bermeo 2011; Dietrich and Wright 2014). Conversely, most natural resources are owned by state companies, and their use is not constrained by international scrutiny.[21] Such absence of international monitoring makes it easy for dictators to dissipate oil and gas money for short-term electoral purposes.

Therefore, I expect that oil- or gas-rich countries should have a larger electoral margin compared to countries that do not produce these resources. To measure a country's natural resource wealth, this book uses Ross's (2012) oil-gas value per capita, calculated by taking the product of a country's total oil/gas production and the current oil/gas price and dividing it by the total population.

### Disciplinary Organizations: Dominant-Party and Ethnic Networks

The second dimension of voter mobilization is disciplinary organizations with which dictators can increase the effectiveness of economic maneuvering. When autocrats have rich financial resources at their disposal, they tend to use disciplinary organizations to effectively distribute the resources to citizens. To capture disciplinary organizations cross-nationally, I focus on (1) party organizations and (2) ethnic kinships. Resonating with this reasoning, Levitsky and Way (2010: 60–66) also concluded that ruling party organizations and ethnic-based identity are important aspects of measuring dictators' organizational power.

Strong party organizations enable dictators to engage in credible power sharing with ruling elites (Magaloni 2008),[22] which disincentivizes the latter to exploit state resources. The party's dense grassroots networks also facilitate the ability of dictators to reach the masses (Greene 2009). Through either or both of these mechanisms, dominant-party organiza-

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(Morrison 2009; F. Ahmed 2012); however, other research contends that foreign aid is positively associated with democratization, particularly since the end of the Cold War (Dunning 2004; Wright 2009; S. Bermeo 2011; Dietrich and Wright 2014).

21. According to Ross (2012: 37–39), natural resources in developing countries began to be nationalized in the 1950s, and the nationalization processes were completed by 1980. Natural resource wealth is, therefore, a very good proxy to measure the dictators' mobilization capability, particularly after the 1970s.

22. Relatedly, investigating a sample of autocracies including both party-based and non-party-based autocracies, del Rio (2019) shows that ruling parties with old age and a fewer number of ruling parties in the ruling coalition contribute to lowering the likelihood of ruling elites' defection from the ruling coalition. The results suggest that although dominant party regimes also face elite defection (e.g., Reuter and Gandhi 2011), such defections are much less likely compared to other types of autocracies.

tions enable dictators to streamline patronage distribution to the rank and file.[23]

To operationalize the presence of dominant-party regimes, I use Geddes, Wright, and Frantz's (2014) dummy variable of party-based dictatorships. This measure of dominant-party regime is appropriate for my research purposes because it defines party regimes not according to the number of political parties in the country but rather on the basis of whether ruling party organizations control the selection of officials, organize the distribution of benefits, and mobilize citizens to vote and show party support (Geddes 2003; Wilson 2014), "though other parties may exist and compete as minor parties in elections" (Geddes 2003: 51).[24] This measure enables us to identify authoritarian regimes with dominant parties, such as Mexico's PRI, Senegal's Socialist Party, Gabon's Democratic Party, Tanzania's Chama Cha Mapinduzi, Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), Taiwan's Kuomintang, Cambodia's People's Party, Malaysia's United Malays National Organization (UMNO), and Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP).

By ethnicity-based networks (or what I call "ethnic organizational power," or EOP), I refer to the scope and cohesion of politically dominant ethnic groups. As previously discussed in this chapter, if an ethnic coalition consists of many ethnic groups, it is more difficult to monitor ruling elites' opportunistic behaviors through intra-ethnic policing mechanisms (Fearon and Laitin 1995). Indeed, cross-national studies demonstrate that ethnically fractionalized ruling coalitions are more exposed to coup risk (Wimmer, Min, and Cederman 2009; Roessler 2011). Furthermore, it is easier for dictators to use extensive ethnic networks to distribute patronage to a broader range of citizens than when such groups are less numerous (Fearon 1999; Chandra 2004; Habyarimana et al. 2007). Consistent with this view, a large body of literature empirically shows that ethnic diver-

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23. Some extant research suggests that oil-rich countries are less likely to institutionalize dominant party regimes (Wright 2008; Reuter 2017) and promote the personalization of autocratic politics (Fails 2020). In fact, my cross-national data also show that 27.2 percent of nondominant party autocracies possess above-mean levels of natural resources (measured by oil-gas value per capita), whereas 16.3 percent of dominant party autocracies possess the above-mean levels of natural resources, meaning that there is about a 10 percent difference in whether a country is oil rich between party-based and non-party-based autocracies. That being said, given that not a few typical party-based autocracies (e.g., Mexico, Malaysia, Gabon, Senegal, and Angola) are armed with abundant natural resources, it is still important to investigate what implications the combination of natural resources and dominant parties may have on the menu of electoral manipulation.

24. Other datasets, such as those of Hadenius and Teorell (2007) and Svolik (2012), focus on the number of parties in the legislature to define dominant-party regimes.

sity prevents efficient goods provision (Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly 1999; Habyarimana et al. 2007; Franck and Rainer 2012). To simultaneously measure the size and cohesiveness of dominant ethnic groups, I construct an EOP index by multiplying the proportion of politically dominant ethnic groups in the total population $(\sum_{i=1}^{N} PDEG_i)$ by the reversed fractionalization index of dominant ethnic groups $(1 - \sum_{i=1}^{N} PDEG_i^2)$ :[25]

$$\text{EOP index} = (\sum_{i=1}^{N} PDEG_i) * (1 - \sum_{i=1}^{N} PDEG_i^2)$$

where $PDEG_i$ is the share of a politically dominant ethnic group in the total population. This variable has a lower value when ethnic groups in ethnic coalitions occupy a smaller portion of the total population and when ethnic coalitions are composed of a larger number of ethnic groups. In my authoritarian regime sample, countries like Haiti, Mexico, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Cambodia, and the Philippines possess relatively large dominant ethnic groups that are less fractionalized, leading to high EOP scores. There are also authoritarian regimes where dominant ethnic groups are large but they comprise multiple ethnic groups (e.g., Yugoslavia, Serbia, Gambia, Benin, Mauritania, Ghana, Cameroon, and Malawi), dominant ethnic groups are coherent but very small in size (e.g., Togo, Mozambique, Sudan, and Syria), and dominant ethnic groups are relatively small and also fractionalized (e.g., Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, and Uganda). In these cases, the EOP index tends to be low.

### The Opposition's Capabilities for Mobilizing the Masses

The third dimension is the opposition's ability to mobilize political support. Unfortunately, we do not have a relevant cross-national dataset that measures the opposition's financial resources and organizational strengths in authoritarian contexts. As a suboptimal measure, I follow previous studies (Howard and Roessler 2006; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2010; Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2014) and code "revolutionary threats" or antigovernment collective actions. Challenging dictators is an extremely risky political behavior because most anti-regime protests are brutally repressed (Davenport 2007). However, once initiated, this costly action results in credibly showing the dictator that a considerable number of people are

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25. The reversed fractionalization index is based on the Herfindahl formula and is expressed as $(1 - \sum_{i=1}^{N} PDEG_i^2)$. To distinguish politically dominant ethnic groups from politically excluded ones, I rely on Wimmer, Min, and Cederman's (2009) *Ethnic Power Relations* dataset.

extremely unsatisfied with the regime such that opposition leaders have sufficient mobilization power to lead citizens in taking to the streets (Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1994; Kricheli, Livne, and Magaloni 2011; Weiss 2012; Tertytchnaya and Lankina 2019).

To operationalize opposition strength, I count the number of occurrences of three types of anti-government collective actions, namely, demonstrations, riots, and strikes, using Arthur Banks and Kenneth Wilson's (2019) *Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive*.[26] One possible problem with this measure is that protests occurring in the immediate past may be highly correlated with those occurring in the present, and the observed correlation between protests and electoral manipulation arises from the correlation between extensive electoral manipulation and post-electoral protests (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014). In fact, the correlation between post-electoral protests (Hyde and Marinov's 2012 NELDA29) and the one-year-lagged collective action variable is quite high ($r = 0.25$) and statistically significant, thus suggesting the possibility of reverse causality. Therefore, I use a three-year moving average (one-year lagged) of the number of collective actions (riots, demonstrations, and strikes) to better capture the history of the opposition's strength in non-electoral periods. When using the three-year moving average, the correlation between the collective action variable and post-electoral protests becomes much lower ($r = 0.09$) and statistically insignificant, thus implying that this variable can now better estimate the effect of collective action capabilities while also mitigating the risk of reverse causality.[27]

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26. Using parties' seat or vote shares to measure opposition threats is problematic in the context of authoritarian regimes because these indicators are directly affected by dependent variables in the current study, such as blatant electoral fraud and electoral systems.

27. Another issue related to the use of Banks and Wilson's (2019) data is that the dataset relies on news coverage offered by the *New York Times*. As a result, the dataset may under-report anti-government collective action particularly in small countries. Although other cross-national datasets, such as *Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes* (NAVCO 2.0) (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013) and *Mass Mobilization Data* (MMD) (Clark and Regan 2016), measure anti-government public dissent with additional news sources, they have other problems that hinder their use for the purpose of this research. Although the NAVCO dataset has the relatively long time span necessary for this research (1945–2006), it primarily focuses on campaigns aiming at "big goals," such as regime change, anti-occupation, and secession (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013: 416); however, opposition strength is also manifested in the form of anti-government collective action over other issues like various state policies. The MMD records anti-government protests over smaller issues such as state policies. However, its time series (1990–2018) is far shorter than that of Banks and Wilson (2019). While acknowledging the potential problem of media reporting, I proceed to use the *Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive* dataset as a primary measure of opposition strength to more comprehensively cover the post–World War II period with a variety of anti-government collective actions.

Do the three subcomponents of mobilization capabilities relate to dictators' electoral performance? Figure 2.5 shows kernel density plots to graphically illustrate the relationship between dictators' mobilization capabilities and electoral margins in presidential and legislative elections (1949–2010). I limit the analysis to electoral authoritarian regimes in which the opposition is allowed to participate in elections because electoral margins between ruling and opposition parties make sense only after the opposition is allowed to join electoral competition. Of course, as electoral margins are at least partly influenced by the extent of electoral manipulation (particularly blatant electoral fraud),[28] the distributions of electoral margins may be exaggerated, especially when dictators are unable to rely on economic maneuvering (i.e., in cases of low mobilization capabilities denoted by the dotted lines in fig. 2.5). In other words, if electoral margins are higher for dictators with high mobilization capabilities than for those with low mobilization capabilities, then empirical investigations offer conservative tests for my theoretical expectations. With this in mind, I compare the distributions of electoral margins in cases of high mobilization capabilities (solid lines) with those of low mobilization capabilities (dotted lines).

Dictators with capital-intensive natural resources (i.e., oil and natural gas) as proxies for their discretionary financial resources tend to have larger margins of victory (figs. 2.5a and 2.5b). This is clear in presidential elections in which resource-rich dictators have a peak of electoral margins around 75 percent, whereas resource-poor dictators' electoral margins garner only around 20 percent. This pattern is less salient in legislative elections; however, resource-rich dictators are more likely to score larger margins (median: 46.4 percent) than those of resource-poor dictators (median: 29.6 percent), for which the tail in the graph tends to spread out toward negative margins. The results indicate that dictators with discretionary financial resources are more successful at scoring large electoral margins.

Disciplinary organizations (i.e., dominant-party and ethnicity-based networks or EOP) also seem to help dictators win big. The distribution of electoral margins leans toward 100 percent in executive elections when dictators control both natural resource wealth and dominant parties; how-

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28. See chapters 3 and 4 for more detailed empirical analyses on the relationship between the dictator's mobilization capabilities and electoral manipulation (blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation). These chapters suggest that measures of mobilization capabilities are negatively correlated with the extent of electoral manipulation, which indicates that electoral margins in cases of high mobilization capabilities are not necessarily brought about by electoral manipulation, whereas those in cases of low mobilization capabilities are more likely to be due to electoral manipulation.

ever, margins cluster between 0 percent and 25 percent of electoral margins when both are lacking (fig. 2.5c). Legislative elections exhibit a similar pattern: the peak of electoral margins is approximately 30 percent when dictators are armed with both oil and a dominant party, whereas margins for dictators lacking both lean toward the left with a peak at around 0 percent of electoral margins (fig. 2.5d). We can again confirm a similar pattern regarding ethnicity-based networks, whereby strong EOP and rich oil enable dictators to have a larger size of electoral margins in presidential elections (fig. 2.5e). The pattern in legislative elections is not very clear; however, electoral margins of strong EOP and rich oil are slightly larger (median: 39.5 percent) than those of weak EOP and no oil (median: 26.9 percent; fig. 2.5f). The overall results suggest that combinations of discretionary financial resources and disciplinary organizations contribute to dictators' large electoral margins.

Dictators who experience anti-government collective action tend to have smaller victory margins in both presidential and legislative elections. In executive elections, larger sizes of electoral margins are more common in the cases in which autocrats have not recently experienced any anti-government collective action, whereas victory margins tend to be smaller when the opposition is sufficiently strong to organize public dissent (fig. 2.5g). The shapes of electoral margin distributions in legislative elections are similar; however, dictators not facing anti-government collective action tend to lean more toward the right and, thus, have larger electoral margins than those experiencing such collective action (fig. 2.5h). The results suggest that strong opposition reduces the dictators' margins of victory.

In sum, my preliminary empirical analysis suggests that the chosen measures of dictators' mobilization capability (i.e., natural resource wealth, disciplinary organizations, and anti-government collective action) are good predictors of dictators' electoral performance. Given that dictators' mobilization capabilities contribute to winning big, the next chapters explore the logic of electoral manipulation, economic maneuvering, and the post-electoral political order through both cross-national statistical analyses and comparative case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

## 2.9. Conclusion

This chapter has presented a theory of autocratic elections. Autocratic political leaders seeking to efficiently govern their countries face several fundamental problems inherent to authoritarian rule. Although elections
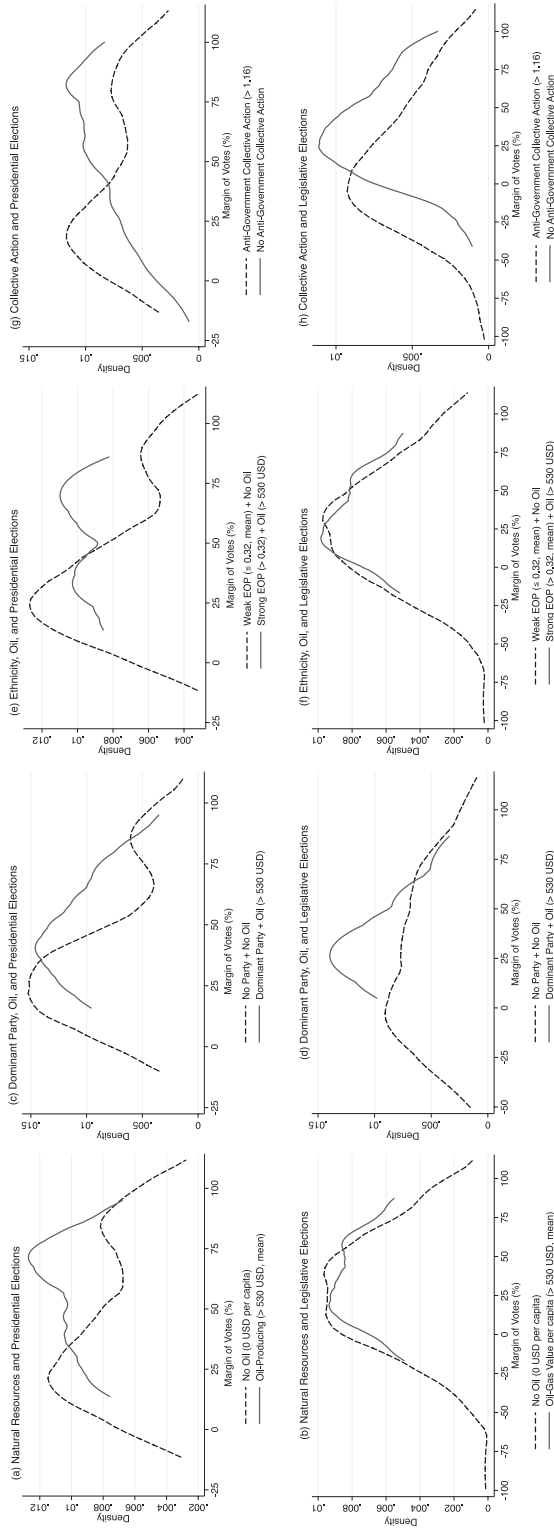
Fig. 2.5. Correlates of Electoral Margins in Authoritarian Elections

*Note:* The solid lines indicate cases in which dictators have high mobilization capabilities (abundant natural resources, presence of disciplinary organizations [dominant-party regimes or large, cohesive dominant ethnic groups] plus natural resources, or the absence of anti-government collective action). The dotted lines indicate cases in which dictators have low mobilization capabilities (absence of natural resources and disciplinary organizations and presence of anti-government collective action). I calculate victory margins in presidential elections as differences in the shares of votes between the winner and the runner-up in the first round of elections. For legislative elections, I calculate margins of votes, which are differences in the shares of votes between ruling parties and opposition parties.

help them solve these problems, for them to do so, authoritarian leaders need to introduce some political transparency to the process. However, the downside of partly free and fair elections is that they negatively affect the likelihood of winning big.

With this electoral dilemma in mind, I have argued that dictators design elections according to their ability to mobilize the masses through economic means. When autocrats are able to win big by effectively mobilizing financial resources, they are more likely to rely on economic maneuvering rather than electoral manipulation, as increasing the level of public support by patronage and pork enables them to win big without damaging electoral fairness through blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation. In contrast, when autocrats have low mobilization capabilities, they cannot help being dependent on electoral manipulation by sacrificing the benefits of holding partly free and fair elections because failure to win big is more likely to activate within-regime threats as well as to pave the way for political instability. Put more simply, my theory of autocratic elections expects that economic maneuvering is a substitute for electoral manipulation. When dictators use electoral manipulation, they do not maneuver the economy, whereas in cases when economic maneuvering is predominant, autocrats find it useful to not rely heavily on electoral manipulation.

The following chapters will empirically test the four implications derived from my theory of autocratic elections. Chapter 3 will explore the determinants of blatant electoral fraud, one major form of electoral manipulation in dictatorships. In chapter 4, I will focus on institutional manipulation, the other significant method of electoral manipulation, which has been relatively overlooked in the autocratic politics literature. Chapter 5 will test the trade-off between electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering by focusing on the magnitude of PBCs in dictatorships. Chapter 6 will investigate what happens when dictators deviate from the equilibrium of autocratic election design in dealing with the electoral dilemma by examining different forms of autocratic instability, including coups, popular protests, and the opposition's stunning election victories. Chapters 7 and 8 will present in-depth comparative case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In so doing, I will shed light on the causal links among electoral manipulation, economic maneuvering, and post-electoral political order in authoritarian regimes.

## PART II

Cross-National Explorations

# Blatant Electoral Fraud

> A somewhat cynical but not overtly exaggerated formulation of a basic norm in Argentine politics is this: I believe in elections as long as I can be sure that my opponents will not win.
>
> —Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy*

## 3.1. Variation in Blatant Electoral Fraud under Authoritarian Regimes

In authoritarian regimes, political leaders and their parties rarely lose elections to opposition parties. Why do incumbents in authoritarian countries win most elections? A typical answer to this seemingly obvious question is that autocrats are less constrained from employing fraudulent techniques to bias election results. In advanced democracies, blatant electoral fraud is too costly to risk undertaking: political leaders are strongly constrained by institutional checks and balances. The media and independent election management bodies closely monitor the electoral practices of politicians and their parties. Such political constraints and transparency make it difficult for the incumbents to resort to blatant electoral fraud. By contrast, in authoritarian regimes, both institutional constraints and third-party actors are far weaker or barely exist. The rule of law may also not be working effectively, thereby providing political leaders with ample opportunities to rig elections extensively. Therefore, a simple comparison between mature democracies and dictatorships leads us to conclude that autocrats resort to blatant electoral fraud by, for example, prohibiting opposition parties from participating in elections, employing electoral violence, and tampering with the ballot box.

Undoubtedly, dictators rig elections in some way or another. Autocrats are allowed to use fraudulent techniques to acquire large majorities within systems exhibiting weak political constraints and a lack of political transparency. However, an intriguing fact is that dictatorships are different in the *extent* to which leaders rely upon electoral fraud. On the one hand, we know of numerous autocratic regimes wherein dictators resort to whatever fraudulent measures they can use to secure an overwhelming electoral victory. For example, in Zimbabwe, when facing increasingly powerful antagonism and protests organized by the opposition party—Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)—President Robert Mugabe resorted to brutal election violence and widespread vote stuffing in the 2008 presidential election. Consequently, the MDC presidential candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, withdrew from the presidential race, which resulted in Mugabe's victory with an astonishing 85 percent of the vote (Bratton and Masunungure 2008: 41). Another example is the 2007 presidential election in Uzbekistan, which was held within a tightly controlled political environment without voters having any real choice: the requirements of running for the presidential election were made more demanding; all contestants publicly endorsed the policies of the incumbent president, Islam Karimov; the media that was broadcasting election campaigns was subjected to strong government control; and widespread practices of proxy voting were observed by electoral monitors (OSCE 2007b).

On the other hand, there are not a few cases of autocratic regimes where dictators are loath to commit electoral malpractices and even willingly make efforts to keep the electoral field less fraudulent through electoral reforms. For instance, in the heyday of Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which was stunned by the fact that the main opposition party boycotted the 1976 presidential election, the authoritarian government increased electoral transparency, thereby enabling opposition parties to gain some presence in Mexican politics (Eisenstadt 2004: 32–44). Nursultan Nazarbaev, the president of Kazakhstan, announced shortly before the 2012 election that he would "reform" electoral laws so that moderate opposition parties could gain some seats in parliament (Mutlu 2012). A similar dynamic can be observed with Malaysia's Barisan Nasional (BN), which had continued to win multiparty elections without blatantly rigging them since independence until the party eventually was removed from office via an electoral turnover in 2018.[1] In Singapore, the

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1. This does not necessarily mean that the BN did not employ other techniques of electoral

People's Action Party has enjoyed legislative supermajorities for the past five decades, despite the fact that "unlike most electoral autocracies Singapore elections are not marred by ballot stuffing or overt electoral fraud" (Tan and Grofman 2016: 2). These vignettes, to name just a few, strongly imply that contrary to the prevailing view that dictators rig elections extensively, some autocrats actually create distance from committing extensive electoral fraud.

Cross-national data further corroborate the insight that dictatorships differ in the extent to which they undertake blatant electoral fraud. Figure 3.1 clearly outlines variations in blatant electoral fraud among Western democracies, non-Western democracies, and dictatorships.[2] High values indicate more extensive electoral fraud. As expected, Western democracies hardly exhibit differences in blatant electoral fraud and mostly hold free and fair elections. The key point here is that the sample of dictatorships exhibits significant variations in the extent to which they fabricate elections. Interestingly, the variance of blatant electoral fraud is slightly higher in dictatorships than in non-Western democracies, many of which are newly democratized countries where free and fair elections have yet to become the norm. By carefully analyzing the data, we can see some authoritarian states where election violence, electoral cheating, and legal restrictions on electoral participation are not as severe. These include Gabon (1990s–2000s), Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan (1980s–1990s), and Kuwait. On the other hand, in other autocracies including Zimbabwe (2000s), Uzbekistan (1990s–2000s), Togo (1990s–2000s), Indonesia (1990s), and Paraguay (1970s–1980s), dictators used extreme fraudulent techniques to fabricate election results. *What explains the significant variation in blatant electoral fraud under dictatorships?*

By applying the theory of autocratic elections put forward in chapter 2, this chapter empirically explores the puzzle of blatant electoral fraud in dictatorships. I argue that dictators' capabilities for mobilizing popular support significantly influence the extent of blatant electoral fraud. Before proceeding to my testable hypotheses, I review the literature on electoral fraud, one of the burgeoning topics in the field of comparative politics.

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manipulation. For example, the party relied heavily on malapportionment and gerrymandering to manufacture party dominance (Washida 2018). Maintaining supermajorities through manipulation of electoral institutions will be investigated in chapter 4.

2. I will later give a detailed explanation on the measurement of blatant electoral fraud used in this book.
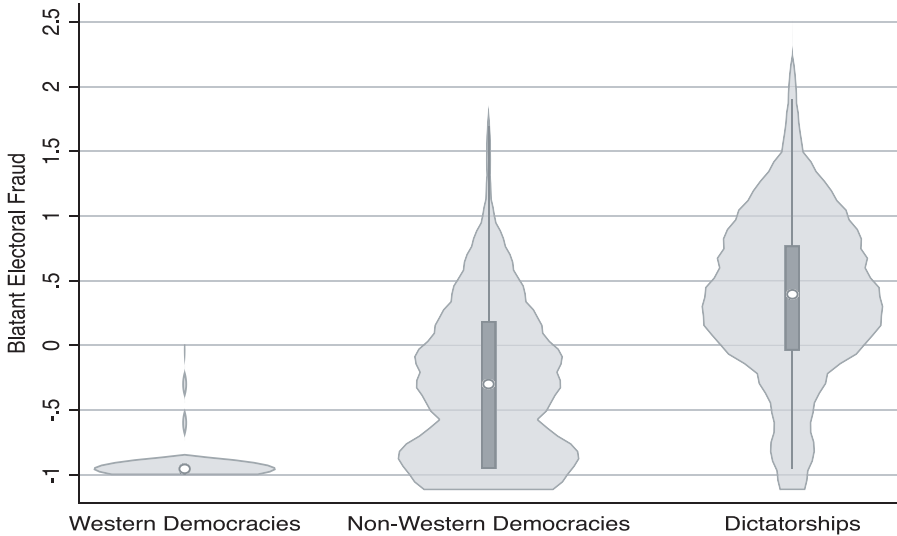
Fig. 3.1. Violin Plots of Variation in Blatant Electoral Fraud
*Note:* The data come from Kelley's (2012) *Quality of Elections Data*. The variable *blatant electoral fraud* is constructed by applying ordinal item response theory to five subcomponents of electoral fraud: (1) illiberal manipulation of electoral law, (2) pre-electoral violence, (3) pre-electoral cheating, (4) election-day violence, and (5) election-day cheating. Higher values indicate higher levels of blatant electoral fraud. The outer shape represents kernel density plots showing distribution of blatant electoral fraud. The line inside stands for the values that occur 95% of the time. The bar inside shows the values that occur 50% of the time. And the central dot represents the median value.

## 3.2. Literature on Electoral Fraud

When exploring what exactly determines blatant electoral fraud in the developing world, scholars have highlighted various features influencing incentives and opportunities of political leaders. Broadly, these arguments can be classified into three streams: (1) political, (2) socioeconomic, and (3) institutional and/or third-party explanations. While briefly introducing the essence of these arguments, this section points out that the literature fails to explore important differences in electoral fraud in autocracies. I do so by taking into account costs and benefits that incur from using this coercive electoral practice.

As a political explanation of blatant electoral fraud, many scholars have explored the impacts of political competition and democratization on electoral malpractices. For example, Lehoucq and Molina (2002) argue that the more severely the parties compete, the more likely it is that electoral

fraud arises since electoral stakes are higher for the competing parties. Illuminating the relationship between the dictator and local officials, Rundlett and Svolik (2016) contend that where a dictator is popular, their local agents bandwagon his prospective election victory and thus rig elections extensively in their electoral districts to demonstrate their loyalty, thereby leading to an oversupply of vote fraud. Using data from the United States (1860–1930), Kuo and Teorell (2017) show that the introduction of secret voting methods reduced the practices of vote buying and voter intimidation, although it increased opaque forms of election fraud such as registration fraud and ballot stuffing. Focusing on five parliamentary elections in Russia, Moser and White (2017) point to diffusion effects of electoral fraud, finding that the existence of manipulated districts in a region strongly influences the likelihood that other districts are likewise manipulated.

Second, socioeconomic factors have been regarded as crucial variables in explaining the extent of blatant election fraud. Lehoucq and Molina (2002) argue that accusations of election fraud have a positive association with poor, less populated, and socioeconomically unequal provinces because ballots are easier to be bought off or have high values under such conditions (see also Stokes et al. 2013; Fukumoto and Horiuchi 2011; Hidalgo and Nichter 2016). Ziblatt's (2009) case study of Imperial Germany contends that the inequality of landholding is more likely to increase the extent of election fraud because landed elites can capture local institutions, whereas Mares (2015) argues that oligopolistic economic structures have a stronger impact on the pervasiveness of electoral fraud in the case.

Third, various institutions and third-party actors play important roles in promoting and restraining electoral malpractice. Some scholars argue that electoral institutions structure party competition, which in turn influences levels of electoral fraud. For example, Birch (2007) argues that single-member districts (SMDs) under majority rule are more likely to be exposed to electoral misconduct than proportional representation (PR) systems in the postcommunist countries. Echoing Birch's (2007) findings, Fjelde and Hoglund (2016) also show that electoral violence is more likely in countries that employ majoritarian electoral institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Scholars contend that third-party actors, such as international and domestic election-monitoring entities, are effective in reducing blatant election fraud. Exploiting a natural experiment in the 2003 Armenian presidential elections where international election monitors were *as-if* randomly assigned to polling stations, Hyde (2007) finds that the presence

of electoral monitors tends to reduce the vote share of the incumbent. By conducting a field experiment in Ghana, Ichino and Schuendeln (2012) show that electoral districts with domestic observers have fewer irregularities in voter registration. Similarly, by randomly assigning independent election observers in the city of Moscow, Enikolopov et al. (2013) find that the presence of observers at the polling stations decreased the reported vote shares of United Russia. Kelley (2012: chap. 7) confirms the effect of international monitoring on reducing electoral fraud through cross-national statistical analyses.

As another third-party explanation, the literature has also focused on the structure of electoral governance. For instance, Hartlyn, McCoy, and Mustillo (2008) provide evidence from nineteen Latin American countries, showing that independent, professional central election commissions improve the quality of elections. Teorell (2017) also points to the importance of professionalized bureaucracy, arguing that election fraud is most likely to occur when political parties compete under a reformed bureaucracy.

Although these studies have fostered our understanding of blatant electoral fraud, at least three issues need to be addressed via further research. First, the existing studies do not consider possible differences of theoretical scope conditions between democracies and autocracies. Cross-national studies include all the countries in their samples and assume that election fraud should play the same role both in democracies and in dictatorships, that is, by producing a marginal victory in elections. However, as Simpser (2013) has suggested, the purpose of holding elections in dictatorships is not only to get reelected but also to obtain an overwhelming victory. This remarkable difference may very well change the motivations for committing electoral fraud when comparing democracies to autocracies.

Second, previous studies have also not taken seriously the electoral dilemma in autocracies. The serious rigging of elections incurs a critical loss of the important benefits of autocratic elections. For instance, rigged election results may become less effective at transmitting information regarding the distribution of public support and/or competence of ruling elites. Fraudulent elections may also lead the opposition to invoke anti-system approaches. Furthermore, for autocratic elections to be able to effectively convey their popularity through election results, they may need to win big *without* relying on heavy-handed measures. Although dictators are less constrained from employing blatant electoral fraud, they also have an incentive to rely less upon this practice as long as they can have reasonable certainty of winning overwhelmingly.

Finally, because extant studies disregard the electoral dilemma, they fail

to consider the possibility that authoritarian leaders may adopt alternative electioneering strategies that are more cost-effective than politically costly blatant electoral fraud. For example, autocrats may be inclined to employ economic maneuvering techniques that are preferable in terms of reducing the risk of electoral manipulation. Since previous studies have focused on blatant electoral fraud without considering the relationships with other available electioneering strategies,[3] we know little about whether blatant electoral fraud is a substitute or a complement for other election strategies.

### 3.3. Blatant Electoral Fraud and the Dictator's Mobilization Capabilities

The theory of autocratic elections developed in chapter 2 points to an empirical implication: *A dictator's high (low) mobilization capabilities lead to a decrease (increase) in the extent of blatant electoral fraud.* This theoretical expectation includes several specific hypotheses with respect to blatant electoral fraud. Before jumping to those hypotheses, I here briefly reiterate my theoretical framework from which I derive them.

The dictator decides the extent to which he relies upon blatant electoral fraud under the constraint of the electoral dilemma. Depending upon the extent of blatant electoral fraud and election results, two sets of political elites—ruling elites and opposition elites—determine whether or not to revolt. Ruling elites plot a coup when the dictator fails to win big, while opposition elites organize mass protests when the dictator relies heavily on electoral fraud. Given these two threats, the dictator aims to achieve an overwhelming majority in the most credible manner possible, thereby minimizing those threats while maximizing the benefits of autocratic elections. When they are unable to win big in partially free and fair elections, autocrats attempt to complement the votes they need with blatant electoral fraud while sacrificing the benefits of autocratic elections precisely because the failure to win big invites the internal threat, that is, the most imminent and serious threat in authoritarian regimes.

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3. Important exceptions are Hyde and O'Mahoney (2011) and van Ham and Lindberg (2015). Hyde and O'Mahoney (2011) find that the presence of international election monitoring encourages political leaders to rely more on pre-electoral public spending since election monitoring makes it difficult to resort to blatant electoral fraud. Van Ham and Lindberg (2015) argue that as democratization proceeds, political leaders in Africa tend to shift their electioneering strategies from intimidation and manipulation of electoral administration to vote buying.

The theory anticipates that the dictator's capability for mobilizing public support influences the extent to which the dictator resorts to blatant electoral fraud. If the dictator has a greater mobilization capability, compared to ruling elites and opposition parties, the dictator is backed up by a large number of supporters who vote for him. Thus, the more capable the dictator is of mobilizing the masses, the more likely he is to enjoy the benefits of autocratic elections, that is, winning big without having to undertake blatant electoral fraud. By contrast, if the elites possess greater capabilities to mobilize their supporters vis-à-vis the dictator, he is not able to organize a large scale of electoral mobilization. As such, free and fair elections are more likely to produce surprising election results, which the dictator wishes to avoid; hence, the dictator has a strong interest in stealing such elections.

To mobilize public support with less electoral fraud, dictators move toward economic maneuvering.[4] Strengthening pork barrel politics and patronage distribution, authoritarian leaders can create public employment, adopt tax exemption for party supporters and the poor, offer bonuses and services to public employees, construct infrastructure in certain regions, and implement other forms of club goods provision.[5] These methods of economic maneuvering enhance political support from citizens. In fact, numerous case studies have suggested that, in winning partially free and fair elections with large margins, authoritarian leaders have often manipulated economic policies before elections (Akhmedov and Zhuravskaya 2004; Magaloni 2006; Pepinsky 2007; Blaydes 2011). Relying more on economic maneuvering and less on blatant electoral fraud, dictators can increase the credibility of election results in the eyes of the public. This helps them to send a clearer signal of regime invincibility; garner more reliable information on political parties' popularities; and create an opportunity to make coordination among opposition parties difficult. All of these are conducive to mitigating the fundamental problems of authoritarian rule.

To be sure, dictators' mobilization capabilities are notoriously difficult to measure. That being said, this book is based upon the empirical analysis of the relationship between dictators' mobilization capabilities and electoral margins (see chap. 2) and operationalizes the concept by shedding light on the following three aspects: (1) discretionary financial resources that dictators possess, (2) disciplinary political organizations that prevent

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4. Chapter 5 empirically investigates the trade-off between blatant electoral fraud and economic maneuvering by focusing on the determinants of political business cycles in dictatorships.

5. For a more direct test of political business cycles in dictatorships, see chapter 5.

ruling elites' opportunistic behavior and streamline economic distribution to the citizenry, and (3) the opposition's ability to mobilize the masses.

### Discretionary Financial Resources

Dictators' discretionary financial resources help them derive popular support through a large scale of economic maneuvering. In particular, wealth from natural resources such as oil and natural gas significantly enriches state coffers without taxation and therefore becomes an important source of strengthening the distribution of pork and patronage in order to co-opt citizens (Jensen and Wantchekon 2004; Desai, Olofsgard, and Yousef 2009; Morrison 2009).

Compared to other sources of revenues such as foreign aid and taxes, natural resources can potentially be more useful in strengthening club goods provisions and patronage distribution for electoral purposes. Thus, dictators in countries with greater natural resources do not need to design the electoral arena in ways that are extremely advantageous to them.

> **Hypothesis 3.1:** *If natural resources are abundant, dictators are less likely to use blatant electoral fraud.*

### Disciplinary Organizations

Authoritarian leaders need to outsource everyday governance to the members of ruling coalitions, including ministers, lawmakers, bureaucrats, and local politicians. Prior to deciding what electoral strategies they rely upon—economic maneuvering or blatant electoral fraud—dictators first need intensive cooperation from their followers within ruling coalitions. Autocrats then can have a strong command of blatant electoral fraud and popular support mobilization via pork and patronage. If dictators cannot get ruling elites to comply with deals, then ruling elites are more tempted to abuse the authority delegated by the dictator, falling into a classical principal-agent problem (Haber 2006; Magaloni 2008).

Dominant parties and ethnic networks are two main disciplinary organizations. Dominant parties allow dictators to make intertemporal power-sharing deals credible (Magaloni 2008; Svolik 2012; Boix and Svolik 2013). Those disciplined elites work for the regime loyally, leading to the enhancement of the dictator's mobilization potential (Wright and Escriba-Folch 2012). A coherent ethnic group (Fearon and Laitin 1995) also enables dictators to police ruling elites. In African countries, when dictators face

strong coup threats from other ethnic groups, they allow only members of their own ethnic groups in the ruling coalition (Roessler 2011).

The manner in which strong organizational bases help dictators win big is determined by what tasks dictators assign to ruling elites. For instance, some party-based dictatorships may rely heavily on systematic violence and intimidation through party organizations, while others may be dependent on pork barrel distribution via party networks (Greene 2009; Bodea, Garriga, and Higashijima 2019). The theory suggests that, as a condition determining the way the dictator uses disciplinary organizations, the size of a dictator's discretionary financial resources is important. In other words, these organizational bases may have starkly different implications on the dictator's eagerness to commit blatant electoral fraud through the following two mechanisms.

The first mechanism lies in the fact that organizational bases have disciplinary power constraining ruling elites. Against this backdrop, when the dictator does not hold discretionary financial resources, he is more likely to order loyal ruling elites to engage in blatant electoral fraud because he does not have sufficient resources to engineer economic maneuvering. In such resource-scarce scenarios, if dictators are equipped with strong political organizations, ruling elites may be more likely to follow orders loyally and to engage in systematic electoral fraud within local strongholds (Levitsky and Way 2010: 63). For example, the 1988 Mexican presidential elections were marred by extensive electoral fraud under the PRI rule. In the elections, ballot stuffing was more likely to be observed in polling stations where the ruling party was dominant and governors had strong ties with the party (Cantu 2019). In Mugabe's Zimbabwe in the midst of an economic crisis between 2000 and 2008, the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) initiated a terror campaign in which the party ordered security forces to "invade farms, burn down houses, and incite other forms of violence, all to force the population into voting for ZANU-PF" (Bratton 2014: 89). Indeed, electoral violence was extensive and systematically organized in the areas where the ruling party ZANU-PF reigned (LeBas 2006: 428).

Conversely, when the dictator has a large amount of discretionary financial resources at his disposal, he can delegate to disciplined ruling elites the task of collecting popular support in locality through economic distribution. Under this condition, autocrats are able to use financial resources more efficiently to garner popular support while preventing local ruling elites from exploiting these resources for their own sake. For instance, utilizing centralized party organizations of the Cambodian People's Party,

Hun Sen distributed state patronage in effective ways to the masses, which contributed to cultivating loyalty from them (Morgenbesser 2016: 60–79). Chang and Golden (2010) cross-nationally show that party-based regimes are less likely to experience political corruption than personalist regimes in which ruling coalitions are under-institutionalized.

The second mechanism is that strong organizational bases also have high density of grassroots networks among their rank-and-file members, allowing autocrats to reach out to a wide spectrum of society when undertaking electoral mobilization. This is done through party membership in the case of party-based regimes and through shared ethnicity in the case of ethnic groups. For instance, in many party-based regimes, "the party controls land titles, fertilizers, subsidized housing, scholarships, food, construction materials, and many other privileges, which are distributed to the most loyal members of the party" (Magaloni and Kricheli 2010: 128). Dominant parties' dense, large networks enable dictators to effectively mobilize party members, thereby increasing the marginal effect of patronage distribution on regime support. Conversely, when autocrats are lacking financial resources to distribute, dense organizational networks may become a useful instrument by which to force supporters to cooperate on rigging elections (Levitsky and Way 2010).

Taken together, the disciplining of ruling elites and the effective mobilizing grassroots supporters create strong organizational bases that become a conditioning factor strengthening the impact of financial resources on reducing blatant electoral fraud. Therefore, I hypothesize that strong organizational bases enhance a dictator's capability for mobilizing public support *when he holds ample financial resources to distribute*. Financial resources in combination with strong organizations greatly reduce the need for dictators to manipulate elections.

**Hypothesis 3.2:** *The negative impact of natural resources on electoral fraud becomes larger if dictators possess stronger organizational bases.*

### The Opposition's Capabilities for Mobilizing the Masses

The strength of opposition groups is also an important aspect that determines the extent to which dictators rely on blatant electoral fraud. In particular, the capability of opposition groups launching collective action against authoritarian governments is a good proxy to observe the extent to which they can mobilize their supporters against a dictator (Aksoy, Carter, and Wright 2014). I expect that frequent popular collective actions com-

pel dictators to think they may not be able to win big at the next election without rigging the election extensively. In Zimbabwe, when facing growing power and protests organized by the MDC, President Mugabe used extensive electoral fraud by resorting to election violence and ballot stuffing prior to the 2008 presidential election. Conversely, if opposition parties are too weak to mobilize citizens and coordinate collective action, dictators become willing to open the electoral field because it is certain that they can easily win elections overwhelmingly in such circumstances. Prior to the 2012 Kazakhstan elections, President Nazarbaev changed the electoral law to make it easier for moderate opposition parties to obtain seats. One of his motivations behind this electoral reform was that opposition parties were too unpopular among citizens to threaten his overwhelming victory in the election. Despite the most "transparent" elections in over a decade in Kazakhstan (Olcott 2012), the dominant party (Nur-Otan) obtained 80.99 percent of total votes, whereas the main opposition (Nationwide Social Democratic Party) gained a mere 1.4 percent of votes.

**Hypothesis 3.3:** *The higher the opposition's capability of collective action, the more likely dictators are to use serious electoral fraud.*

### 3.4. Cross-National Statistical Analysis of Blatant Electoral Fraud

#### Dependent Variable: Blatant Electoral Fraud

This section performs a cross-national analysis of blatant electoral fraud in dictatorships. The unit of analysis is the country-election-year in authoritarian regimes. I identify authoritarian regimes by using Geddes, Wright, and Frantz's (2014) *Autocratic Regimes Dataset*. Using Judith Kelley's (2012) *Quality of Elections Data* (QED), my sample includes 354 elections in 88 authoritarian countries between 1977 and 2004.[6]

This study defines blatant electoral fraud as a set of coercive measures that deviate election results from voters' initial vote preferences. As such, blatant electoral fraud biases election results in favor of the political leader during election campaigns and on voting days. In light of this definition, blatant electoral fraud consists of the following three subcomponents: (1) election violence, (2) election cheating, and (3) undemocratic restrictions

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6. Descriptive statistics are found in appendix A3.

on electoral law. Election violence is physical intimidation during electoral periods exercised largely by incumbent parties (Straus and Taylor 2012; Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014). Governments use electoral violence to threaten and deter opposition candidates and citizens, thereby undermining the effectiveness of oppositions' campaigns and decreasing the turnout of opposition supporters. Electoral cheating allows dictators to affect the number of votes during campaign periods and election days with nonviolent but still coercive measures, for example, the undermining of oppositions' freedom to campaign, media bias, ballot stuffing, and nonviolent intimidation (Kelley 2012). Restrictions regarding electoral law refer to a series of regulations preventing citizens and electoral candidates from influencing politics, including, for example, the prohibition of opposition parties from participating in electoral processes; limits placed on voting rights according to certain social characteristics (i.e., gender and ethnicity); flaws in the complaints procedures; high thresholds for new parties to get registered and gain seats; and constraints on the right to run for office (through language and educational requirements) (Kelley 2012). These fraud techniques, though considerably different in how they manipulate elections, have a common feature in that they all involve more or less coercive means and also contribute to providing the dictator with a margin of victory that would otherwise be impossible.

To measure blatant electoral fraud as defined above, this study relies on the QED constructed by Kelley (2012).[7] The dataset evaluates the extent to which each election is characterized by blatant electoral fraud using country reports published by the U.S. Department of State. In light of the definition of electoral fraud, I use the following five variables to measure

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7. Other datasets also measure blatant electoral fraud in global terms: Birch's (2011) *Index of Election Malpractice* (IEM), Norris et al.'s (2016) *Perceptions of Electoral Integrity* (PEI), Hyde and Marinov's (2012) *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy* (NELDA), and Coppedge et al.'s (2018) *Varieties of Democracy* (V-Dem) dataset. IEM is similar to QED in many respects yet only covers between 1995 and 2007. PEI evaluates 49 items concerning electoral integrity by conducting expert surveys, yet it only covers the period after 2016. NELDA covers a more extensive period (1945–2010) yet focuses more on the competitiveness of elections and does not specifically measure more diverse aspects (i.e., timing and patterns) of election cheating and election violence. Lastly, the V-Dem project provides a measure of clean elections covering the largest time period (1900–2016) by aggregating various subcomponents such as voting irregularities, vote buying, voter registration, and election violence through an ordinal item response theory (IRT). Some subcomponents of the clean election index, however, include post-electoral events and also do not fully take into account pre-electoral restrictions on an opposition's entry to elections, such as prohibition of opposition parties and eligibility for elections.

the extent of election fraud, all of which are measured separately from the U.S. Department of State's (often politically biased) assessment on whether an election was acceptable (Kelley 2012: 186):[8] (1) Was the legal framework not up to standards, were there limits on the scope and jurisdiction of elective offices, and were there unreasonable limits on who can run for office, etc.? ("Legal problems"); (2) Were there restrictions on the freedom to campaign, media restrictions, intimidations, and improper use of public funds? ("Pre-electoral cheating"); (3) Was there any violence or unrest before an election day? ("Pre-electoral violence"); (4) Did any problems occur related to vote processing (e.g., double voting), tabulation tampering, voter fraud, vote buying,[9] and intimidation on election day? ("Election-day cheating"); and (5) Did any violence and unrest occur on an election day? ("Election-day violence"). Each variable takes a 4-point scale between 0 (no problems) and 3 (serious problems). I aggregate the five variables by applying a rating scale model of the item response theory (IRT) and create a dependent variable, *blatant election fraud*.[10] A higher value indicates more extensive electoral fraud.

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8. Using the overall evaluation on the quality of elections in the dataset is problematic for this research for two reasons. First, the overall election assessment "captures whether the State Department report, notwithstanding the level of problems, considered the election acceptable" (Kelley 2012: 186), and thus it is likely to be biased by the United States' political interests in the assessed country. In contrast, the five measures coding specific instances of electoral manipulation are made distinctively from the U.S. Department of State's evaluation, and therefore they are relatively free from such political biases (Kelley 2012: 186). Second, the overall evaluation includes election administrative capacities as a subcomponent measuring electoral fraud, yet this does not necessarily come from dictators' eagerness to commit electoral fraud but mostly stems from the quality of bureaucracy and central electoral management bodies (Teorell 2017).

9. This includes "vote-buying" practices on election day, and thus one may wonder that this might be overlapped with economic maneuvering. However, theoretically and empirically this concern is minor. Theoretically, vote buying recorded in this dataset is very narrowly defined and assumed to be an exchange between relatively small goods and votes on election day. The concept of economic maneuvering is far broader and is implemented during the periods leading up to elections: it is usually delivered through pork barrel politics (club goods provisions like infrastructure and social spending targeted at certain regions and groups) and patronage distribution (public employment or bonus increases). Empirically, if the data include most of these economic maneuvering practices as election-day vote buying, the election-day cheating variable should be positively associated with discretionary financial resources. Yet, the oil-gas variable is negatively correlated with the election-day cheating variable, suggesting that the possible measurement errors are not serious.

10. The correlation coefficient between the IRT measure and the simple aggregation of these subcomponents of blatant electoral fraud is 0.992. Using the aggregation measure as the dependent variable, the overall results remain unchanged.

### *Independent Variables*

To measure the distribution of mobilization capabilities, I follow the operationalization introduced in chapter 2. To test Hypothesis 3.1 about discretionary financial resources, I use Ross's (2012) oil-gas value per capita (measured in constant US dollars, baseline year 2000). The variable is calculated by multiplying a country's total oil-gas production by the current oil-gas price and then dividing by total population.

To test Hypothesis 3.2 about the conditional effect of discretionary financial resources, I introduce an interaction term of Ross's oil-gas variable and dictators' organizational bases. Organizational bases are cross-nationally measured according to two variables: (1) party-based organizations and (2) ethnicity-based networks. I use a dummy variable based on Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) to code party-based regimes, while setting personalist regimes as the reference category.[11]

Ethnicity-based networks are measured by the ethnic organizational power (EOP) index. This variable has a lower value, as ethnic groups in ethnic coalitions occupy a smaller portion of total population and given that ethnic coalitions are composed of more ethnic groups. The larger and less fractionalized the dominant ethnic groups are, the more likely discretionary financial resources are to reduce electoral fraud.

Regarding Hypothesis 3.3, I operationalize the opposition's capabilities of gaining mass support. As discussed in chapter 2, I follow the extant literature such as Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2010) and Howard and Roessler (2006: 372) and code "revolutionary threats" or anti-government collective action by counting the number of demonstrations, riots, and strikes from Arthur Banks and Kenneth Wilson's (2019) *Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive*.

### *Control Variables*

In addition to these main explanatory variables, I also introduce a host of control variables in order to deal with confounding factors. These are based on previous work on electoral fraud and regime change. Since electoral fraud is more likely in repressive authoritarian regimes and variables

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11. Personalist regimes are the regimes wherein dictators are least likely to be constrained by political institutions in credible ways (Geddes 2003; Wright and Escribà-Folch 2012). Therefore, this regime could work as a relevant reference category to investigate differences in the conditional effect between dictators with disciplinary organizations and those without such organizations.

of interest such as oil and anti-government collective action are likely to be correlated with political repressiveness within a particular country, estimating models without controlling for the degree of preexisting political freedom may bias estimates for the three hypotheses (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014). Therefore, I introduce the Freedom House Index as a control for the degrees of political rights and civil liberty in non-electoral periods. This variable is transformed to facilitate interpretation and, thus, ranges from 2 (least free) to 14 (most free), capturing the extent to which civil liberties and political freedom are guaranteed. To mitigate the risk that the measure will accrue electoral fraud and to capture the overall trends in political openness, the variable is a three-year moving average lagged by one year. Furthermore, I also control for civil conflict (from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program) because civil conflict may affect both the dictator's mobilization capabilities and his use of blatant electoral fraud.

Domestic institutional covariates serve as explanations of electoral fraud and thus should be controlled for. Authoritarian regime types are an important consideration along these lines. As Geddes (1999) has suggested, military dictators are more likely to step down and thus may allow fair and free elections. Using Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014), I introduce dummy variables for military and monarchy dictatorships. Independent, professional electoral management bodies may improve the quality of elections (Hartlyn, McCoy, and Mustillo 2008). Kelley's (2012) QED measures quality of election governance in both pre-electoral and election-day phases. Aggregating the two variables of pre-electoral and election-day administrative capacities by using the IRT technique, I introduce election administrative incapacities with higher values indicating lower quality of electoral governance. In elections that determine who will wield executive power, authoritarian leaders may be more inclined to manipulate elections when electoral stakes are high (Lehoucq and Molina 2002). To account for this, I follow Simpser and Donno (2012) and include a dichotomous variable called main elections, which is coded as 1 for presidential elections in presidential (or mixed) systems as well as parliamentary elections in parliamentary systems.

In addition to political institutions, international reputation is also a crucial factor that authoritarian leaders have to consider when holding elections. In particular, the international community may decide to cut foreign aid following rigged elections (S. Bermeo 2011). I therefore introduce percentage of foreign aid relative to gross domestic product (GDP) (F. Ahmed 2012).

The country's level of economic development and economic expansion may be correlated with oil production and anti-regime collective actions as well as the extent of electoral fraud (Lehoucq and Molina 2002). Therefore, I include logged GDP per capita and GDP growth to control for the level of (and change in) economic development (one year lagged).[12]

### Estimation Method

The number of observations within each unit (i.e., a country) is very small,[13] and some of the independent variables rarely vary over time (e.g., the dominant party dummy and the EOP variable). For data with a small number of within-unit observations and sluggish independent variables, random effects (RE) estimators yield lower variance than fixed effects (FE) estimators (Clark and Linzer 2015). Furthermore, the Hausman test does not reject the null hypothesis ($\chi^2 = 7.19$; $p = 0.516$), suggesting that the independent variables are orthogonal to the unit effects and therefore RE estimators are unbiased. For these reasons, I adopt RE-ordinary least squares (RE-OLS) estimators that control for unit heterogeneity among countries beyond the control variables mentioned above. Considering the likelihood that errors are correlated within each country, I adopt robust standard errors clustered by country. I also include decade dummies (1980s, 1990s, and 2000s) to deal with time-specific unobservable heterogeneities.

### Estimation Results

In table 3.1, Models 1 and 2 examine Hypotheses 3.1 and 3.3 with and without the basic set of controls mentioned above. The variable of oil-gas value per capita is statistically significant in both models and negatively correlated with electoral fraud, supporting Hypothesis 3.1. Interpreting the results substantively, oil-abundant countries (i.e., the 75th percentile of oil-gas value per capita = US$8,700) reduce blatant electoral fraud by 0.174, which is about one-third of the dependent variable's standard deviation. Given that the standard deviation of the dependent variable is 0.63, the effects of being an oil-producing country are modest. One possible interpretation of this medium effect of the oil-gas variable is that the

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12. As additional relevant controls, I include electoral systems (Birch 2007), presence of international and domestic election monitors (e.g., Hyde 2007; Kelley 2012; Ichino and Schuendeln 2012), and trade openness (Birch 2011) to find that the results remain robust.

13. The average number of observations within unit (country) is 4, while the number of units is 88.

TABLE 3.1. Correlates of Blatant Electoral Fraud

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Estimator | RE-OLS | RE-OLS | RE-OLS | RE-OLS |
| Oil-gas value per capita | −0.0017*** | −0.002*** | −0.0018*** | 0.00475 |
| ($100) | (0.0003) | (0.001) | (0.0005) | (0.00329) |
| Anti-government | 0.034* | 0.0353*** | 0.0331*** | 0.0351*** |
| collective action | (0.019) | (0.0131) | (0.0128) | (0.0131) |
| Party-based regimes | −0.321*** | −0.074 | −0.033 | −0.0710 |
| (PBR) | (0.11) | (0.087) | (0.088) | (0.0858) |
| Ethnic organizational | 0.0472 | 0.341** | 0.316** | 0.376*** |
| power (EOP) | (0.147) | (0.136) | (0.129) | (0.142) |
| Oil*PBR | | | −0.017*** | |
| | | | (0.0044) | |
| Oil*EOP | | | | −0.0322** |
| | | | | (0.0152) |
| Military regimes | −0.538*** | −0.422*** | −0.421*** | −0.422*** |
| | (0.128) | (0.0910) | (0.0907) | (0.0910) |
| Monarchy regimes | −0.305*** | 0.0385 | 0.0164 | 0.0300 |
| | (0.111) | (0.119) | (0.115) | (0.118) |
| Freedom House Index | | −0.108*** | −0.114*** | −0.111*** |
| (avg) | | (0.0156) | (0.0156) | (0.0155) |
| Election administrative | | 0.149*** | 0.163*** | 0.146*** |
| incapacity | | (0.0484) | (0.0457) | (0.0488) |
| Main elections | | 0.0347 | 0.0362 | 0.0362 |
| | | (0.0369) | (0.0371) | (0.0368) |
| Logged GDP per capita | | −0.121** | −0.0989* | −0.114** |
| | | (0.0533) | (0.0520) | (0.0527) |
| Economic growth | | −0.008* | −0.00953** | −0.00777* |
| | | (0.0044) | (0.00481) | (0.00447) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | | −0.00721** | −0.00787*** | −0.00756** |
| | | (0.003) | (0.00296) | (0.00297) |
| Civil conflict | | 0.15 | 0.163 | 0.162 |
| | | (0.124) | (0.125) | (0.123) |
| Constant | 0.0907 | 1.472*** | 1.375*** | 1.424*** |
| | (0.157) | (0.429) | (0.416) | (0.424) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 206.69*** | 312.62*** | 547.17*** | 325.46*** |
| $R$-squared | 0.194 | 0.466 | 0.48 | 0.47 |
| Observations | 354 | 325 | 325 | 325 |
| Number of countries | 88 | 79 | 79 | 79 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

models do not consider the conditions under which dictators use natural resource wealth for distributive purposes rather than members of ruling coalitions pocketing oil money for themselves. This is what I examine as Hypothesis 3.2.

Models 1 and 2 also show that the opposition's collective action is positively correlated with electoral fraud in a statistically significant way, supporting Hypothesis 3.3. The more riots, demonstrations, and strikes authoritarian leaders face during the three years before an election, the more extensively they rig elections thereafter. Interpreting the results, in autocracies that frequently experienced anti-government collective action three years prior to elections (i.e., the 75th percentile of the collective action variable = 14), the governments increased the extent of blatant electoral fraud by 0.494 (75 percent of the standard deviation of the dependent variable), which is not substantively small.

Zimbabwe is a case in point. During the 1980s and 1990s, the extent of blatant electoral fraud in the country was relatively modest: election violence was minor, electoral cheating was not extensive, and restrictions of electoral law were not serious. However, elections in 2000 and 2002 exhibited higher levels of blatant electoral fraud in all those three aspects. One of the contributing factors to the escalation of blatant fraud was the foundation of the main opposition, MDC. Backed up by escalating strikes and an increase in the price of petrol, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union led by Tsvangirai and other trade unionists founded MDC in 1999, which became a real threat to the rule of President Mugabe and his ZANU-PF (Alexander 2000: 385–91; Bratton 2014: 75–76). Other than Zimbabwe, countries such as Kenya (1992), Jordan (1997), Tajikistan (1995), Bangladesh (1986), the Philippines (1984), and Indonesia (1997) are all examples where strong opposition movements forced the governments to resort to blatant electoral manipulation.

Both the party-based regime dummy and the EOP have no statistically significant impacts on electoral fraud in a consistent manner across the models. These uncertain effects may indicate the possibility that autocrats are utilizing these political organizations to systematically resort to blatant electoral fraud in some cases and to streamline economic distribution in others. The end result is the canceling out of their effects on blatant electoral fraud. Thus, how these relationships between political organizations and fraud will change according to the amount of financial resources is what we will examine via empirical tests for Hypothesis 3.2.

Model 3 examines the impact of oil-gas value per capita as conditional upon the presence of the party-based regime. The evidence here supports

Hypothesis 3.2. In both models, the oil-gas rent variable and its interaction term with the party-based regime dummy are negative and statistically significant.[14] Figure 3.2a graphically illustrates the difference in the impact of natural resources on electoral fraud for party-based and personalist regimes (the reference category). In personalist regimes, the least institutionalized form of authoritarian regimes, natural resources reduce electoral fraud minimally. If the country is a party-based regime, however, the impact of natural resources is about 10.4 times greater, which makes the reduction effect of natural resources on blatant electoral fraud substantively large. For instance, oil-producing countries (in the 75th percentile of the oil-gas variable) with dominant party organizations reduce blatant electoral fraud by a factor of approximately 1.63, which is about 2.6 times higher than the standard deviation of the dependent variable. Under dominant party regimes that include Malaysia, Mexico, Tanzania, and Gabon, increases in oil and gas revenues have significantly lowered the extent of blatant electoral fraud.

A case in point is the Suharto regime of Indonesia, which was backed up by the Golkar Party and state institutions. In the late 1970s and mid-1980s, Suharto enjoyed substantial oil revenues (US$305 per capita) because of surges in global oil prices (Smith 2007: 135–37). "Oil exports, which had been worth $641 million in 1973 rose to $6.9 billion in 1979 and $10.6 billion in 1980. Hence, the state's capacity to extract resources and distribute them to political allies, both existing and desired, had grown exponentially" (Mietzner 2018: 89). As natural resource wealth grew, Suharto shifted his electioneering strategy from coercion to patronage distribution. Indeed, parliamentary elections held in 1977 and 1982 were both relatively clean (i.e., the electoral fraud level was far below the mean), and the increased focus on the regime's patronage resources "made coercion less essential, especially in elections" (90). After a significant drop in oil prices in the late 1980s, however, the Suharto regime began to rig elections in multiple and extensive ways. In the 1997 parliamentary elections, when oil-gas value per capita was just US$98, the level of electoral fraud reached the maximum value in the sample.

Model 4 provides additional evidence for Hypothesis 3.2 from the other perspective—the EOP. Interaction terms of the EOP variable and oil-gas value per capita are negative and statistically significant.[15] Figure

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14. The same results hold if the model does not include the EOP variable. The results remain unchanged if the model simultaneously introduces the interaction of the natural resources variable and the EOP variable.

15. The same results hold if the model does not include the dominant party variable. The
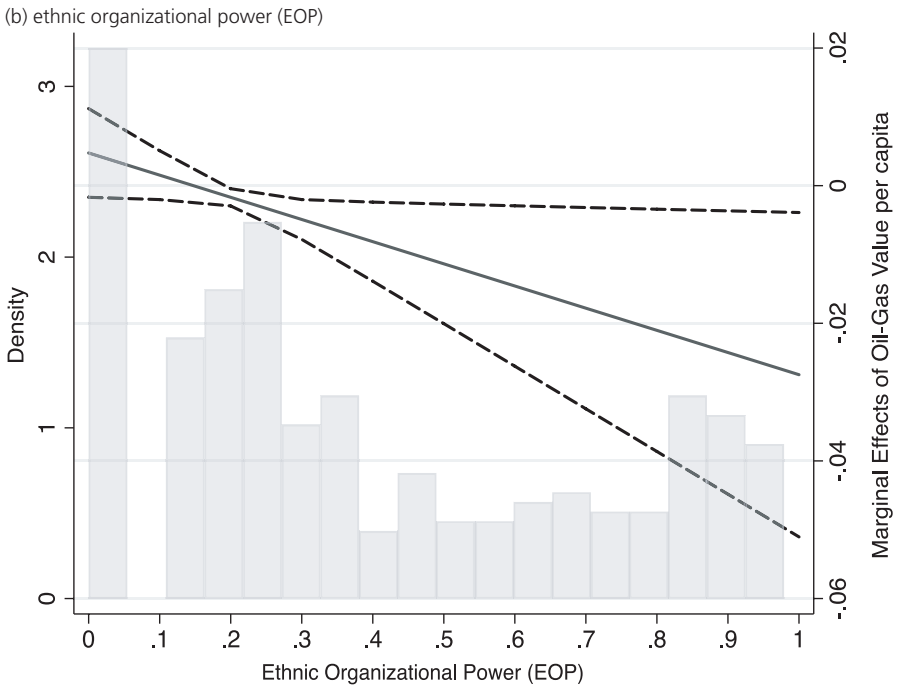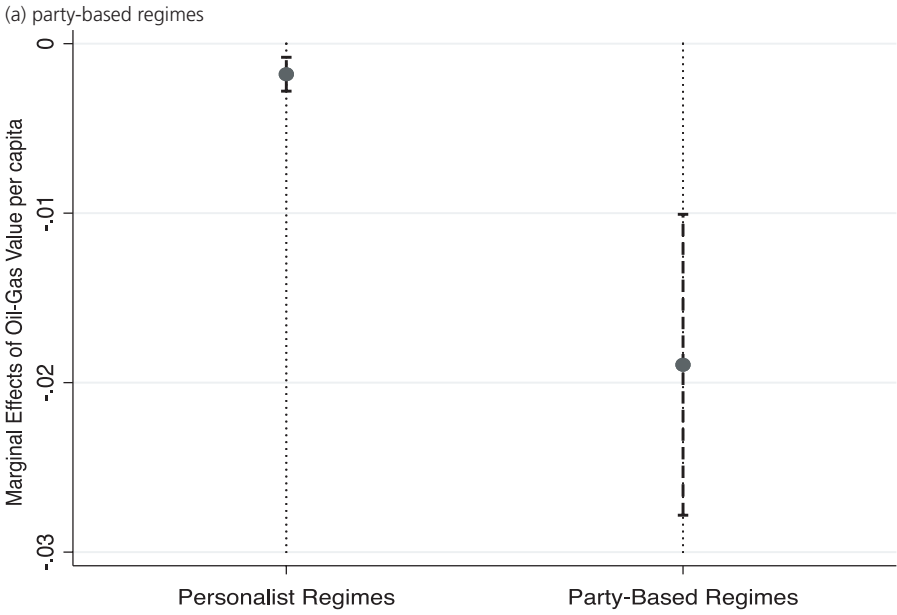
(a) party-based regimes

(b) ethnic organizational power (EOP)

Fig. 3.2. Conditional Marginal Effects of Natural Resource Endowment on Blatant Electoral Fraud

*Note:* The upper and lower graphs are based on estimation results of Models 3 and 4, respectively. The dashed lines are the 95 percent confidence intervals.

3.2b depicts graphs illustrating how the coefficient of oil-gas per capita will change according to the values of the EOP. Where the EOP is weak (0 to 0.17), as with situations like Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tunisia, and Syria, the impact of natural resource endowments is not statistically distinguishable from 0. As politically dominant ethnic groups become more cohesive and expansive, the negative impact of natural resource endowments becomes larger. At the maximum value where only one dominant ethnic group occupies 98 percent of the total population (EOP = 0.98), the coefficient of oil-gas rent per capita becomes approximately 10 times larger than when the EOP is equal to 0.2. Interpreting the results, oil-producing countries with the highest EOP (0.98) are more likely to reduce blatant electoral fraud by 2.1 than oil-producing countries when the EOP is 0.2. Notably, this is 3.3 times higher than the standard deviation of the dependent variable.

Hafez al-Assad's Syria is a case where a single, small dominant ethnic group made it difficult to distribute financial resources widely and consequently maintained high levels of blatant electoral fraud. The regime's dominant ethnic group was the Alawis, which occupied only 12.9 percent of the total population. "Alawi, largely underrepresented in government service before the Ba'thist takeover, have certainly profited over-proportionally from the fact that key positions in the regime have been occupied by Alawi officers since 1966" (Perthes 1995: 183). Within the Alawi population and inner circles of the president, a pyramid of dense patronage networks was formed, which reached all levels of the community. Mostly targeting the Alawi and several other regional political bases, the Assad regime utilized redistribution strategy through electricity, schooling, and health services (Perthes 1995: 185; Van Dam 2011; De Juan and Bank 2015: 94). The limited scope of redistribution within the boundary of the dominant group, however, made competitive elections highly risky for the regime, and therefore elections were extremely fraudulent. Throughout the regime, the extent of blatant electoral fraud remained extensive (far above the mean in the sample) even though the country consistently produced a fair amount of natural resources (US$260–380 per capita): in presidential elections only one candidate, Hafez al-Assad himself, was allowed to run, whereas in parliamentary elections real opposition parties were prohibited to participate in elections and voters could choose between a regime-sponsored united front led by the dominant Ba'ath Party and individual independent

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results remain unchanged if the model simultaneously introduces the interaction of the natural resources variable and the dominant party variable.

candidates. In addition to the exclusion of opposition parties, the regime resorted to rigging elections to help some candidates win the elections (Perthes 1992: 16).

Control variables have largely predictable directions of coefficients, with some variables having statistically significant effects. Military regimes tend to rely less upon blatant electoral fraud, in comparison with personalist dictatorships. This is consistent with the view that military regimes often return to the barracks and allow political liberalization (Geddes 1999). The Freedom House Index is negatively correlated with the extent of blatant electoral fraud, thus suggesting that regimes that are highly repressive during non-electoral periods tend to commit blatant electoral fraud.[16] Incompetence of electoral administrative bodies fuels electoral fraud in a statistically significant way. Both economic prosperity and high economic growth contribute to reducing blatant electoral fraud. Finally, foreign aid is positively correlated with electoral fairness, suggesting that aid-receiving autocracies are less likely to employ blatant electoral fraud.

### Further Analyses and Robustness Checks

To further explore the specific relationships between mobilization capabilities and blatant electoral fraud, I have performed various additional statistical analyses. The blatant electoral fraud variable includes different techniques in relation to election rigging, for example, undemocratic restrictions on the electoral law, election violence, and election cheating. To test which aspects of mobilization capability affect which specific methods of blatant electoral fraud, I disaggregate the electoral fraud variable into three categories: (1) problems on electoral law (ranging from 0 to 3); (2) repression and violent intimidation (i.e., pre-electoral and election-day violence, ranging from 0 to 6); and (3) nonviolent electoral cheating (i.e., pre-electoral and election-day cheating, ranging from 0 to 6). Following this, I run ordered logit models with robust standard errors clustered by country.

For all the different forms of blatant electoral fraud, natural resource endowments consistently have negative correlations with the dependent variables in statistically significant ways. Natural resources are negatively correlated with both legal problems and election violence. Furthermore, its

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16. The Freedom House Index accounts for roughly 15 percent of total variation in blatant electoral fraud. Thus, political repression in non-electoral periods is a strong predictor of electoral fraud in the upcoming elections. However, given that the adjusted $R$-squared is 0.47 (Model 3), large variations remain explained by the other included variables.

conditional effect with the dominant party dummy remains strong and sta-
tistically significant for both election violence and electoral cheating. This
result suggests that natural resources reduce any type of blatant electoral
fraud employed by dictators, be it legal problems, overt violence, and even
relatively opaque cheating. By contrast, opposition strength is positively
correlated with election violence and fails to reject the null when electoral
fraud takes the form of legal problems and election cheating. This suggests
that authoritarian governments may be more inclined to respond with
repression rather than nonviolent means when the opposition is strong.
The interaction effect with the EOP variable becomes uncertain in mod-
els with disaggregated models, suggesting that ethnicity-based networks
impact less as an intervening variable in terms of specifying manipulation
techniques (appendix B3.1).

Blatant electoral fraud is also different in that it occurs at different *phases*
of the electoral process. In this regard, I distinguish pre-electoral periods
from election-day periods in order to investigate which factors of mobi-
lization capability are better at explaining pre-electoral and election-day
electoral fraud. I utilize the IRT technique to aggregate different meth-
ods of electoral fraud and measure the degrees of electoral fraud for pre-
electoral and election-day periods, respectively.[17] Following this, I employ
RE-OLS estimators with robust standard errors clustered by country.

Again, natural resources are negatively correlated with both pre-
electoral and election-day fraud in a consistent manner. Furthermore,
pre-electoral fraud tends to be reduced if the oil-rich dictators are deeply
embedded within the dominant party organizations, while the oil-rich dic-
tators with strong ethno-organizational powerbases are likely to be less
dependent upon election-day fraud. The opposition strength variable has
positive associations with pre-electoral manipulation strategies, yet its
coefficient does not reach the 10 percent level of statistical significance,
implying that collective anti-government actions may not be a strong pre-
dictor in explaining the timing of blatant electoral fraud (appendix B3.2).

Finally, I conduct a range of sensitivity analyses. Robustness checks con-
firm that the main results are robust to important methodological issues,
such as (1) possible sample selection bias, (2) additional control variables,
(3) possible endogeneity between oil and fraud, and (4) possible outliers.
First, it might be the case that the distribution of electoral manipulation
is biased as a result of limiting the sample to autocracies only. Similarly, as

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17. Legal problems of electoral laws are likely to influence both pre-electoral and election-
day periods; hence, I include it for both periods.

some oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia do not hold elections, the impact of natural resources on fraud may be biased due to the fact that autocracies with no elections are excluded from the sample. To deal with these concerns of sample selection biases, I employ Heckman two-stage selection models to confirm that the main results remain unchanged (appendix B3.3).[18] Furthermore, I include additional relevant covariates at the risk of reducing the number of observations. The literature suggests that both domestic and international election monitoring decreases the likelihood of blatant electoral fraud (e.g., Hyde 2007; Kelley 2012). Additionally, research suggests that electoral systems influence the extent of blatant electoral fraud (Birch 2007). The inclusion of these additional control variables does not alter the main results (appendix B3.4).

Another point of note is that there is also a potential reverse causality problem between electoral fraud and natural resources since the freer and fairer the elections, the more tempted authoritarian leaders may be to exploit natural resources in advance. Following Haber and Menaldo (2011: 23), I use three variables on proven oil reserves in each country as instrumental variables, each of which are highly correlated with oil-gas value per capita, yet it is reasonable to assume that an oil reserve's effect on fraud will go only through oil-gas value per capita (and therefore satisfy the exclusion restrictions). These instrumental variables are jointly statistically significant at the 0.1 percent level in the first stage, suggesting that the instruments are good predictors of oil-gas value per capita. Also, Hansen's J test of the overidentifying restrictions cannot reject the null hypothesis that instruments are not correlated with the error term in the second-stage estimation, suggesting that the instruments are valid. A two-stage instrumental variables estimation shows that the oil variable has a negative impact on blatant electoral fraud (appendix B3.5).

Last, as distributions of the natural resources and anti-government collective action variables tend to be skewed, the estimation results may be sensitive to some outliers. To ensure that the results remain robust, I conducted jackknife analyses by excluding countries one by one to find that natural resource wealth remains negatively associated with blatant electoral fraud whereas anti-government collective action is still positively associated in statistically significant ways.[19]

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18. The first-stage model estimates the likelihood of holding autocratic elections and calculates the inverse Mills ratio, which is introduced in the second-stage model where the dependent variable is blatant electoral fraud with the same set of predictors employed in the main analysis.

19. The estimation results are available upon request.

## 3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the logic of blatant electoral fraud in dictatorships. Dictators face the electoral dilemma of choosing between the certainty of winning big and the credibility of election results. Focusing on the extent to which dictators can mobilize mass support through economic maneuvering, I have argued that dictators with high mobilization capabilities are more likely to lower the extent of blatant electoral fraud because they can mobilize public support through the distribution of pork and patronage. Conversely, dictators with low mobilization capabilities tend to inevitably rely on blatant electoral fraud to hold onto power. Specifically, I find that dictators with abundant natural resources and weak opposition are likely to refrain from blatant electoral fraud. Furthermore, the negative effect of natural resources on fraud tends to be magnified when dictators have disciplinary organizations through which they can streamline economic distribution, that is, dominant parties and large, cohesive dominant ethnic groups.

The findings of this chapter imply that the mere existence of relatively free and fair elections does not *necessarily* lead to further democratization. Specifically, authoritarian leaders may decide the extent of blatant electoral fraud for their own sake and thus introduce less fraudulent elections when they think they can win big by mobilizing regime supporters. If popular dictators are likely to allow elections with less fraud, then evaluating a country's prospect of democratization through the practices of electoral integrity may prove to be inadequate. In addition to tracking blatant electoral fraud, it is also necessary to closely investigate what are the fundamental sources of popular support in authoritarian regimes.

Dictators' electioneering strategies, however, are not limited to the techniques of blatant electoral fraud that this chapter has focused upon. In addition to these coercive tactics of electoral manipulation, many authoritarian leaders also manipulate electoral institutions to bias election results, including enacting electoral system reforms, redistricting for gerrymandering purposes, and manipulating district magnitudes to create high levels of malapportionment. The next chapter will unravel this alternatively dominant form of electoral manipulation in dictatorships—institutional manipulation.

# Institutional Manipulation

Structuring the world so you can win.
   —William H. Riker, *The Art of Political Manipulation*

## 4.1. The Puzzle of Electoral System Choice in Dictatorships

Electoral rules significantly affect seat-vote elasticity, specifically the manner in which scored votes are translated into shares of seats in the legislature (Rae 1971; Taagepera and Shugart 1989; Lijphart 1994; Cox 1998). In particular, one of the few "laws" in political science research is the so-called Duverger's law, which proposes that single-member district (SMD) systems, where only one candidate is elected in an electoral district, lead to a high disproportionality in favor of large parties. In contrast, proportional representation (PR) systems generally assign seats to parties in the legislature proportionally according to votes that they obtained, usually favorable to small parties (Duverger 1954).

In democracies where political parties compete in free and fair elections, SMD systems often bring landslide election victories to major *opposition* parties with a big swing. For instance, amid very low popularity before the 1993 Canadian parliamentary elections, the ruling Progressive Conservative Party reduced their seats from 156 to 2, losing to the biggest opposition party, the Liberal Party. In the Japanese 2009 lower house elections, the increasingly popular main opposition party, the Democratic Party, achieved a landslide victory by boosting their seats from 115 to

308, whereas the Liberal Democracy Party, which had long been in office mostly from 1955 to 2009, lost a substantial portion of their seats, going from 300 to 119. Put simply, SMD systems in mature democracies favor large parties that emerge in strength, be they ruling or opposition parties.

However, in dictatorships with multiparty elections, SMD systems have a slightly different institutional mechanism. In most authoritarian regimes, government turnover through elections is a remote possibility: The ruling party occupies a hegemonic position and is mostly the only party large enough to receive seat bias generated under majoritarian electoral systems. For this reason, SMD systems produce a significant seat bias exclusive to the ruling party, in what I term the *pro-regime seat premiums (bias)* under SMD systems.

Figure 4.1 provides the first-cut cross-national evidence corroborating the pro-regime seat premiums in SMD systems under electoral authoritarianism.[1] Ruling parties under majoritarian electoral systems tend to receive more seats than those under proportional systems: the distribution of seat shares leans toward 100 percent of seats, even though the share of votes is normally distributed with having around 60 percent of votes as the peak. Electoral authoritarian states like Georgia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Singapore are only a few examples where ruling parties enjoyed large seat premiums under SMD systems.[2] In contrast, in light of their shares of seats, opposition parties tend to be far more under-represented in the legislature under majoritarian electoral systems than in PR systems. Specifically, the distribution of opposition seats is extremely skewed toward 0 percent of total seats in majoritarian electoral systems, whereas seat shares tend to coincide with vote shares in PR systems. Opposition parties in the above-mentioned country examples have indeed suffered from this pro-regime seat bias and hence were extremely underrepresented under majoritarian electoral systems, relative to their vote shares.

Given that SMD systems generate significant, exclusive seat premiums for dictators' parties, one may be tempted to conclude that dictators' natural choice of voting system is a majoritarian electoral system. However, reality paints a different picture. Figure 4.2 shows kernel density plots depicting patterns of electoral systems in electoral authoritarian regimes in general as well as those within each region. Here I use the effective electoral threshold (EET) as the measure of electoral systems. EET mea-

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1. The definition and operationalization of electoral authoritarian regimes is provided at the beginning of section 4.5.

2. In the listed countries, ruling parties received more than 20 percent of seat premiums in pure SMD systems.

(a): EET>10; Majoritarian Systems

Ruling Parties' Votes/Seats Shares (%)

Density

(b): EET<=10; Proportional Systems

Ruling Parties' Votes/Seats Shares (%)

Density

(c): EET>10; Majoritarian Systems

Opposition Votes/Seats Shares (%)

Density

(d): EET<=10; Proportional Systems

Opposition Votes/Seats Shares (%)

Density

Shares of Votes ———    Shares of Seats - - - -
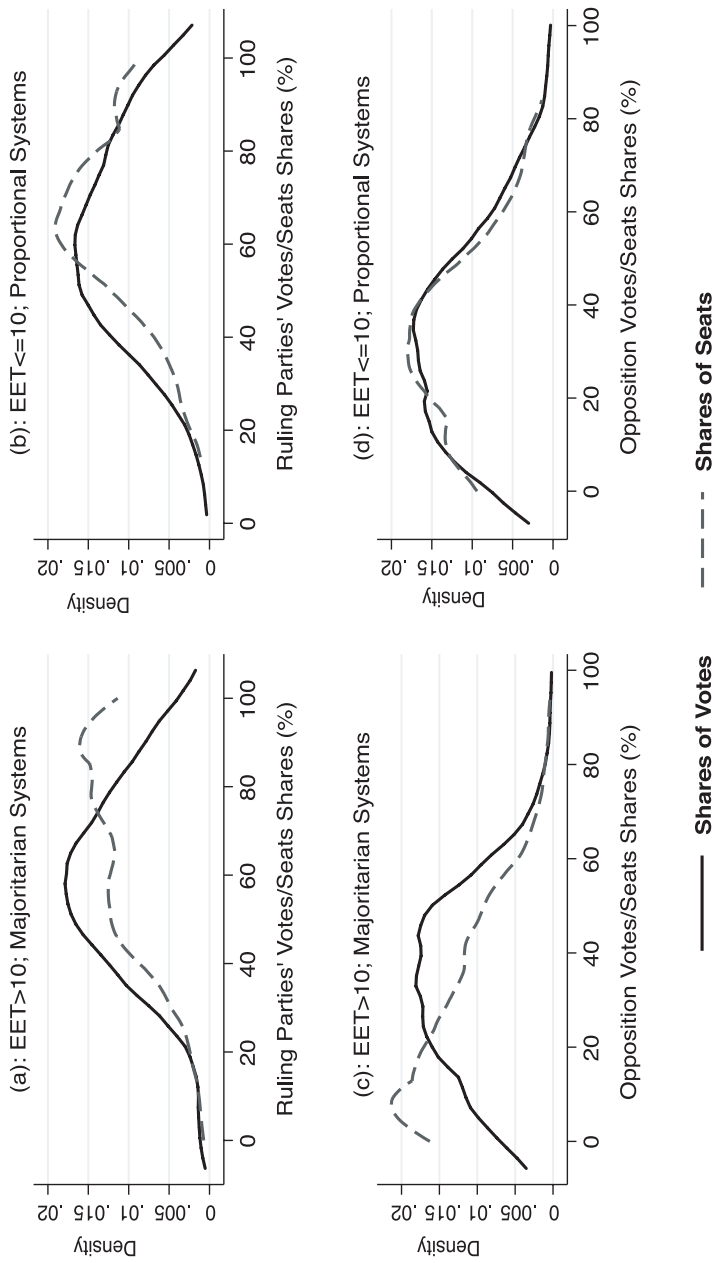
Fig. 4.1. Pro-Regime SMD Seat Premiums in Parliamentary Elections of Electoral Autocracy

*Note*: The data cover 83 electoral authoritarian countries from 1945 to 2010. Electoral authoritarian regimes are defined as autocracies where multiparty elections are held and certain degrees of pluralism and competition are allowed but wherein minimal democratic norms are severely violated. Effective electoral threshold (EET) measures the proportion of votes that, for each electoral system, secures parliamentary representation to any party with a probability of at least 50 percent (Boix 1999: 614). An EET of 37.5 percent is identical with the pure SMD system, and lower values of EET indicate more proportional representation systems. Here, for descriptive purposes, I adopt EET = 10 as the threshold below which an electoral system is categorized as a proportional system and otherwise a majoritarian system. Figures 4.1a and 4.1b represent ruling parties' shares of votes (straight line) and seats (dashed line), while figures 4.1c and 4.1d stand for those of opposition parties.
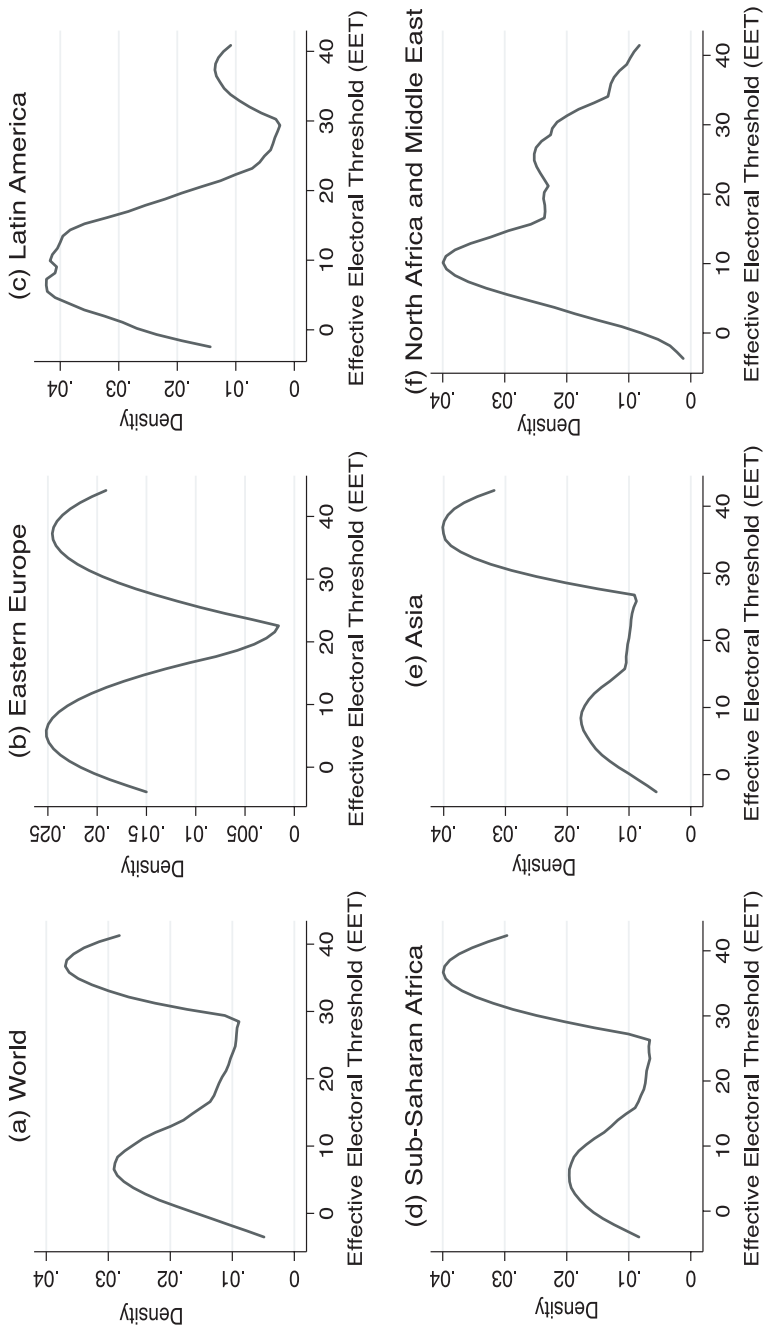
Fig. 4.2. Patterns of Electoral Systems in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes

*Note*: The data cover 98 electoral authoritarian countries from 1945 to 2010. An EET of 37.5 percent is identical with the pure SMD system, and lower values of EET indicate more PR systems.

sures the proportion of votes that, for each electoral system, secures parliamentary representation for any party with a probability of at least 50 percent (Boix 1999: 614), with higher values indicating more majoritarian electoral systems (the maximum value is 37.5 percent, indicating the pure SMD system).[3]

As the figures show, although the pure SMD system (EET = 37.5 percent) is a dominant form of electoral system, a significant portion of electoral autocracies also adopts PR systems (with low values of EET). Looking at within-region variations, electoral autocracies in Eastern Europe, Latin America, North Africa, and the Middle East are more likely to adopt PR-based systems than those in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Specifically, electoral authoritarian regimes including Mexico (1970–2000), Guyana (1968–2006), Peru (1995–2000), Brazil (1970–78), Russia (2007–14), Kazakhstan (2007–), Burkina Faso (2002–7), and Indonesia (1971–97) represent only a fraction of instances where some form of PR system was adopted and thus election results were not tilted toward governing parties due to the pro-regime seat bias.

The strong presence of the pro-regime SMD seat premiums and dictators' choice of PR systems posits an intriguing puzzle regarding electoral systems in dictatorships: *Why do some autocrats choose PR systems despite the fact that they are seemingly a suboptimal choice of electoral systems? Under what conditions do authoritarian leaders change their electoral systems from SMD to PR and vice versa?* Before offering an answer to these puzzles of electoral institutions in dictatorships, I first review what the literature has said about determinants of electoral system reforms.

## 4.2. Literature on Electoral System Design

Scholars have accrued a sophisticated understanding of electoral system choice by mostly focusing on (1) political, (2) economic, and (3) historical factors based upon experiences of democratic countries. I suggest, however, that crucial differences between democracies and autocracies make it difficult to directly apply the extant explanations to the authoritarian context specifically.

Rokkan (1970) delivered the pioneering work on this matter. He proposed two political explanations regarding the adoption of PR in prewar Europe. Rokkan's first hypothesis argues that incumbents adopt PR systems

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3. For more detailed discussions about the EET measure, see section 4.4.

to avoid a devastating electoral defeat in the face of socialist mobilization. Boix (1999) advances this hypothesis and argues that ruling parties adopt PR systems when they are seriously divided between the conservative and liberal camps. Rokkan's second hypothesis, which has been taken up by Calvo (2009), suggests that parties with a geographically concentrated distribution of votes enjoy more seats than those that have geographically dispersed votes under SMD systems. Therefore, the old parties with dispersed votes prefer to shift to PR to moderate such seat biases.

Other scholars have focused on the distribution of economic interests. Cusack, Iversen, and Soskice (2007) argue that whether right-wing parties adopt PR systems depends on the extent to which businesses and unions forge cooperative relationships through well-established collective bargaining. If right-wing parties are embedded in cross-class, consensus-based decision-making processes, they can enjoy benefits from such regulatory politics, and thus the cross-class alliances encourage governments to choose PR systems. Rogowski (1987) argues that trade-dependent countries are more likely to adopt PR systems. An open economy encourages governments to resist protectionist pressures, maintain high efficiency, and retain high policy stability. In PR systems that tend to have larger electoral districts, incumbents can contain regional and sectorial demands more effectively, thus making governments in trade-dependent countries prefer PR systems.

Although these explanations are powerful in understanding the choice of electoral systems in advanced democracies, it is difficult to directly apply these insights to authoritarian contexts because all assume strong party competition in democracies. Rokkan's first hypothesis views strong socialist challenges as a driving force leading to the adoption of PR systems.[4] Rokkan's second hypothesis also assumes that strong party competition is responsible for generating the seat bias. Similarly, the economic-interest explanation also presumes that distributional conflict among different economic groups becomes severe in the face of strong party competition. However, a crucial difference between democracies and autocracies is that opposition parties in authoritarian states are mostly too weak to be a viable alternative at elections. Put differently, these explanations are unable to offer a compelling answer to the puzzle of electoral system change in dictatorships: why do some authoritarian leaders prefer PR systems despite the fact that ruling parties do not need to worry about opposition parties?

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4. Indeed, Boix recognized this, suggesting that his theoretical expectation is applicable only to democracies (1999: 622).

As a historical explanation, it has been argued that electoral systems are highly path dependent. Especially in democracies, a dominant view is that, once selected, electoral systems are surprisingly stable because the choice of electoral system is strongly influenced by the stakes applicable to the preexisting parties (Cox 1998: 18).[5] Certainly, electoral systems in electoral authoritarian regimes also have such a path-dependent characteristic. However, there have been significant reforms that changed electoral systems in many electoral authoritarian regimes. This runs contrary to the experience of mature democracies in which electoral systems have been highly stable. In autocracies, political leaders may have more discretion in designing pliable electoral systems.[6]

Scholars have recently begun to explore the choice of electoral systems in authoritarian regimes.[7] In their pioneering research, Lust-Okar and Jamal (2002) argue that the type of authoritarian regime shapes dictators' preferences over electoral rules in the Middle East. Since monarchies rely less on popular support and their political stability depends upon the power balance among competing forces, monarchs prefer electoral systems that allow them to remain in place as key arbitrators. By contrast, party-based regimes rely more directly on popular politics, and thus leaders in

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5. For example, Tsebelis (1990) argues that extant electoral systems may shape the interests of legislators within each party, which makes it difficult to change electoral systems, even if an alternative electoral system is rational for parties as a whole. Based on this insight, recent literature argues that ruling parties may change more specific and micro-level electoral rules in their favor. For instance, McElwain (2008) shows that incumbent politicians tended to enjoy advantages in elections by restricting the lengths of electoral campaign periods in Japan.

6. As another historical factor, researchers have focused upon the nature of regime transitions, contending that periods of democratic transitions render it problematic for electoral systems to have expected institutional effects. Specifically, scholars have shown that electoral system change in transitioning states does not lead reformers to gain benefits that they initially expected because the effects of electoral reforms are highly uncertain in those countries where democratic institutions are still immature (Przeworski 1991; Remington and Smith 1996; Moser 2001; Andrews and Jackman 2005). In authoritarian regimes, however, electoral institutions have high certainty about how they work, at least compared to those in transitioning countries. In stark contrast with the findings in new democracies, a large body of literature on authoritarian elections demonstrates that electoral rules help dictators consolidate their power (Magaloni 2006; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Blaydes 2011). Specifically, in discussing electoral systems in the Middle East, Lust-Okar and Jamal (2002) note: "Both sides [incumbents and oppositions] know their preferences over the electoral rules. . . . PR and larger member districts tend to increase the number of effective parties and the possibility of minority representation, whereas majoritarian systems and SMD tend to limit the participation of smaller parties. . . . Elites hold firm preferences over electoral laws when they negotiate with each other" (345–46).

7. Regarding differences in electoral systems between democracy and autocracy, Bielasiak (2006) finds that in the postcommunist world, democracy and semi-authoritarian states tend to adopt PR systems or mixed systems while more authoritarian states adopt SMD systems.

these regimes have incentives to choose electoral rules that favor their party while also keeping the opposition fragmented. Meanwhile, Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2001) argue that Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) shifted from a pure majoritarian system to a mixed-member system, because the PR portion reduces the incentive for the opposition to coordinate, while the SMD portion helps the PRI obtain a disproportionate share of seats. Comparing Central Asian countries, Jones Luong (2002) argues that political actors' perception of power plays an important role in designing electoral systems: when a political actor expects their power will increase vis-à-vis other actors, they propose electoral rules that are favorable to themselves, and other actors are likely to accept them.[8]

This chapter expands upon these insights to increase our understanding of the origins of electoral institutions in autocracies. Theoretically, my argument builds on Lust-Okar and Jamal's (2002) and Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni's (2001) contributions on the costs and benefits of different electoral systems as well as Jones Luong's (2002) focus on the distribution of power between a dictator and other actors within a given system. Specifically, by highlighting dictators' differing abilities to derive public support from the masses, I posit novel hypotheses for electoral autocrats' choice of electoral systems. Empirically, I expand the sample beyond the Middle East, Central Asia, and Mexico to include virtually all of the world's electoral autocracies.

## 4.3. The Costs and Benefits of SMD and PR in Authoritarian Regimes

To stay in power at the ballot box, dictators employ various techniques to manufacture a landslide victory and deter potential challengers. As I investigated in chapter 3, electoral violence, ballot stuffing, media bias, voter intimidation, and the packing of election management bodies are all examples of blatant electoral fraud. Autocrats may also engage in economic maneuvering prior to elections, thereby engineering political business cycles through the provisions of pork and patronage. This will be closely examined in chapter 5.

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8. In a recent review article, Gandhi and Heller (2018) offer useful information concerning elections and electoral rules in authoritarian regimes. They highlight various formal and informal constraints under which dictators engage in electoral system designs. Particularly, they argue that the frequent use of electoral coercion and manipulation in authoritarian regimes severely worsens the information problems, which in turn make it difficult for dictators to find the optimal electoral rule.

One crucial—yet less explored—strategy of electioneering by dictators is the choice of electoral system. Many studies have documented various political and economic effects associated with different electoral systems. For instance, in democracies, PR systems are more likely to lead to higher turnout, less strategic voting, and higher government spending and deficits, as well as greater income equality (Persson and Tabellini 2004; Iversen and Soskice 2006). Similarly, in authoritarian regimes, I posit that different electoral systems have different effects that are pertinent to authoritarian rule. In other words, dictators strategically choose electoral systems to meet their political needs and priorities.

Given the electoral dilemma found in dictatorships, autocrats consider carefully the certainty of winning big and the credibility of election results. SMD systems provide the pro-regime seat premiums, thereby increasing the likelihood of dictators winning elections overwhelmingly. That said, the adoption of SMD systems is also accompanied by several side effects that may undermine the credibility of election results. By contrast, PR systems proportionally allocate seats in parliament according to political parties' share of votes, thereby increasing the credibility of election results. This feature, however, makes it more difficult for governing parties to win big at elections, because they are unable to receive any pro-regime seat bias generated by institutional manipulation. Put differently, SMD systems help dictators boost their ability to co-opt ruling elites through legislature at the cost of electoral credibility, while PR systems' proportionality contributes to the dividing of opposition parties and the enhancement of political legitimacy of the regimes while sacrificing electoral margins.

### *Pro-Regime Seat Premiums under SMD Systems: Co-opting Ruling Elites through Legislature*

SMD systems enable dictators to incorporate large portions of ruling elites into the legislature as an institutionalized rent-seeking mechanism. Specifically, SMD helps dictators co-opt ruling elites by solving the commitment problem, which appears when ruling elites suspect dictators will renege on the rents and economic privileges given to them. As a way of making a credible commitment to elites, dictators can institutionalize legislatures to credibly guarantee a long-lasting provision of rents from the regime (Lust-Okar 2008). I add to this literature by emphasizing the advantages derived from electoral systems. SMD systems allow dictators to retain a larger pool of legislative seats for ruling elites due to high seats-votes disproportionalities.

SMD systems generate the pro-regime seat premiums through three mechanisms.[9] First, essentially, Duverger's (1954) well-known mechanical and psychological effects from majoritarian electoral systems yield a significant seat bias to the governing party in dictatorships. That is, expecting that a large portion of seats will not be guaranteed to opposition parties due to the high disproportionality of SMD systems (i.e., mechanical effects), voters may cast their ballot for the ruling party or abstain from voting altogether (i.e., psychological effects).

Second, SMD systems also allow authoritarian leaders to gerrymander electoral districts, leading to further generating seat biases in favor of the ruling party. In SMD systems where governments are able to design every single electoral district, dictators are more likely to engage in gerrymandering to favor the ruling parties. Conversely, in PR systems, district magnitude is large in number while the electoral districts tend to be geographically wide and are often fixed with administrative units. Therefore, ruling parties have less discretion to redistrict in these scenarios. Examples of extensive gerrymandering under majoritarian electoral systems are too numerous to list. Ruling parties in mid-nineteenth-century Europe resorted to redistricting to maintain electoral dominance under SMD systems (A. Ahmed 2013). In Hong Kong, the government redraws electoral boundaries that pro-democracy opposition parties control as their strongholds (Wong 2019). The Kenya African National Union's home provinces enjoyed a large portion of parliamentary seats due to constituency gerrymandering under Daniel arap Moi's rule, helping him hold onto power (Omolo 2002: 219). Washida (2018: chap. 7) demonstrates that Malaysia's Barisan Nasional (BN) tended to break apart overrepresented supporting bases to export their supporters to neighboring constituencies where the party's popular support was relatively weak.

Third, due to the leeway to commit gerrymandering and the vulnerability of small electoral districts to population change, SMD systems are more likely to suffer high levels of malapportionment, leading to seat bias in favor of the ruling party. Malapportionment, which is "the discrepancy between the shares of legislative seats and the shares of population held by

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9. In addition to the effects of electoral systems on national aggregates of parties' vote shares, geographical distribution of public support for political parties may also matter for the dictator's calculus over electoral system choice. However, as the ruling party's dominance is far more likely to prevail across regions in dictatorships than in advanced democracies, SMD systems are unlikely to induce strong partisan bias, as argued by Calvo (2009). Empirically, systematically collecting district-level data on the distribution of votes and seats in dictatorships is highly intractable. For these reasons, I focus on the national-level mechanisms of electoral systems in dictatorships.

geographical units" (Samuels and Snyder 2001: 652), aids autocrats in winning elections overwhelmingly by increasing the value of a vote primarily within the ruling party's strongholds. By contrast, under PR systems, and in particular the ones with a nationwide electoral district, governing parties are unable to manipulate district magnitude according to numbers of constituents. Indeed, cross-national analyses on malapportionment suggest that whether a country adopts SMD systems is a strong predictor of high levels of malapportionment (Samuels and Snyder 2001; Horiuchi 2004). Electoral authoritarian countries are, in particular, more likely to suffer legislative malapportionment than countries with advanced democracies (Ong, Kasuya, and Mori 2017). According to Boone and Wahman (2015), African electoral autocracies with SMD systems, such as the Gambia and Tanzania, have maintained malapportioned electoral districts by assigning more seats to rural areas. Malaysia's redistricting under the BN rule significantly inflated the electoral weight of regime supporters and reduced the value of a vote in the opposition's support bases, contributing to generating the pro-regime seat premiums under an SMD system (Washida 2018).

Taken together, these three mechanisms aid SMD systems in biasing election results toward the ruling party in authoritarian regimes. The pro-regime seat premium under SMD systems is nicely illustrated by the examples of Singapore, Malaysia, and Tajikistan. Between 1959 and 2008, the People's Action Party in Singapore and the BN in Malaysia obtained 87 percent of the total seats with only 63 percent of the total votes. Thanks to the strong pro-regime seat premium, both parties have remained electorally dominant since independence. In the same vein, Tajikistan's 2015 parliamentary elections produced a significant seat premium to the ruling People's Democratic Party; although the ruling party obtained only 65.2 percent of votes in the portion of PR, the party secured 85.3 percent of seats in the SMD portion, leading to an overwhelming election victory with 81 percent of seat shares in total (OSCE 2015: 30).

Cross-national analysis provides evidence on the pro-regime seat premium in authoritarian regimes.[10] Here, electoral system types are measured by the EET index originally proposed by Lijphart (1994). Since Boix's (1999) seminal study, scholars have adopted this measure to explore the determinants of electoral systems. Conceptually, EET measures "the proportion of votes that, for each electoral system, secures parliamentary

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10. I estimate random effects ordinary least squares (RE-OLS), with robust standard errors clustered by country. As the number of observations within a unit (country) is very small (mean = 3.7, maximum at 15), and models include sluggish independent variables (EET and logged total seats), RE estimators yield lower variance than FE estimators (Clark and Linzer 2015).

TABLE 4.1. Pro-Regime Seat Premiums in SMD Systems

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Estimator | RE-OLS | RE-OLS | RE-OLS |
| Dependent variable | Disproportionality | Ruling party's seat premium | Ruling party's seat premium |
| Effective electoral | 0.138 | 0.143** | –0.162 |
| threshold (EET) | (0.0864) | (0.0705) | (0.197) |
| Share of ruling party votes | | –0.0496 | –0.142* |
| | | (0.0500) | (0.0755) |
| EET*Share of ruling | | | 0.00506 |
| party votes | | | (0.00313) |
| Share of independents | 0.0123 | 0.118 | 0.154 |
| votes | (0.101) | (0.113) | (0.105) |
| Logged total seats | –1.629 | –0.765 | –1.061 |
| | (1.300) | (1.144) | (1.111) |
| Constant | 20.94** | 7.682 | 14.77** |
| | (8.226) | (7.145) | (7.375) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 16.36 | 31.41*** | 35.49*** |
| R-squared | 0.083 | 0.102 | 0.119 |
| Observations | 309 | 311 | 311 |
| Number of countries | 83 | 83 | 83 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Descriptive statistics of the variables are available in appendix A4.

representation to any party with a probability of at least 50 percent" (Boix 1999: 614). Operationally,

$$EET = \frac{75\%}{M + 1}$$

where $M$ represents average district magnitude in a country-year. As the country's electoral system becomes more proportional, the value of EET becomes smaller.[11]

As seen in figure 4.1, shares of votes and seats tend to coincide for ruling and opposition parties under PR systems, whereas under SMD systems, seat shares are highly skewed toward 100 percent for ruling parties and toward 0 percent for opposition parties. To provide more rigorous evidence, table 4.1 shows the results of regression analyses in which I test the impact of SMD systems after controlling for relevant confounders.[12] The

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11. When EET is lower than the legal threshold that often exists in PR systems, I use the legal threshold as the EET in the country.

12. Model specifications are based upon Lijphart (1994).

findings corroborate the idea of the pro-regime seat premiums in dictator-ships with SMD systems.

Interestingly, when the dependent variable is the disproportionality index that measures discrepancies between seats and votes of *both* ruling and opposition parties (Model 1), SMD systems do not have a statistically significant impact.[13] However, when the dependent variable measures gaps between seats and votes of ruling parties, SMD systems are positively asso-ciated with the dependent variable (Model 2). For example, when a country adopts the pure SMD system (EET = 37.5 percent), ruling parties obtain 4.64 percent more seats, compared to the scenario where a country adopts a PR system with the 5 percent of legal threshold. These results suggest that SMD systems bias election results only in favor of ruling parties.

Further analysis also shows that the pro-regime seat premiums in SMD systems have a positive feedback character, suggesting that dictators with high mobilization capabilities may not value the pro-regime seat premi-ums. Namely, the more votes autocrats acquire, the more seat premiums they receive. Model 3 in table 4.1 estimates an interaction model to show how the effect of EET on ruling parties' seats-votes elasticity changes depending on vote shares that ruling parties obtain at elections. The inter-action term is positive, suggesting that the seat premiums become larger if ruling parties are able to mobilize a large number of supporters at elections (see fig. 4.3). For instance, if a dictator adopts an SMD system (EET = 37.5 percent) and the ruling parties obtain 65 percent of total votes in elections, then the ruling parties receive 5.3 percent more seats as compared to the scenario when it adopts a PR system with the 5 percent EET and the same 65 percent vote. In contrast, when ruling parties get more vote shares, say, 85 percent of total votes, SMD provides 8.54 percent more seats than a PR system with the 5 percent of EET. This result suggests a possibility that dictators who can mobilize a large number of regime supporters may not need to adopt a majoritarian electoral system.

Figure 4.3 also provides additional evidence that SMD systems do not necessarily bring a big swing in favor of opposition parties—even if rul-ing parties are weak. The coefficient of the EET does turn negative if the ruling parties' vote share is less than about 30 percent, yet the effect is not distinguishable from 0 at the 0.05 level, even when vote shares of ruling

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13. In advanced democracies, majoritarian electoral systems are the most powerful predic-tor of high disproportionality (Lijphart 1994; Moser and Scheiner 2012). Disproportionality is measured according to the disproportionality index in which both ruling and opposition parties are included.
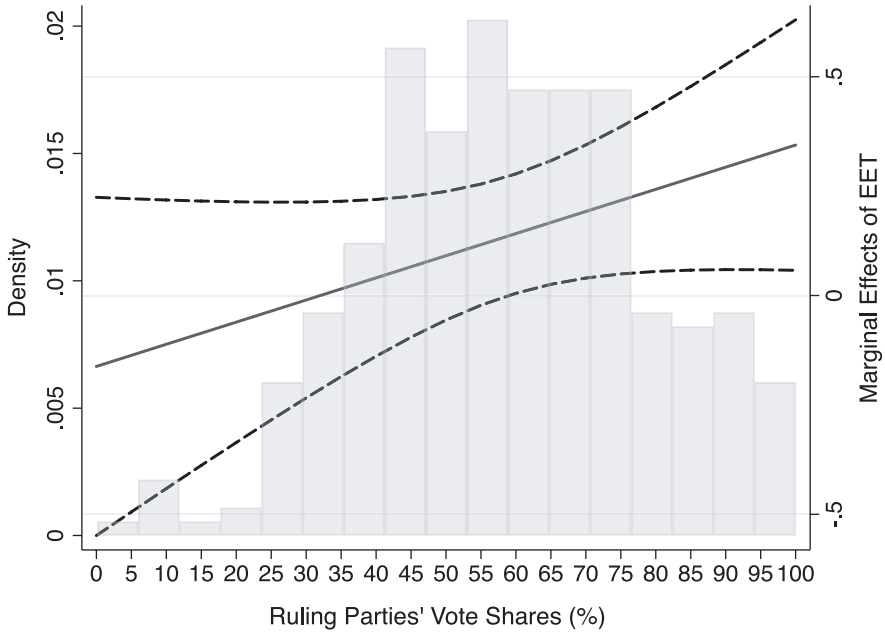
Fig. 4.3. Pro-Regime Seat Premiums and Ruling Parties' Vote Shares
*Note:* The dotted lines are the 95% confidence intervals. The estimation results are based on Model 3.

parties are located from 0 to 30 percent.[14] The overall results again support the theoretical assumption posited by my theory. Specifically, contrary to Rokkan's (1970) and Boix's (1999) theoretical expectations, SMD systems do not necessarily backfire on authoritarian rulers with high disproportionality in electoral authoritarianism. The evidence here suggests that even if ruling parties are not capable of reaching the majority of total votes, authoritarian rulers could contain opposition surges in elections by engaging in other institutional manipulation techniques such as gerrymandering and malapportionment.

### *Benefits of PR Systems: Divide and Rule the Opposition and Demonstrate Regime Invincibility*

Although PR systems do not generate extra seats for the incumbent, they contribute to improving the credibility of election results, which then gen-

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14. Such countries include Ecuador (2002), Peru (1990), East Germany (1990), Albania (1992), Cyprus (1970), Russia (1995), Belarus (2000, 2004, 2008), Liberia (2005), Kenya (1992), Iraq (2010), South Korea (1950), and Pakistan (1985).

erates two benefits of autocratic elections identified in chapter 2: namely, the divide-and-rule effects and the demonstration effects. As a result, PR demands that dictators have higher levels of mobilization capabilities to win big, yet it is proportionality that brings these two benefits together such that they contribute to stabilizing authoritarian rule.

### The Divide-and-Rule Effect

PR systems render the opposition's coordination difficult and thus improve the divide-and-rule function of autocratic elections. Since the opposition in authoritarian regimes can win seats with smaller vote shares under PR systems, they are more willing to participate in politics within the existing institutional framework(s) than they are to adopt an extremist or anti-system approach. In this sense, PR renders dictators' institutional co-optation strategies toward the opposition even more effective. Importantly, the opposition groups participating in elections are less likely to coordinate their electoral campaigns to build a pre-electoral opposition coalition precisely because of the seat-vote proportionality. Barbera (2013) echoes this proposition and shows that PR tends to increase the number of opposition parties in authoritarian countries. Under SMD systems, however, opposition parties have stronger incentives to coordinate their election efforts in order to remain electorally viable (Golder 2006). Even in an autocracy, SMD systems promote opposition coordination. For instance, in the 2003 Georgian election with a pure SMD system, the two main opposition parties formed a coalition prior to the election. In the midst of political apathy and discontent, the pre-electoral coalition played an important role in successfully mobilizing protests against President Shevardnadze and ensuring the success of the Rose Revolution (Welt 2006).

I explicitly test the validity of this relationship and examine whether pre-electoral opposition coalitions are less likely to emerge under PR systems. Here, the dependent variable is whether a pre-electoral opposition coalition is formed. I use Gandhi and Reuter's (2013: 143) measure of opposition coalition making, which is a dichotomous variable coded as 1 "if there was a significant pre-electoral coalition among opposition parties, and 0 otherwise." The main independent variable is the EET.

Table 4.2 shows the results of random effects probit regression (RE probit).[15] As expected, the EET is positively correlated with the proba-

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15. Because the dependent variable is binary, I adopt a probit estimator. Employing fixed effects probit regression drops a significant number of countries wherein the dependent variable does not vary over time, which risks sample selection bias. Given this, I estimate RE probit to consider unit heterogeneity. For model specifications, I follow Gandhi and Reuter

TABLE 4.2. Electoral Systems and the Formation of Pre-Electoral Opposition Coalitions in Electoral Autocracy

| Estimator | Model 1 RE probit | Model 2 RE probit |
|---|---|---|
| Effective electoral threshold | 0.0364** | 0.0398*** |
| (EET) | (0.0176) | (0.0128) |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | –0.0699 | –0.0641 |
| | (0.0580) | (0.0523) |
| Age of largest opposition | 0.148** | 0.169*** |
| | (0.0577) | (0.0488) |
| Number of opposition parties | 0.0699** | 0.0496 |
| | (0.0329) | (0.0399) |
| Ruling party seat shares (lagged) | 0.0118 | 0.0220** |
| | (0.00828) | (0.0103) |
| Parliamentarism | –0.217 | –1.054** |
| | (0.458) | (0.436) |
| Ethno-Linguistic | 1.915** | 1.499* |
| Fractionalization | (0.855) | (0.772) |
| Economic growth (lagged) | 0.0180 | –0.00636 |
| | (0.0269) | (0.0275) |
| Logged GDP per capita (lagged) | –0.0795 | –0.00200 |
| | (0.146) | (0.126) |
| Election violence | –0.0610 | 0.445 |
| | (0.311) | (0.373) |
| Opposition coalition | | 1.486*** |
| (last election) | | (0.470) |
| Constant | –5.108* | –7.051*** |
| | (2.754) | (2.597) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Region fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Log pseudolikelihood | –69.32 | –43.96 |
| Observations | 226 | 168 |
| Number of countries | 71 | 55 |

*Note:* Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Descriptive statistics of the variables are available in appendix A4.

bility of pre-electoral opposition coalition making in both models, suggesting that in PR systems opposition parties are less likely to form coalitions before elections. Figure 4.4 graphically illustrates this result based on Model 2 in table 4.2. When the EET is 5 percent, the probability of

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(2013), the most comprehensive analysis on pre-electoral coalition making in nondemocracies. Although their sample is all nondemocracies (1946–2006), I limit the sample to electoral authoritarian regimes. Based on Gandhi and Reuter's (2013) model specification, I include ethno-linguistic fractionalization, number of opposition parties, parliamentarism, age of the largest opposition parties, economic growth (one year lagged), logged total population (one year lagged), election violence, ruling party's share of seats in the previous elections, natural resource wealth (one year lagged), and five regional dummies.
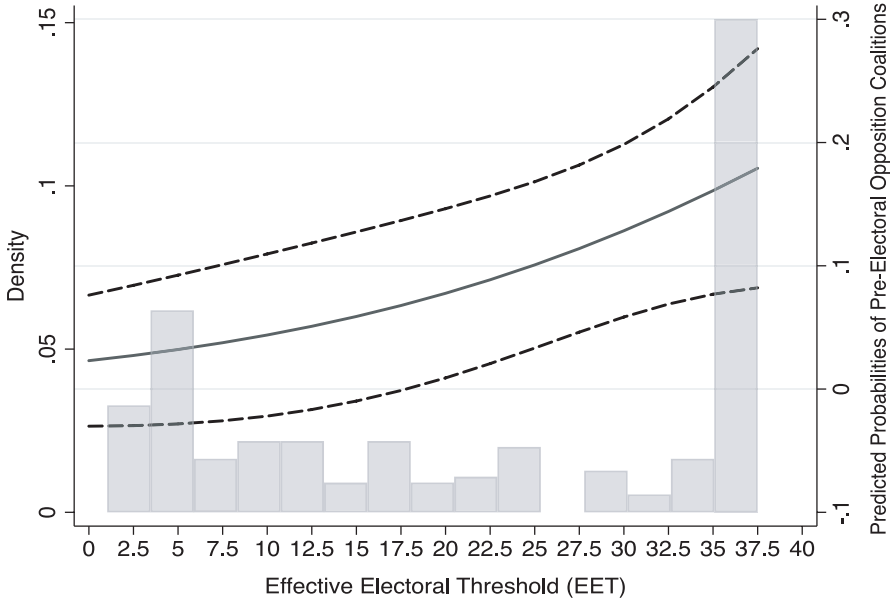
Fig. 4.4. Electoral Systems and Predicted Probabilities of Pre-Electoral Opposition Coalitions

*Note:* The dotted lines are the 95% confidence intervals. The graph is based on Model 1.

opposition coalition making is only 1 percent. When a country adopts an SMD system (EET = 37.5 percent), the probability of coalition increases to a maximum level of 12.5 percent. This suggests that electoral systems are also important when it comes to explaining how opposition coordination functions in electoral authoritarian regimes.

## The Demonstration Effect

The second advantage of adopting PR systems is that PR helps dictators effectively legitimize elections and autocratic regimes, thereby enhancing the demonstration effects of autocratic elections. In general, PR systems are associated with higher turnouts, because they have low barriers of entry into politics (Jackman 1987). Even voters in electoral autocracies have a greater incentive to vote in PR elections, since fewer votes are wasted; that is, there is the sense that one's vote will count in some way, albeit not necessarily directly. Importantly, high turnout is crucial for dictators, since winning an election *with* high turnout reinforces the regime's popularity and underscores its invincibility (Magaloni 2006). De Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler (2015: 1363) note that in the recent Egyptian elections, the election had to be extended for an additional day to bolster turnout. According to

TABLE 4.3. Electoral Systems and Voter Turnout in Electoral Autocracy

| Estimator | Model 1 RE-OLS |
|---|---|
| Effective electoral threshold (EET) | –0.183* |
| | (0.104) |
| Parliamentarism | 5.857** |
| | (2.690) |
| Election violence | –1.655 |
| | (1.827) |
| Ethno-Linguistic Fractionalization | 0.0436 |
| | (6.316) |
| Opposition's election boycott | –2.414 |
| | (2.390) |
| Election fraud (NELDA11) | –2.233 |
| | (1.900) |
| Logged GDP per capita (lagged) | 3.013** |
| | (1.460) |
| Constant | 62.93*** |
| | (13.63) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 47.03*** |
| $R$-squared | 0.15 |
| Observations | 314 |
| Number of countries | 82 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Descriptive statistics of the variables are available in appendix A4.

news reports, many voters "stayed home due to political apathy, opposition to another military man becoming president, discontent at suppression of freedoms among liberal youth, and calls for a boycott by Islamists." In addition to increasing voter turnout, PR systems also significantly narrow the gap between shares of votes and seats. All things being equal, this is more likely to legitimize election results because election results represent a more exact reflection of the dictator's strength than those under SMD systems, which produce pro-regime seat biases. In short, by promoting higher turnout and reducing the pro-regime seat premiums, PR systems render greater legitimacy to authoritarian regimes through election results and, hence, deter not only mass countermobilizations but also political divisions within ruling coalitions. Alternatively, SMD systems suppress turnout: low turnout could further breed citizens' apathy and discontent toward the authoritarian regime.

To solidify this claim, I conducted a cross-national analysis to test

whether PR systems help dictators to mobilize voters at elections.[16] As expected, the EET is negatively correlated with voter turnout. The turn-out model suggests that a 1 percent increase in EET decreases turnout by 0.18 percent (with the 10 percent statistical significance). This implies that turnout in a pure SMD system (EET = 37.5) is 5.85 percent lower than that in a PR system with 5 percent legal threshold (EET = 5). In line with robust findings in democracies (Jackman 1987; Blais 2006), PR systems also boost voter turnout in electoral authoritarianism.

## 4.4. The Dictator's Mobilization Capabilities and the Strategic Choice of Electoral Systems

The discussion so far suggests that different electoral systems provide different advantages for dictators. SMD systems help autocrats to acquire seat premiums and facilitate co-optation toward ruling elites, thereby improving the prospect of winning big. PR systems, conversely, equip dictators to weaken the opposition and legitimize their regime by increasing the credibility of electoral processes and election results. Precisely because different electoral systems offer different benefits, I argue that dictators strategically select electoral systems based on their political needs and priorities.

Specifically, I contend that dictators' optimal choice of electoral systems crucially depends on dictators' capabilities of mobilizing public support. Autocrats who can mobilize public support do not need to rely on the pro-regime seat premiums obtained by adopting SMD systems. Instead, they are more likely to prefer PR systems, because dictators with high public support can utilize PR systems to co-opt the opposition and gain greater political legitimacy while maintaining political dominance in the legislature.

Dictators' resources and capacity advantages can fluctuate over time. While dictators may be able to gain a high level of public support on any given day, they are likely to question themselves as to whether they can still hold onto their influences and resources in the future. Under such

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16. Given a short time series (the mean number of observations within unit [country] is 3.8 with the maximum being 14) and some independent variables that rarely change over time, I employ a RE-OLS estimator with robust standard errors clustered by country. For model specification, I include half-decade dummies and a host of other controls (i.e., parliamentarism, election violence, ethnic fractionalization, opposition boycott, election fraud, and logged GDP per capita).

circumstances, dictators with high mobilization capabilities are incentivized to lock in their current political advantages by choosing PR systems. In other words, autocrats use PR to project their current strengths to non-electoral periods all the way up to the next elections. They do so by capitalizing on the ability of PR systems to divide the opposition parties (i.e., the divide-and-rule effects of autocratic elections). Furthermore, by increasing turnout and winning big without the seat premiums, PR helps dictators demonstrate their popularity, legitimize the regime, and, most importantly, preempt future challenges (i.e., the demonstration effects of autocratic elections).

Conversely, autocrats who are unable to derive popular support are more likely to adopt SMD systems to maintain legislative dominance, because the failure to obtain an overwhelming majority in parliament may reveal certain weaknesses of their regimes. Consider, for example, Zafy's Madagascar, where he lost a majority in the 1993 legislative elections under a PR system, allowing the opposition to challenge and defeat him in the 1996 presidential elections. Levitsky and Way (2010: 63) also suggest that losing legislative control in authoritarian regimes can result in critical consequences for the dictator. In this respect, the pro-regime seat premiums under SMD systems help autocrats expand institutionalized rent-seeking opportunities for a broader range of ruling elites, which in turn is conducive to co-opting ruling elites. Indeed, Svolik (2012) demonstrates that more than two-thirds of dictators are forced from power by ruling elites. Under such circumstances, weak dictators have greater incentives to boost their seat share by using SMD systems, given that these additional seats grant those dictators extra bargaining chips by which they can co-opt their potential challengers. In this regard, SMD systems ensure that ruling elites, the most imminent threat to autocrats, remain loyal to the regime to the greatest extent possible.

Based on my theory of autocratic elections, it is possible to derive an empirical implication: *A dictator's high (low) mobilization capabilities lead to an adoption of PR (majoritarian) electoral systems*. In measuring the concept of a dictator's mobilization capabilities, I focus on three factors, in identical fashion to chapter 3: (1) discretionary financial resources, (2) disciplinary organizations, and (3) the opposition's capabilities of mobilizing the masses.

### Discretionary Financial Resources

A dictator has a high mobilization capability if he has discretionary financial resources enabling him to distribute goodies to the citizenry. Resource-

rich dictators are able to mobilize public support by engaging in the distribution of patronage and club goods (Jensen and Wantchekon 2004; Desai, Olofsgard, and Yousef 2009; Morrison 2009). In contrast, it is more difficult for resource-poor dictators to spend a lot on public expenditure due to budgetary constraints; hence, they must find other ways to ensure an overwhelming election victory. Importantly, I argue that resource-rich dictators are incentivized to use PR systems, while resource-poor dictators cannot help relying on SMD systems. With their abundant resources to mobilize mass support, resource-rich dictators can reasonably expect to win the election with a large vote share. Under such circumstances, autocrats are less dependent on the seat premium produced by SMD systems. In other words, resource-rich dictators can afford to employ PR because they can manage to obtain a landslide victory and win enough seats to co-opt ruling elites without the SMD's pro-regime seat bonus. Importantly, since resource-rich dictators are less dependent on the SMD seat premium, they can take advantage of PR to divide and rule the opposition and enhance turnout and regime legitimacy, which enable autocrats to project the current strength to the future.

**Hypothesis 4.1:** *Resource-rich autocrats are more likely to adopt PR systems.*

### Disciplinary Organizations

The extent to which autocrats are able and willing to provide patronage and public goods to the citizenry may depend not only on the amount of discretionary financial resources available but also on organizational bases through which they can effectively "trickle down" goodies to the masses. Strong organizational bases such as dominant party regimes or less fractionalized dominant ethnic groups may ensure dictators' capabilities in making effective provisions of patronage and pork in two ways. First, these political organizations may be useful in disciplining ruling elites who are tempted to take opportunistic behaviors and put delegated resources in their pockets, once they are asked to allocate those resources to citizens. For example, through incentivizing ruling elites *not* to undertake such opportunistic behaviors by monitoring and/or institutionalizing merit-based career promotion systems, well-institutionalized ruling parties may enable dictators to prevent ruling elites from engaging in political corruption and thereby streamline economic distribution toward the populace. Second, political organizations that have extensive networks at the grassroots level enable authoritarian leaders to reach out to a wider range of regime supporters

while using monitoring mechanisms that such networks may strengthen. Thus, utilizing such networks, autocrats are able to effectively distribute resource wealth that they possess to potential regime supporters.

When resource wealth meets with such strong organizational bases, authoritarian leaders are able to use discretionary financial resources to mobilize public support through the effective distribution of patronage. Conversely, when autocrats have abundant natural resources but lack strong organizational bases, natural resource wealth may become less effective in mobilizing public support because those resources are likely to be exploited by middle-level politicians and/or voters to free ride on the provision of club goods without voting for the ruling party or by abstaining from voting altogether. Importantly, I predict that autocrats who have both natural resource wealth and strong organizational bases are more likely to prefer PR to SMD, compared to those with only rich natural resource wealth. Armed with both abundant resources and disciplinary organizations, autocrats can mobilize public support much more extensively, lessening the needs for pro-regime seat premiums as found under SMD systems. To further consolidate their regimes, such autocrats are more likely to seek the benefits of autocratic elections, that is, to divide and rule opposition parties and enhance regime legitimacy by scoring high turnout.

**Hypothesis 4.2:** *The likelihood that resource-rich dictators adopt PR systems is likely to increase if they possess strong organizational bases.*

### The Opposition's Ability to Mobilize the Masses

The extent to which autocrats are able to mobilize public support also hinges on the opposition's capabilities of gathering political support from the masses. When the opposition has a greater ability to mobilize votes in multiparty elections, competing ruling parties are likely to reduce vote shares in those elections. If opposition parties are strong enough to threaten ruling parties' overwhelming victories and thus ruling parties expect that they are unable to maintain supermajorities in the current electoral system, then dictators will consider adopting an alternative, more majoritarian electoral system that will lead to a larger seat bonus in favor of ruling parties. Put differently, in electoral authoritarian regimes, when the opposition is expected to obtain a relatively high level of political support from the citizenry, dictators may be inclined to adopt a majoritarian electoral system.

Intriguingly, this theoretical expectation is starkly different from that in

advanced democracies. The literature suggests that when opposition parties are strong, ruling parties are more likely to adopt a PR system that prevents the opposition from achieving a landslide victory (Boix 1999). In contrast, in electoral authoritarian regimes, SMD systems are more likely to bring seat premiums exclusive to ruling parties, because in most cases opposition parties are not strong enough to enjoy seat premiums generated by SMD systems. In the situation where government alternation through elections is a remote possibility, SMD systems are likely to serve as a safety valve for dictators to maintain their legislative dominance through the pro-regime seat bias.

> **Hypothesis 4.3:** *Robust opposition threats encourage autocrats to adopt SMD systems.*

## 4.5. Cross-National Statistical Analysis of Institutional Manipulation

### *Sample: Electoral Authoritarianism*

To test the aforementioned three hypotheses, I focus on electoral authoritarian regimes from 1949 to 2009. From among the authoritarian regimes identified by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014), I limit my focus to electoral authoritarian regimes. Following Schedler (2002), I define electoral authoritarianism as those autocratic states where multiparty elections are held and certain degrees of pluralism and competition are allowed, but wherein minimal democratic norms are severely violated. I use two data sources to identify electoral authoritarian regimes. The first source is the *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy* (NELDA). Hyde and Marinov (2012) regard elections as minimally competitive if there is ex ante uncertainty over election results. More specifically, elections are minimally competitive if (1) multiple parties are legal, (2) more than two candidates are allowed to stand in electoral districts, and (3) the opposition is allowed to participate in the election. I use these criteria to distinguish electoral autocracies from closed autocracies on the spectrum of authoritarian regimes.

NELDA's operationalization is useful because it provides us with a large number of countries over an extensive time period. It does not include countries where political parties are de jure illegal but rather where relevant political groups function as de facto political parties (e.g., Jordan, Kuwait, Swaziland, and Uganda). I therefore complement NELDA with

Svolik's (2012) dataset on the concentration of legislative power in authoritarian systems. Using Svolik's data, I count autocratic countries as electoral authoritarian if multiple political actors, including both partisan and nonpartisan opposition groups, compete in a legislative election. Taken together, if a country meets the criteria in either one of the two datasets, I regard the country as an electoral authoritarian regime.

### Dependent Variable: Effective Electoral Threshold

As I briefly discussed in the previous sections, the core dependent variable, electoral system type, is measured by the EET index. As the country's electoral system becomes more proportional, the value of EET becomes smaller. In our sample, EET ranges from 0.74 percent (Iraq, where district magnitude is 275) to 37.5 percent (e.g., Singapore [1968–91] and Zimbabwe). When EET is lower than the legal threshold that often exists in PR systems, I use the legal threshold as the EET in that particular country.

Figure 4.5 shows time-series variations in EET found in both electoral autocracies and democracies. Interestingly, in the sample of electoral authoritarian regimes, the average EET has been declining over time, indicating that more countries have adopted PR systems particularly following the end of the Cold War. Yet, the SMD system (EET = 37.5) is still the dominant choice among electoral authoritarian countries. In contrast, electoral systems in democracies are more permissive and tend to be more stable over time. Upon closer examination, I also found that out of the ninety electoral system reforms in electoral authoritarian regimes, fifty-two experienced shifts to more proportional systems, whereas thirty-eight cases changed to more majoritarian systems.

### Independent Variables

To reiterate, I argue that dictators' optimal choice of electoral systems depends on *the extent to which* they have resources and the capability to obtain mass support relative to the opposition, which is captured by (1) discretionary financial resources, (2) disciplinary organizations, and (3) the opposition's strength. To be consistent with the previous two chapters, I use the same variables to operationalize these three subcomponents of the dictator's mobilization capabilities. To tap into the dictator's discretionary financial resources, I focus on natural resource wealth (Hypothesis 4.1).

To operationalize natural resource wealth, I use Ross's (2012) variable of oil-gas value per capita, calculated by taking the product of a country's
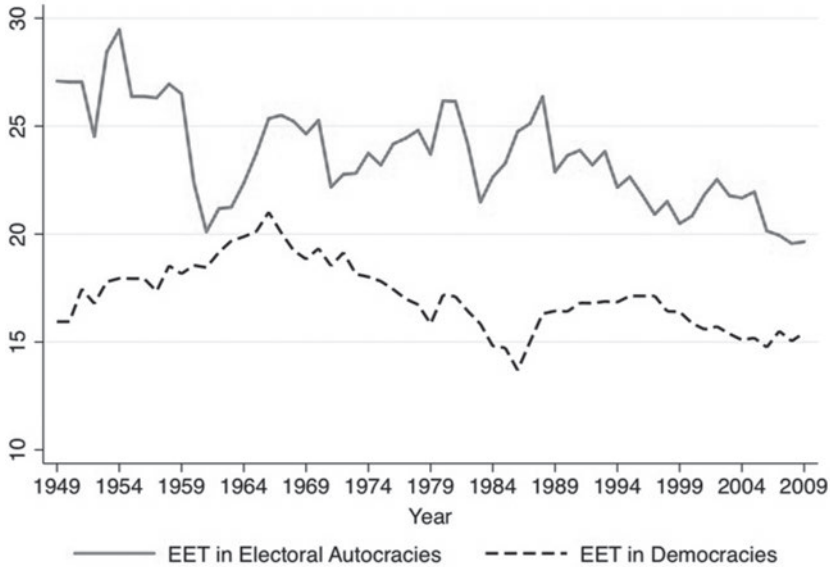
Fig. 4.5. Time-Series Change in the Effective Electoral Threshold

total oil-gas production and the current oil-gas price and dividing by total population.

To test Hypothesis 4.2, I introduce an interaction term of the oil-gas variable and dictators' organizational bases. In a careful review, Ross (2015) concludes that abundant natural resources provide ruling elites with opportunities to receive rents and thus engage in expropriating those resources. If that is the case, then the mere existence of natural resource wealth may not guarantee that dictators are able to reach the masses with material benefits. Echoing the analyses given in chapters 2 and 3, organizational bases are empirically assessed from two angles: (1) party-based organizations and (2) ethnicity-based networks. For party organizations, I use a dummy variable based on Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) to code party-based regimes, while setting personalist regimes as the reference category.[17] I expect that dictators with natural resource wealth are

17. Personalist regimes are the ones where dictators are least likely to be constrained by political institutions in credible ways (Geddes 2003; Wright and Escribà-Folch 2012). Therefore, this regime works as the best reference category to investigate differences in the effect of natural resource wealth between dictators with strong political organizations and those without such organizations. The dummy variable of monarchy regimes is dropped from the analysis due to collinearity.

more likely to adopt PR systems when dictators are armed with dominant parties. For ethnicity-based networks, I use the size and cohesiveness of dominant ethnic groups—the EOP of dictators. The variable has a lower value, as ethnic groups in ethnic coalitions occupy a smaller portion of total population and as ethnic coalitions are composed of more ethnic groups. I expect that resource-rich dictators with larger, less fractionalized dominant ethnic coalitions are more likely to adopt PR systems than those without such ethnic coalitions.

I hypothesize that stronger opposition threats increase the likelihood that autocrats adopt majoritarian electoral systems in the contexts of electoral authoritarian regimes (Hypothesis 4.3). To be consistent with the analyses in chapters 2 and 3, I use the number of anti-government collective action events (riots, demonstration, and strikes) as a proxy for opposition threats. Anti-regime collective actions, once successfully mobilized, can be very threatening to authoritarian regimes. Based on Banks and Wilson's (2019) *Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive*, I calculate a three-year moving average of the number of riots, strikes, and demonstrations.

### Control Variables

To control for confounders that may affect the relationship between electoral system choice and my independent variables of interest, I introduce a couple of control variables. First, one may argue that an association between natural resources and electoral system choice may have a spurious relationship with civil conflict. If an autocrat pockets all the windfall incomes for his personal use, natural resources will increase the value of holding office and incentivize rebel groups to initiate civil conflict (Bodea, Higashijima, and Singh 2016). Furthermore, countries in a state of civil war may adopt a PR system to reflect diverse interests of society for the purpose of reaching a peace agreement (Bogaards 2013). Hence, civil war may work as a possible confounding factor correlated with both electoral system choice and natural resource wealth. Therefore, I control for civil war (from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program).

Additionally, several studies emphasize the importance of uncertainty in transitioning countries, showing that in new democracies strategic institutional designs do not necessarily allow reformers to reap the benefits they had anticipated (Andrews and Jackman 2005). For instance, after examining the cases of Eastern Europe, Ishiyama (1997) concluded that substantial changes in electoral systems would have occurred if communist parties and oppositional forces had thought of their organizations as

*seat-maximizing* parties rather than as mass movements when they initially chose the electoral system. I include the number of years since a given country transitioned into an electoral authoritarian regime to control for the effect of uncertainty.

The literature of democratic diffusion suggests that the spread of democracy has a significant impact on the propensity to move toward PR systems (Blais, Dobrzynska, and Indridason 2005). Following Li and Reuveny (2003), I use the proportion of democratic countries in a given region to operationalize the spread of democracy. Finally, following Boix (1999), I add standard time-varying controls such as logged total population and trade openness. All independent variables are lagged by one year.[18]

## Estimation Results

The unit of analysis is country-year from electoral authoritarian regimes. In all models, I add a lagged dependent variable to control for time dependence or path-dependent characteristics of electoral systems. I estimate two-way fixed effects ordinary least squares (FE-OLS) to account for country- and year-specific heterogeneities.[19] The two-way fixed effects modeling enables me to consider unobservable confounders as well as observable time- and space-invariant variables (such as the British and French colonial heritages) that may influence the dictator's choice of electoral systems.

As a naive first test, I regress the variable of EET on the variables of natural resource wealth (Hypothesis 4.1) and opposition threats (Hypothesis 4.3) without including the control variables in table 1 (Model 1).[20] The result, which confirms the hypotheses, suggests that resource-rich dictators tend to choose PR systems, whereas opposition threats tend to encourage dictators to choose SMD systems. One may naturally suspect that this simple bivariate result must be anomalous and reflects an association between dictators' strength and other confounding factors. Accordingly, I next incorporate all of the control variables discussed above into our model

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18. Descriptive statistics of the variables is available in appendix A4.

19. As the number of observations within unit (country) is long due to the country-year data structure (the average is 17 with the maximum being 50), the FE-OLS estimators have lower variance than the RE-OLS estimators. The Hausman test rejects the null ($\chi^2 = 70.79$; $p = 0.094$; Model 2), suggesting that the FE estimators are unbiased and preferred to the RE estimators.

20. Because the inclusion of the EOP and party-based regime variables reduces by one-third the total number of observations, I do not include these variables in Models 1 and 2. Nonetheless, introducing these variables does not change the effects of the natural resource and collective action variables on EET.

TABLE 4.4. Determinants of Electoral System Choice in Electoral Autocracy

| Estimator | Model 1 FE-OLS | Model 2 FE-OLS | Model 3 FE-OLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lagged EET | 0.894*** | 0.886*** | 0.771*** |
| | (0.0250) | (0.0255) | (0.0717) |
| Oil-gas value per capita | −0.0145*** | −0.0232* | 0.00712 |
| (100 USD) | (0.00437) | (0.0122) | (0.00862) |
| Anti-government | 0.189* | 0.208* | 0.259* |
| collective action | (0.108) | (0.112) | (0.138) |
| Party-based regimes | | | −1.127 |
| | | | (0.702) |
| Oil-gas*party | | | −0.130*** |
| | | | (0.0321) |
| Ethnic organizational | | | −0.682 |
| power (EOP) | | | (2.085) |
| Oil-gas*EOP | | | 0.140 |
| | | | (0.113) |
| Trade openness | | 0.00188 | 0.0102 |
| | | (0.00517) | (0.00873) |
| Logged total population | | 1.167 | 2.619 |
| | | (1.174) | (2.580) |
| Duration of electoral | | −0.0114 | 0.0140 |
| autocracy (EA) | | (0.0214) | (0.0268) |
| Regional democracy | | 0.0735 | 0.0366 |
| | | (0.136) | (0.182) |
| Civil conflict | | 1.014* | 1.736* |
| | | (0.550) | (0.910) |
| Military regimes | | | −0.859 |
| | | | (1.128) |
| Constant | 2.523*** | −14.20 | −34.85 |
| | (0.791) | (17.40) | (39.14) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Country fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,576 | 1,479 | 1,000 |
| Number of countries | 91 | 87 | 71 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

specification. As can be seen, the results in Model 2 corroborate our previous findings on the relationship between dictators' natural resource wealth, opposition threats, and dictators' optimal choice of electoral systems.

From Models 1 and 2, we can see that the natural resource wealth variables are negatively correlated with the electoral system variable, whereas opposition threats (operationalized as anti-government collection action) are positively correlated with the dependent variable. These results suggest that dictators with abundant natural resources are more likely to adopt PR systems by lowering EET, whereas autocrats facing strong opposition

threats are more likely to adopt SMD systems by elevating EET. Model 2 indicates that a US\$1,000 increase in natural resource income per capita lowers EET by 0.232. Given the fact that the average change in EET ranges from –0.46 to 0.24, and one standard deviation of natural resource wealth is US\$3,318, the impact of natural resource wealth is large and substantial. To list a handful of typical cases, in the midst of growing natural resource endowments, Mexico, Equatorial Guinea, Senegal, Gabon, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia manipulated their district magnitudes to favor more proportional systems. Model 2 also demonstrates that an average one-unit increase in the number of anti-government opposition collective actions (e.g., riots, strikes, and demonstrations) in the last three years elevates EET approximately by 0.21. Given that one standard deviation of the opposition threats variable is 1.14, the effect of opposition threats is also substantively large. Facing a large number of anti-government collective actions, electoral authoritarian countries including Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia adopted or maintained SMD systems.

Model 3 introduces two interaction terms with natural resources—party-based regimes and the EOP—to empirically evaluate Hypothesis 4.2.[21] On the one hand, the interaction with the dummy of party-based regimes is negative and statistically significant at the 1 percent level. Graphing the conditional effect of natural resource endowments upon the presence of the dominant party, figure 4.6 draws comparison between party-based regimes and personalist regimes. As can be seen, when autocrats have dominant parties, natural resource wealth is negatively correlated with EET, therefore suggesting that those autocrats are more likely to adopt PR systems by lowering EET. When electoral autocracies are personalist regimes, the effect of natural resource wealth is not distinguishable from 0, therefore indicating that whether autocrats have strong political organizations that enable them to effectively mobilize public support through patronage may be important in explaining electoral system choice. On the other hand, I cannot find evidence that ethnic organization power conditions the impact of natural resource wealth on electoral system choice. The interaction term is positive and not statistically significant. The results suggest that ethnic networks may not be a relevant conditional factor in mediating the relationship between natural resource wealth and the adoption of PR systems in electoral authoritarian regimes.

Regarding control variables, the lagged dependent variable has a large, statistically significant effect on electoral system choice. This suggests that

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21. The results do not change by introducing the interaction terms individually.
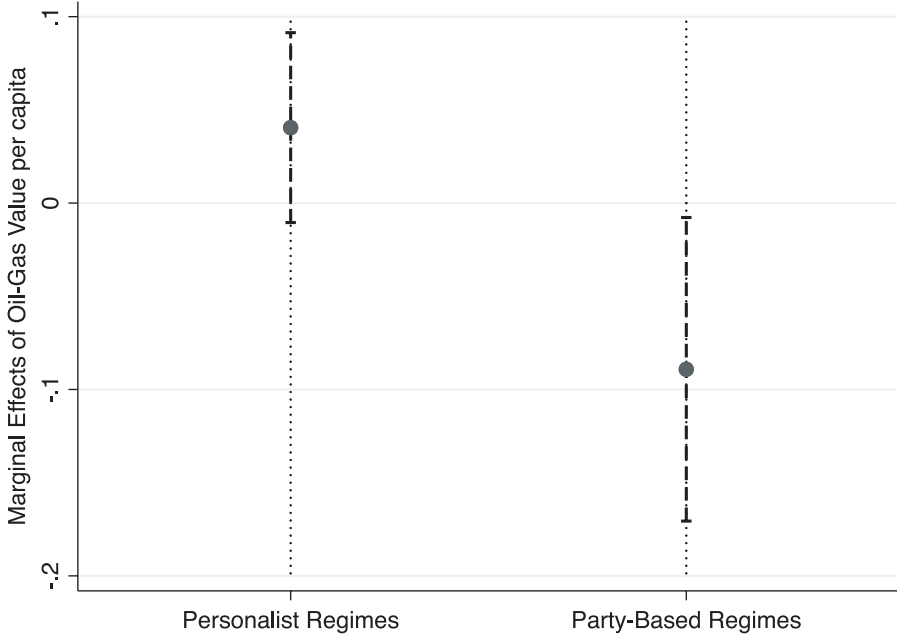
Fig. 4.6. Natural Resources, Party-Based Regimes, and Electoral System Choice
*Note:* The graph is based on estimation results of Model 3. The dashed lines are the 95 percent confidence intervals.

although dictators often succeed in changing electoral systems, electoral systems are themselves inherently highly sticky and influenced by the previous electoral systems. This may be because in authoritarian regimes electoral systems generate vested interests among ruling politicians, which makes it difficult to redistrict and/or change electoral systems flexibly enough for the dictator's own sake (Higashijima 2021). Nevertheless, the overall estimation results suggest that after controlling for the stickiness of electoral systems in dictatorships, the remaining variation is well explained by the extent to which dictators are able to mobilize public support from the masses. Other than the lagged dependent variable, the civil conflict variable is positively associated with EET in statistically significant ways, suggesting that autocrats under civil war tend to have majoritarian electoral systems.

### Robustness Checks

To confirm that the estimation results are robust, I conduct sensitivity analyses for (1) possible sample selection bias, (2) endogeneity problems,

(3) additional control variables, and (4) possible outliers. First, I analyze the set of electoral systems in autocratic regimes, but these observations may be a self-selected sample from all potential authoritarian countries that have ever considered institutionalizing elections in the first place. For instance, Gandhi (2008) argues that dictators have greater incentives to establish formal political institutions such as legislatures when they lack natural resources to buy off the opponent. Indeed, some oil-abundant countries in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, do not even hold national elections. Likewise, some resource abundant autocracies do not allow opposition parties to participate in elections (e.g., Turkmenistan). To address this issue, I estimate a Heckman selection model. The first-stage model is based upon Miller's (2020) baseline model; however, it also adds the natural resource variable to predict transitions from closed autocracies to electoral authoritarian regimes. Following this, by introducing the inverse Mill's ratio calculated from the estimation of the first stage, I predict electoral system choice in electoral autocracies.[22] The results show that the inverse Mill's ratio is not statistically significant, indicating that selection bias is not of concern. Most importantly, the selection model estimation does not alter my main findings (appendix B4.1).

Second, there may be the potential threat of endogeneity between natural resource wealth and dictators' institutional choices. A recent study points out that weak institutions may incentivize political leaders to increase nontax revenues and buy off political support from elites (Menaldo 2016). Following this line of reasoning, astute readers may question whether autocrats adopting PR systems may pump more oil prior to elections to maintain a supermajority. Consequently, I employ an instrumental variable (IV) estimation with country and year FE. As I did in chapter 3, I use three time-varying variables on proven oil reserves—proven oil reserves in billions of dollars, proven oil reserves divided by country size, and proven oil reserves in each region—as IVs. These instruments are ideal because oil reserves in a given country and region are highly correlated with oil-gas values per capita. These variables satisfy the exclusion restrictions because proven oil reserves will not increase as a result of autocrats' policies and because their effects on electoral systems should only run through the IVs (e.g., oil-gas value per capita). Moreover, these IVs are jointly statistically significant at the 0.1 percent level in the first stage, suggesting that the instruments are good predictors of oil-gas value per capita. Also, Hansen's J test of the overidentifying restrictions cannot reject the null hypothesis that instruments

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22. In addition to the predictors of electoral systems, I also add the variables included in the first-stage model to the second stage to consider the possibility that predictors for the emergence of electoral autocracy may also influence the choice of electoral systems.

are not correlated with the error term in the second-stage estimation, suggesting the instruments are valid. Importantly, the IV estimation reaches the same conclusion that dictators' resource wealth is associated with the adoption of PR systems in authoritarian regimes (appendix B4.2).

Third, I introduce additional covariates that potentially influence electoral system choice. The first covariate is the degree of blatant electoral fraud. Autocratic elections with extensive fraud reduce the relevancy of electoral system choice because autocrats can win such elections without strategically designing electoral systems. Furthermore, blatant electoral fraud is positively correlated with SMD systems (Birch 2007). To measure electoral fraud, I use NELDA10 measuring as to whether there was a strong concern of extensive electoral fraud prior to the previous parliamentary election.[23] The second covariate is international diffusion of electoral systems: A country's electoral system is often mimicked by its neighboring countries (Bol, Pilet, and Riera 2015). To consider such diffusion effects of electoral systems, we control for regional means of EET. Including these two variables does not alter the main results (appendix B4.3).

Finally, since the distributions of the natural resources and anti-government collective action variables tend to be skewed, I conduct jack-knife analyses to make sure that the results are not sensitive to possible outliers. In the jackknife analyses, I drop each country one by one to find that the estimation results largely remain unchanged.[24]

## 4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the choice of electoral systems in electoral autocracies. I have argued that dictators who have the capacity to mobilize citizens are incentivized to employ PR systems to reinforce and preserve their political strengths, while dictators lacking such capacities tend to rely upon the pro-regime seat premium associated with SMD systems in order to co-opt ruling elites within the legislature. Using newly collected cross-national data in electoral authoritarian regimes, my empirical analyses lend strong empirical support for the theory of authoritarian elections. I also explicitly tested a couple of theoretical expectations regarding the costs and benefits of different electoral systems, showing that majoritarian systems bias seat distributions in favor of ruling parties, foster a unified opposition,

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23. The electoral fraud measure used in chapter 3 has a much shorter time span and a far smaller number of observations. Hence, I do not use it.
24. The estimation results are available upon request.

and lower voter turnout more so than PR systems in electoral autocracies.

This chapter makes several key contributions to the literature. First, the current research contributes to the literature concerning electoral system choice. While acknowledging the importance of opposition threats (Boix 1999), partisan bias (Calvo 2009), and economic interests (Rogowski 1987; Cusack, Iversen, and Soskice 2007) in shaping the choice of electoral systems in democracies, I highlight the limitations of these factors in electoral autocracies and posit a new theory for electoral autocracies' choice of electoral system. By doing so, this chapter also connects to the emerging literature rethinking the oil curse (Haber and Menaldo 2011). My empirical finding suggests that autocrats rich in natural resources may not necessarily alienate themselves from their citizens. Rather, I show that dictators with natural resource endowments tend to adopt PR systems and thereby lower the barrier of entry and thus encourage political participation on the part of citizens.

Second, by exploring the origins of electoral institutions found in dictatorships, I add to the ongoing debate about the role of elections in authoritarian politics. As discussed, scholars have identified various beneficial functions of authoritarian elections for authoritarian leaders. On the flip side, recent studies have begun to question the consolidating effects of elections, suggesting that elections in authoritarian regimes can lead to instability and even democratization (Reuter and Robertson 2015; Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig 2017). By taking into account the origins of electoral systems, the current research argues that the effects of elections in dictatorships are likely to be endogenous to dictators' rationale for selecting electoral institutions in the first place. In this light, this chapter engages in a direct dialogue upon the endogenous nature of political institutions within authoritarian regimes. As Pepinsky (2014) has rightly argued, political institutions in autocracies are the least likely to be randomly assigned and their designs are influenced by autocrats' rational calculations and various socioeconomic factors that may directly influence the survival of an authoritarian regime. By focusing on natural resource wealth, disciplinary organizations, and opposition strength, my theory of autocratic elections illuminates the origins of electoral institutions within autocracies.

Third, I contribute to parallel scholarship on electoral manipulation (Simpser 2013) by highlighting an underexplored yet critically important aspect of electoral maneuvering in dictatorships. This chapter suggests that dictators, in addition to committing blatant electoral fraud—investigated in chapter 3—can consolidate their rules by manipulating the electoral formula.

When taken together, the findings of chapters 3 and 4 allow us to derive an additional implication of my theory of autocratic elections regarding an economic effect of autocratic elections: namely, autocrats holding "open" elections in terms of high electoral integrity and high proportionality can strategically secure their power by manipulating economic policy instruments leading up to elections, specifically economic maneuvering. The next chapter will explore the maneuvering of economic policy as an adverse effect of holding relatively free and fair elections in authoritarian regimes.

# Economic Maneuvering

Tyrants who have the mass of the people for their friends and the nobles for their enemies are more secure than those who have the people for their enemies and the nobles for their friends; because in the former case their authority has the stronger support. For with such support a ruler can maintain himself by the internal strength of his State.

—Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses on Livy*

## 5.1. Autocracies and Political Business Cycles

This chapter investigates the conditions under which dictators resort to economic maneuvering prior to elections. Since the pioneering work by Nordhaus (1975) and Tufte (1978), a voluminous literature has investigated the logic of political business cycles (PBCs) by primarily focusing on the experiences of advanced democracies. Earlier studies assumed that voters decide whom to vote for based on the government's pre-electoral economic performance. Governing parties implement expansionary fiscal and monetary policies before elections to garner political support, resulting in real economic growth and increases in incomes during election time. However, a large body of empirical studies did not find clear evidence on this theoretical expectation (Lewis-Beck 1988; Alesina, Cohen, and Roubini 1992; Drazen 2000: 238–39).

Another strand of empirical studies, however, finds that governments in advanced democracies manipulate economic policies before elections,

leading to the exacerbation of election-year fiscal deficits and high inflation after elections (Kohno and Nishizawa 1989; Alesina, Cohen, and Roubini 1992; Berger and Woitek 1997; Reid 1998). In other words, pre-electoral economic manipulation does not necessarily have a strong impact on real growth rates, but governments do tend to exercise expansionary fiscal policy during election years, resulting in fiscal imbalances and post-election inflation. In providing a theoretical explanation of this puzzle, political economists introduced the idea of "information asymmetries" between voters and a government (Alesina 1987; Rogoff and Silbert 1988; Rogoff 1990). Since voters are unable to gather information on the government's de facto competence, they try to estimate it based on the government's policy performance in the past in order to decide whether to vote for the governing party.

Applying the signaling game framework, more recent studies shift their empirical focus to developing countries and emerging democracies. Scholars conclude that governments in these countries are more prone to engineer electoral budget cycles than those in advanced democracies (Schuknecht 1996; Block, Ferree, and Singh 2003; Shi and Svensson 2006; Brender and Drazen 2005). Brender and Drazen (2005) and Shi and Svensson (2006) argue that this is due to a lack of political information in new democracies. It is more difficult for voters in new democracies to get access to reliable, low-cost information on governments since voters are not accustomed to democratic politics and also the media are still underdeveloped. To gain an alternative source of political information, voters are more inclined to estimate government competency by observing how extensively the government can boost up the economy prior to elections.

The previous studies on PBCs in democracies have assumed that party competition is strong enough to cause government alternation. For instance, Brender and Drazen (2005: 1274) contend that "if the political budget cycle reflects the manipulation of fiscal policy to improve *an incumbent's re-election chances*, then it only makes sense in countries in which elections are competitive. If elections are not competitive, then the basic argument underlying the existence of a political business cycle loses much of its validity" (italics added).

Recent research on autocracies, however, documents case study and region-specific evidence that reveals that autocrats spend a lot prior to elections, despite the fact that government alternation is a remote possibility. For instance, Ames (1987) analyzes seventeen Latin American countries under military rule, uncovering election-year surges in government expenditures. Block (2002) demonstrates that governments manipulate fiscal and

monetary policies on the eve of elections in sub-Saharan Africa. Kruger and Kuran (1993) find that the Turkish government created budget cycles under authoritarian rule. Grier and Grier (2000), Gonzalez (2002), and Magaloni (2006) provide evidence that in Mexico the Institutional Revolutionary Party government had loosened fiscal policy and devalued the currency to prepare for elections. In Russia, Akhmedov and Zhuravskaya (2004) find that local politicians are more likely to create opportunistic PBCs in regions where media is not well institutionalized and civil liberty is underdeveloped. According to Blaydes (2011), the Mubarak regime tended to suffer high inflation rates after elections. Pepinsky (2007), utilizing quarterly time-series data from authoritarian Malaysia, shows that the United Malays National Organization government exacerbated fiscal discipline in election years.

Consistent with these anecdotes, my cross-national data support the insight that authoritarian governments change fiscal policies for elections. Figure 5.1 shows violin plots of changes in fiscal revenues (a), fiscal expenditures (b), and fiscal balances at election years across three different regime types—Western democracies, non-Western democracies, and dictatorships. The graphs suggest that non-Western democracies are slightly more likely to experience changes in fiscal revenues and expenditures in election years than Western democracies: Non-Western democracies' variances in fiscal revenues and expenditures (and hence fiscal balances) are larger than those of Western democracies. Most importantly, dictatorships seem to have larger variances in those measures than these two types of democracies. This simple comparison indicates that authoritarian governments also manipulate economic policies prior to elections at least as much as their democratic counterparts do and that the manners in which autocrats manipulate economic policy are also significantly different across authoritarian regimes. This poses an important puzzle: *Why do autocracies manipulate economic policies according to electoral cycles despite the fact that elections are not fully competitive? Under what conditions do autocracies engage in pre-electoral economic maneuvering?*

A few studies have investigated electoral business cycles cross-nationally using a global sample in the context of hybrid regimes and autocracies. Including eighty-one developed and developing countries (1975–95), Shi and Svensson (2006) find that governments in developing countries tend to suffer budget deficits in election years. Because the rents that politicians can enjoy by remaining in power are high and the share of informed voters in the electorate is low (in the developing world), these authors argue that governments in developing countries are more inclined to manipulate fis-
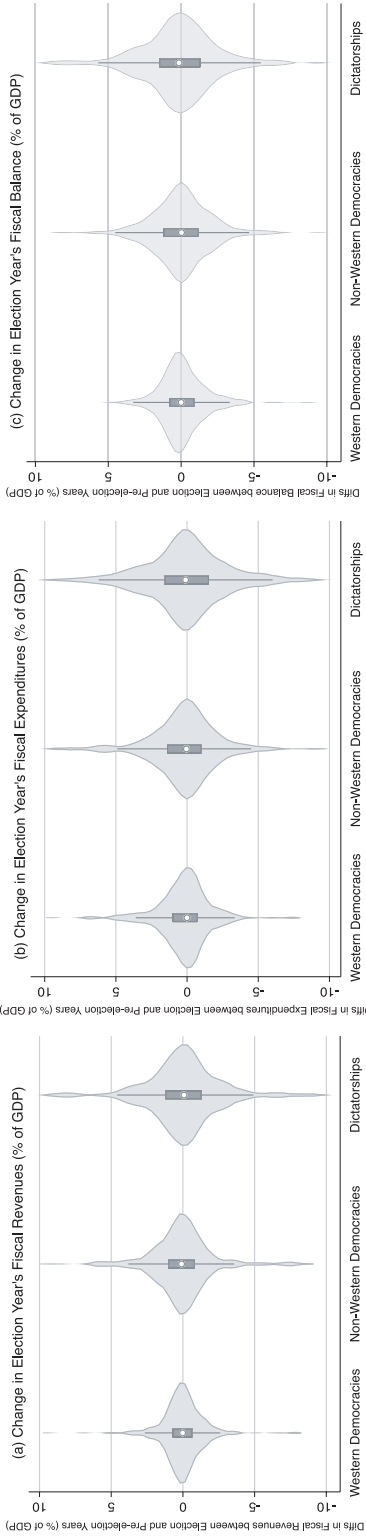
Fig. 5.1. Violin Plots of Variation in Fiscal Policies

*Note*: The data come from Bodea, Garriga, and Higashijima (2019). Figure 5.1a shows the distribution of changes in fiscal revenues from pre-election to election years, whereas figure 5.1b shows those of fiscal expenditures. Figure 5.1c indicates changes in fiscal balances, which are created by (fiscal revenues + grants − expenditures). The outer shape represents kernel density plots showing distributions of each variable. The line inside stands for the values that occur 95% of the time. The bar inside shows the values that occur 50% of the time. And the central dot represents the median value.

cal policy before elections to signal their competence. Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2018) provide the first systematic analysis of PBCs in dictatorships. They find that in election years authoritarian governments distribute to the grass roots and thus increase fiscal expenditures, irrespective of opposition participation in elections. They reason that, since even in noncompetitive elections local candidates are judged regarding their competence by voter turnout in their constituencies, they have incentives to distribute goodies to citizens prior to elections. Han (2021) demonstrates that autocrats reallocate budgetary spending to redistributive policies prior to elections to derive public support.

Building upon these cross-national studies of PBCs in dictatorships, this chapter identifies the conditions under which autocrats engage in economic maneuvering depending on the extent of electoral manipulation. Geddes, Wright, and Franz (2018) investigate whether opposition participation creates significant differences in the magnitude of PBCs, yet they do not focus on other important conditions differentiating autocratic elections, for example, the extent of blatant electoral fraud and electoral system types. While resonating with their argument that dictators also have incentives to engage in fiscal largesse during election periods, I derive a couple of additional observable implications from my theory of autocratic elections, arguing that relatively free and fair elections encourage autocrats to spend more on manipulated elections.[1] Furthermore, although most studies on PBCs in dictatorships focus on the expenditure side, autocrats are also able to engage in economic maneuvering on the revenue side for distributive purposes by, for example, lowering tax rates and implementing tax exemptions before elections. This creates a distributive effect while decreasing government's fiscal revenues. Based upon a cross-national dataset coding both government revenues and expenditures, this chapter empirically investigates PBCs in dictatorships.

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1. Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2018) also suggest a similar mechanism by focusing on whether elections allow opposition parties. They argue that "if elections are a costly signal of the dictator's invincibility, we would expect to see *central government spending* increases during election years as officials demonstrate their ability to organize and mobilize the masses. If sending a costly signal was the only purpose of elections, however, we would expect to see much higher spending during competitive election years. On the other hand, if an important function of elections is to incentivize local candidates to extend distribution to the grassroots, we would expect to see high spending during all elections" (144; italics added). They also found evidence in favor of the latter interpretation. One possible reason for their results is that their expenditure measure includes fiscal spending of both central and local governments (i.e., general government spending). This measurement makes it difficult to identify the dictator's signaling mechanism and favors the local candidate mechanism. To focus on the former mechanism, I use the central government's fiscal balance in my empirical analysis.

## 5.2. A Trade-Off between Electoral Manipulation
## and Economic Maneuvering

The theory of autocratic elections predicts that when deciding to hold less manipulated elections (i.e., those with less blatant electoral fraud and more proportional electoral systems), dictators have a stronger incentive to engage in pre-electoral maneuvering of policy instruments in the run-up to elections. This is because in less fraudulent elections, autocrats need to mobilize political support through the distribution of patronage and club goods provisions. Based on my theory, this section derives several hypotheses on the relationship between electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering.

As detailed in the previous chapters, autocrats have various tools at their disposal to manipulate election results, thereby allowing them to win big at the ballot box. On the one hand, as chapter 3 has demonstrated, autocrats may resort to blatant electoral fraud to make up election results by, for example, excluding the opposition, strengthening repression and committing opposition intimidation, tampering with ballot boxes, and packing electoral management bodies. On the other hand, autocrats may also rely on the manipulation of electoral institutions, as chapter 4 has revealed. More specifically, SMD systems bias election results in favor of ruling parties through gerrymandering and malapportionment, as well as mechanical and psychological effects of Duverger's law as observed in dictatorships.

These methods of electoral manipulation, however, entail significant costs in three ways by undermining the credibility of election results. First, election results yielded through electoral manipulation work less effectively as a credible signal of a regime's invincibility. The more manipulated the elections are, the less likely the election results are to be the function of de facto popular support. Second, electoral manipulation—and in particular blatant electoral fraud—could damage the information-gathering functions of elections. Blatant electoral fraud makes it difficult to discern signals from noises in electoral information. Third, electoral manipulation increases the cohesiveness of opposition forces and works as a catalyst to coordinate their collective action. Fraud contributes to public discontent and provides opposition elites with chances to mobilize their supporters. Even an adoption of SMD systems increases the likelihood that opposition parties merge and form pre-electoral coalitions (chap. 4, this volume; Barbera 2013).

Due to these three drawbacks of electoral manipulation, authoritarian leaders may have an incentive to refrain from relying on it, as long as they

are sure that they will be able to win big in upcoming elections. To enhance autocrats' certainty of winning big *without* resorting to electoral manipulation, one theoretical possibility is for autocrats to compete with the opposition over programmatic policy packages to attract voters. However, in reality, it is very difficult for authoritarian governments to rely exclusively on programmatic policy appeals to maintain popularity. In a society ridden with dense patron-client relationships and low levels of economic development (as seen in many dictatorships), most policy promises in elections are unlikely to be credible, and thus election campaigns based on programmatic policy packages are not a strong option for political leaders (Stokes et al. 2013). As an alternative measure to reconcile the trade-off between the certainty and the credibility of election victories, autocrats have the option of increasing the levels of pork and patronage to mobilize regime supporters.

Against this backdrop, I argue that autocrats with elections that are relatively free from electoral manipulation (i.e., less fraudulent elections and/or PR systems) are more likely to engage in economic maneuvering. As the previous chapters have shown, dictators with high mobilization capabilities rely less upon electoral manipulation such as blatant electoral fraud and the pro-regime seat premiums under SMD systems. Therefore, one logical consequence of holding relatively free and fair elections in authoritarian regimes is that *autocratic elections with little (much) electoral manipulation are more (less) likely to experience economic maneuvering*. Differences in electoral manipulation of authoritarian elections influence the extent to which autocrats manipulate economic policy instruments prior to elections. I focus on three subcomponents of electoral fairness to derive testable hypotheses.

### Opposition Participation in Elections

Building upon Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2018), I first focus on whether autocrats allow opposition parties to participate in elections. In closed authoritarian regimes, voters do not have relevant alternatives at the ballot box other than the ruling party. Thus, elections are entirely noncompetitive. Where it is obvious that the dictator can win big by precluding opposition participation, elections do not convey a credible signal of regime popularity, because election results are not an accurate reflection of the dictator's ability to derive political support from people. Furthermore, elections without choice do not offer information on popular support for the opposition and increase the risk of the radicalization of opposition forces. By trading these benefits of multiparty elections, autocrats can maintain an

overwhelming election victory, which minimizes the possibility that election results reveal regime weaknesses. All other things being equal, autocrats who are unable to mobilize public support via economic maneuvering should exclude, a priori, opposition parties from the electoral process. As a consequence, we should observe a reduced magnitude of PBCs in closed authoritarian regimes.

By contrast, when autocrats permit multiparty competition in elections, election results become more credible, to the point where citizens are able to estimate whether dictators can score an *overwhelming* majority, not a slim victory, via elections. Voters recognize that elections in electoral authoritarian regimes are not truly competitive: even after allowing for opposition parties to participate, authoritarian leaders can still resort to a variety of electoral manipulation measures to prevent opposition parties from winning elections and bias election results in their favor. The unleveled electoral field makes electoral turnover to opposition parties a remote possibility. Yet, it may be also not an easy task for autocrats to obtain 80–90 percent of the vote in elections when competing against opposition parties.

In such a scenario, authoritarian leaders turn to the manipulation of policy instruments, which enhance the credibility of election results. Economic maneuvering enables them to score a large victory at elections without the exclusion of opposition parties. This serves as a credible means by which to signal the dictators' popularity. Furthermore, multiparty elections provide autocrats with other benefits, for example, gathering information on the opposition and co-opting them. In leveling the electoral field by allowing the opposition to participate, elections also better work as an institutional device with which to divide and rule the opposition camp(s). Consequently, authoritarian rulers in electoral authoritarian regimes are more likely to distribute pork and patronage compared to those in closed authoritarian regimes. This leads to a large magnitude of election-year fiscal imbalance in electoral autocracies.

**Hypothesis 5.1:** *Autocratic elections with opposition parties are more likely to experience a larger size of PBCs than autocratic elections without choice.*

### Blatant Electoral Fraud

The second dimension to be considered is the relationship between blatant electoral fraud and economic maneuvering. As chapters 2 and 3 have already shown, blatant electoral fraud enhances the certainty of winning

big at the expense of the credibility of election results. On the one hand, massive electoral fraud loses important benefits of elections: overt electoral fraud may undermine the demonstration effect of election results, taint the quality of electoral information, and encourage the opposition to unify and launch collective action. On the other hand, making elections free from fraud runs the risk of failing to obtain a landslide victory. My theory of autocratic elections suggests that dictators with high mobilization power are less likely to engage in blatant electoral fraud. Similar to opposition participation, I suggest that dictators who rely less on blatant electoral fraud are likely to turn to the maneuvering of economic policy. In so doing, autocrats can maximize the benefits of holding multiparty elections while minimizing the risk that partially free and fair elections expose regime weaknesses.

The PRI's authoritarian rule in Mexico serves as a good case to illustrate the relationship between blatant electoral fraud and economic maneuvering. From the early 1970s until the 1982 debt crisis, the country was in the "populist period": Aided by the oil boom and a massive scale of foreign borrowing, the PRI government adopted expansionary economic policies by increasing public expenditures, food and housing subsidies, and land distribution, and these measures of economic maneuvering were further strengthened in electoral periods (Magaloni 2006: chap. 3). Due to these policies for economic maneuvering, the PRI's electoral performance had been overwhelming. "Before the onset of the debt crisis in 1982, which marked the beginning of more than twenty years of economic stagnation, the Mexican PRI was able to win most elections by impressive margins of victory. Electoral fraud played such a minor role during those years" (Magaloni 2006: 5). Indeed, in 1977, the PRI started further electoral reforms to increase the transparency of the electoral processes to encourage electoral participation of opposition parties, which were discouraged by the PRI's electoral dominance and which boycotted the 1976 presidential elections (Eisenstadt 2004: 38–39). By contrast, in the "neoliberal period" after the 1982 debt crisis, when the oil boom ended, the government accepted the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) orthodox stabilization packages. The opposition emerged in strength, and the ruling party became more dependent upon various measures of blatant electoral fraud. Magaloni's (2006) analysis of PBCs demonstrates that, after 1982, money growth, nominal wage increases, and inflation are all not systematically observed during electoral periods. As a substitute for economic maneuvering, the PRI resorted to extensive electoral fraud in the 1988 presidential elections to maintain their electoral majority.

**Hypothesis 5.2:** *Autocratic elections without blatant electoral fraud are more likely to experience a larger size of PBCs than those with massive electoral fraud.*

### Institutional Manipulation

Third, the types of electoral systems in electoral authoritarian regimes affect the extent to which authoritarian leaders rely on the maneuvering of economic policy. As chapter 4 has demonstrated, SMD systems enable dictators to facilitate political dominance in the legislature through pro-regime seat premiums. However, the adverse effects of adopting SMD systems also exist: SMD systems undermine the demonstration effect of autocratic elections by lowering voter turnout and also make it easier for opposition parties to solve coordination problems. By contrast, autocrats who are certain that they can maintain a supermajority without the pro-regime SMD seat premiums are inclined to choose PR systems, which deepen cleavages among opposition parties and also enhance political legitimacy by scoring higher turnout. In other words, autocrats who adopt PR systems need to maintain electoral dominance without pro-regime seat premiums and thus are more likely to distribute patronage and engage in pork barrel politics on the eve of legislative elections, compared to those holding legislative elections under majoritarian electoral systems.

**Hypothesis 5.3:** *Parliamentary elections with PR systems in electoral authoritarian regimes are more likely to experience a larger size of PBCs than those with SMD systems.*

### 5.3. Cross-National Statistical Analysis of Economic Maneuvering

### Dependent Variable: Fiscal Balance

The remainder of this chapter tests these hypotheses by conducting cross-national statistical analysis using a global dataset composed of fiscal balances. My dataset covers ninety-seven authoritarian countries around the world from 1950 to 2010.[2]

The dependent variable is fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP.[3]

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2. Descriptive statistics are available in appendix A5.

3. Since I conceptualize economic maneuvering as the distribution of pork and patronage broadly defined, I do not limit the empirical focus here only to "public goods provisions" like

Different from previous studies on PBCs in dictatorships (e.g., Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018), this study includes both revenues and expenditures to capture the dictator's various sources of economic maneuvering. Broadly, governments manipulate macroeconomic policy to engage in preelectoral economic distribution toward the citizenry in two ways. First, they increase the levels of public spending by strengthening club goods provisions targeted at certain regions, classes, and social groups (i.e., pork barrel politics) or by increasing the levels of patronage distribution like pensions, salaries, and bonuses among public servants (i.e., clientelism).[4] Second, governments are also able to affect incomes among the citizens by proclaiming tax exemptions and lowering tax rates targeted at certain social classes like the poor and the elderly (another type of pork barrel), leading to the reduction of fiscal revenues in election years. To account for both expenditures and revenues, I measure fiscal surpluses/deficits by subtracting expenditures from revenues plus grants. Excluding local government's budgets, I focus on central government's revenues and expenditures, because the latter is more accessible for dictators as a primary source of economic maneuvering. Based on Bodea, Garriga, and Higashijima (2019), I extend and update the dataset on fiscal surpluses/deficits by referring to recent *IMF Annual Country Reports*.[5]

## Independent Variables

To test whether autocratic elections with the opposition increase fiscal deficits (Hypothesis 5.1), I identify competitive elections by referring to Hyde and Marinov's (2012) NELDA dataset. According to Hyde and Marinov (2012), elections are minimally competitive if (1) multiple parties are legal, (2) more than two candidates are allowed to stand in electoral districts, and (3) the opposition is allowed to participate in the election. If all three conditions are satisfied, the election is regarded as competitive;

infrastructure, health care, and education. For instance, in many authoritarian regimes, governments increase salaries and provide bonuses for public officials (i.e., patronage distribution). Also, economic maneuvering may take the form of tax exemption, and therefore exclusively focusing on the expenditure side does not allow us to take into account this possibility.

4. At the same time, governments may also adopt less restrictive monetary policies to boost money growth (e.g., lower interest rates set by central banks or a larger size of government borrowing) for the purpose of adopting expansionary fiscal policies (cf. Bodea and Higashijima 2017).

5. Bodea, Garriga, and Higashijima's (2019) fiscal data are based upon Brender and Drazen (2005), the International Financial Statistics, the IMF Government Financial Statistics, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development transition reports.

otherwise, it is considered noncompetitive. Based upon the NELDA, I create two election dummies—(1) *competitive elections* and (2) *noncompetitive elections*. Non-election years may not be identical between closed authoritarian regimes (autocracies without competitive elections) and electoral authoritarian regimes (autocracies with competitive elections). Since my theoretical focus is that electoral autocrats increase their spending in election years more than in non-election years, I introduce a dummy variable of non-election years in closed authoritarian regimes, while setting non-election years in electoral authoritarian regimes as the reference category.[6] I expect the competitive election-year dummy to be negative and statistically significant on fiscal balance.

I also hypothesize that autocratic elections with less blatant electoral fraud are negatively correlated with fiscal balance (Hypothesis 5.2). To identify the extent of blatant electoral fraud, I use Kelley's (2012) *Quality of Elections Data* (QED) used in chapter 3. The dataset evaluates the extent to which each election is characterized by blatant electoral fraud. Consistent with chapter 3, I use the following five variables: (1) Was the legal framework not up to standards, were there limits on the scope and jurisdiction of elective offices, and were there unreasonable limits on who can run for office, etc.? ("Legal problems"); (2) Were there restrictions on the freedom to campaign, media restrictions, intimidations, and improper use of public funds? ("Pre-electoral cheating"); (3) Was there any violence or unrest before an election day? ("Pre-electoral violence"); (4) Did any problems occur related to vote processing (e.g., double voting), tabulation tampering, voter fraud, vote buying, and intimidation on the election day occur? ("Election-day cheating"); and (5) Did any violence and unrest occur on an election day? ("Election-day violence"). Each variable takes 4 values between 0 (no problems) and 3 (serious problems). First, I aggregate the five variables by applying a rating scale model of the item response theory. Then, based on this continuous variable of blatant electoral fraud, I classify autocratic elections into one of the following three groups to introduce three dummy variables of election years: (1) relatively clean elections, (2) mediocre elections, and (3) dirty elections.[7] Similar to Hypothesis 5.1, I set non-election years in electoral authoritarian regimes as the reference category by including the dummy variable of non-election years in closed authoritarian regimes.

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6. Even if I exclude authoritarian regimes without holding elections throughout their autocratic rule (e.g., China and Saudi Arabia), the main results remain unchanged.

7. An autocratic election is coded as "relatively clean" if the continuous measure of blatant electoral fraud is below the 25th percentile, as "mediocre" if the measure is between the 25th and 75th percentile, and as "dirty" if the measure is above the 75th percentile.

Third, to empirically assess whether parliamentary elections held under PR systems increase fiscal deficits (Hypothesis 5.3), I introduce the interaction term "competitive parliamentary elections" and EET used in chapter 4. As detailed in chapter 4, EET is defined as the proportion of votes that, for each electoral system, secures parliamentary representation to any party with a probability of at least 50 percent (Boix 1999: 614). An EET of 37.5 percent is identical with the pure SMD system, and lower values of EET indicate electoral systems that allocate seats more proportionally (i.e., PR systems). My expectation is that parliamentary election years become more negatively correlated with fiscal balances as the country's electoral system is more proportional. To partial out the impacts of presidential elections and noncompetitive parliamentary elections in terms of fiscal balance, I introduce the dummy variables of competitive and noncompetitive presidential elections and the interaction term between noncompetitive parliamentary elections and EET.

Following Bodea, Garriga, and Higashijima's (2019) work on the determinants of fiscal policy in authoritarian regimes, I introduce logged GDP per capita,[8] GDP growth,[9] trade openness,[10] capital openness,[11] population over sixty-five,[12] and fixed exchange rate regimes[13] as control variables.

### Estimation Methods

I use cross-sectional time-series data, and the unit of analysis is country-year. For Hypotheses 5.1 and 5.2, I adopt a two-way (country and year) fixed effects (FE) estimator by introducing country dummies to account for within-country variations in fiscal balance and to control for country-specific time-invariant heterogeneities,[14] while including year dummies to consider time-specific heterogeneity. Furthermore, I calculate robust standard errors clustered by country to consider heteroskedasticity within

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8. The GDP per capita measure comes from *Penn World Table* (Version 7.1, https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/productivity/pwt/?lang=en).

9. The growth variable comes from *World Development Indicators* (WDI).

10. Trade openness is measured as the sum of imports and exports relative to GDP, taken from WDI.

11. I use Chinn and Ito (2008) to operationalize capital openness.

12. This variable comes from WDI.

13. I use Reinhart and Rogoff (2004) to control for fixed exchange rate regimes.

14. As the time series of the data is long (for models of competitive elections, they have 22.7 years on average with the maximum value being 57 years, while for models of blatant electoral fraud, they have 16.5 years with the maximum of 32 years) and the election variables vary over time, FE models have lower variance than random effects (RE) models (Clark and Linzer 2015). Further, the Hausman test rejects the null, suggesting that the FE estimator is unbiased and more preferable to the RE estimator.

country. To take into account auto-correlation, I introduce a lagged dependent variable (one year lagged fiscal balance).

For Hypothesis 5.3, I adopt a system generalized method of moment (GMM) estimator. The results of electoral system choice in chapter 4 strongly suggest that electoral systems in dictatorships have a strong path-dependent character. Using FE models with the variables that change little within countries leads to highly inefficient estimation (Plümper and Troeger 2007). The system GMM estimator enables us to deal with this problem while accounting for fixed individual effects, potential heteroskedasticity, and auto-correlation within countries (Roodman 2007).[15] Further, I include half-decade dummies[16] and regional dummies in the GMM estimator to consider time- and region-specific unobservable heterogeneity.

### Estimation Results

Table 5.1 and figure 5.2 graphically present evidence for Hypothesis 5.1. Figure 5.2 tests whether years of competitive elections are negatively correlated with fiscal balance, compared to non-election years in electoral authoritarian regimes. The coefficient of competitive elections is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that autocracies allowing opposition participation exhibit 0.68 percent more fiscal deficits (relative to GDP) than non-election periods. By contrast, years of noncompetitive elections are also negative, but standard errors are too large to be statistically significant, indicating that noncompetitive elections do not lead autocrats to overspend.[17] The results thus offer supporting evidence on my theoretical expectation that autocrats trade competitive elections with the manipulation of economic policy instruments.

Table 5.2 and figure 5.3 show the results testing Hypothesis 5.2: holding autocratic elections with less electoral fraud is negatively correlated

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15. In the GMM regression, I use only up to the second lag of the variables for the regression in levels in order to reduce the number of instruments and the risk of overfitting the data. Also, I report two standard specification tests: The Hansen test of overidentifying restrictions tests the overall validity of the instruments, and failure to reject the null hypothesis gives support for the model, including the choice of endogenous variables. The Arellano-Bond test for AR (2) in first differences tests whether the residuals from the regression in differences in second order are serially correlated. Failure to reject the null hypothesis supports the model specification.

16. Introducing year dummies leads to instruments proliferation in the GMM estimator. Therefore, I introduce half-decade dummies.

17. In the figure, the reference category is non-election years in electoral authoritarian regimes. Setting non-election years in closed autocracy as the reference category does not change the results.

TABLE 5.1. Competitive Elections and PBC in Dictatorships

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Sample | Autocracy | Autocracy |
| Estimator | FE-OLS | FE-OLS |
| Lagged fiscal balance | 0.458*** | 0.499*** |
| | (0.0323) | (0.0679) |
| Competitive elections | –0.550** | –0.682** |
| | (0.241) | (0.262) |
| Noncompetitive elections | 0.319 | –0.560 |
| | (0.951) | (0.664) |
| Non-election years in closed | –0.584 | –0.963* |
| autocracy (CA) | (0.389) | (0.523) |
| Logged GDP per capita | | 0.408 |
| | | (0.962) |
| Economic growth | | –0.00421 |
| | | (0.0245) |
| Trade openness | | 0.0137 |
| | | (0.0123) |
| Capital openness | | 0.255 |
| | | (0.911) |
| Population over 65 | | 0.0651 |
| | | (0.337) |
| Fixed exchange rate regimes | | 0.0233 |
| | | (0.479) |
| Constant | –2.127*** | –3.779 |
| | (0.457) | (6.662) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 2,079 | 1,437 |
| *R*-squared | 0.3311 | 0.518 |
| Number of countries | 97 | 85 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

with fiscal balance in election year. Consistent with the theoretical prediction, "relatively clean" autocratic elections tend to have a negative correlation with fiscal balance in a statistically significant way. Specifically, if autocratic elections are free from blatant electoral fraud, authoritarian governments tend to worsen fiscal balance by 0.7 percent of GDP in election years, in comparison to non-election years in electoral authoritarian regimes. Neither "mediocre" nor "dirty" elections, on the other hand, have a statistically significant impact on fiscal deficits. The coefficient of mediocre elections is smaller than that of relatively clean elections and does not reach the 10 percent level of statistical significance. Dirty elections have a larger negative coefficient, but standard errors are too large to reject the null hypothesis. The results are consistent with Hypothesis 5.2.
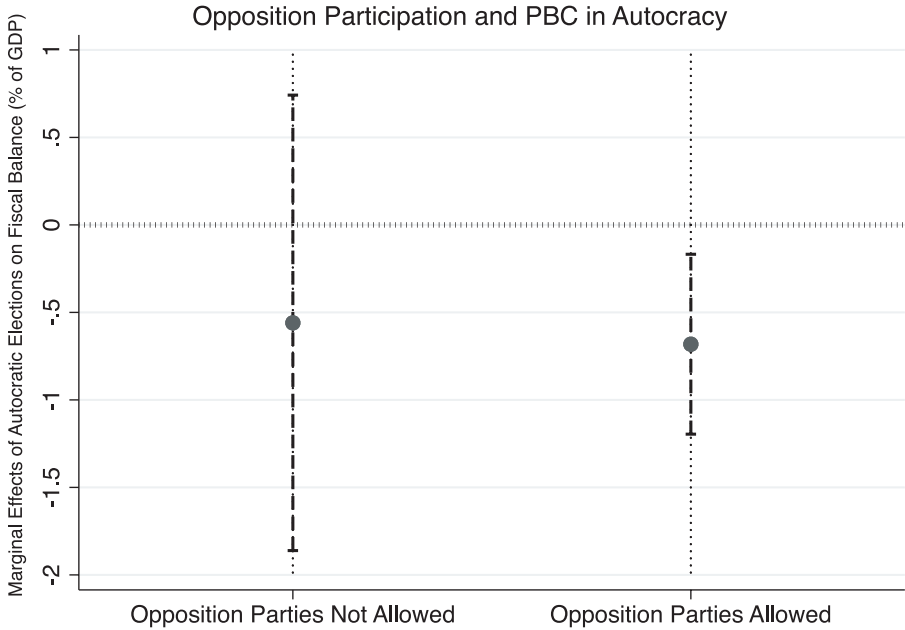
Fig. 5.2. Competitive Elections and Economic Maneuvering in Dictatorships
*Note:* The estimation is based upon Model 2. The vertical axis represents fiscal balance (fiscal revenues – fiscal expenditures) measured as a percentage of GDP. The dashed lines represent the 95 percent confidence intervals. The reference category is non-election years in electoral authoritarian regimes.

Finally, table 5.3 and figure 5.4 examine the effect of autocratic elections on fiscal deficits according to different electoral systems in electoral authoritarian regimes (Hypothesis 5.3). Here we distinguish competitive legislative elections from noncompetitive ones because opposition parties need to be allowed to participate in elections for electoral systems to influence election results. I also limit my analysis to legislative elections since what I focus on here as the independent variable is electoral systems in legislative elections.

Figure 5.4a shows the changing effect of noncompetitive legislative elections on fiscal balance. The coefficient of elections does not change much and is statistically insignificant across different values of EET, suggesting that electoral systems do not matter in explaining variation in fiscal deficits in noncompetitive legislative elections. By contrast, figure 5.4b presents the conditional effect of competitive legislative elections on fiscal deficits depending upon electoral system types. The coefficient of elections is negative and statistically significant (although it is at the 10 percent level)

TABLE 5.2. Blatant Electoral Fraud and PBC in Dictatorships

| | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|---|---|---|
| Sample | Autocracy | Autocracy |
| Estimator | FE-OLS | FE-OLS |
| Lagged fiscal balance | 0.420*** | 0.493*** |
| | (0.0397) | (0.0702) |
| Clean elections | –0.732** | –0.703** |
| | (0.329) | (0.326) |
| Mediocre elections | –0.380 | –0.615 |
| | (0.414) | (0.441) |
| Dirty elections | –0.538 | –1.550 |
| | (1.344) | (1.180) |
| Non-election years in CA | –0.635 | –0.960* |
| | (0.420) | (0.549) |
| Logged GDP per capita | | –0.0274 |
| | | (1.220) |
| Economic growth | | 0.0153 |
| | | (0.0293) |
| Trade openness | | 0.0152 |
| | | (0.0138) |
| Capital openness | | –0.211 |
| | | (0.907) |
| Population over 65 | | 0.328 |
| | | (0.429) |
| Fixed exchange rate regimes | | 0.0316 |
| | | (0.478) |
| Constant | 0.813** | –1.997 |
| | (0.343) | (8.517) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,567 | 1,241 |
| R-squared | 0.3167 | 0.5074 |
| Number of countries | 95 | 84 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

when EET is located between 0 and 20, that is, when electoral systems are more proportional. For instance, when EET is 10 percent, fiscal deficits in years of legislative elections are approximately –7.5 percent. As electoral systems become more majoritarian, however, the coefficient of legislative elections becomes positive and statistically non-distinguishable from 0. The overall results support Hypothesis 5.3: There is a trade-off between the adoption of majoritarian electoral systems and pre-electoral economic maneuvering.

Examining the control variables included in the models, we can see that the lagged dependent variable (fiscal balance) is positive and statistically significant in most of the models, indicating that economic policy is highly
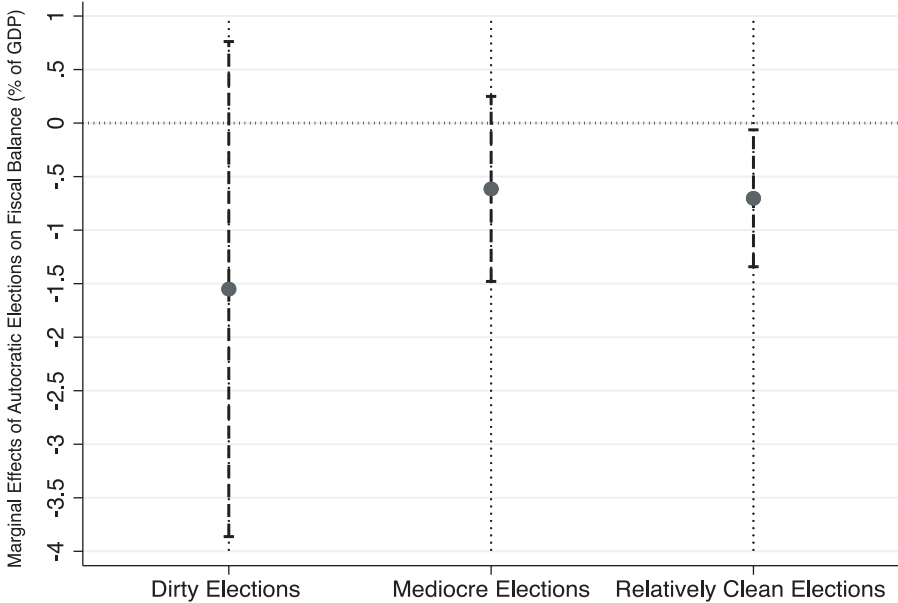
Fig. 5.3. Blatant Electoral Fraud and Economic Maneuvering in Dictatorships
*Note:* The estimation is based upon Model 4. The dashed lines are the 95% confidence intervals. The reference category is non-election years in electoral authoritarian regimes. The horizontal axis represents the extent of blatant electoral fraud. An autocratic election is coded as "relatively clean" if the continuous measure of blatant electoral fraud is below the 25th percentile, as "mediocre" if the measure is between the 25th and 75th percentile, and as "dirty" if the measure is above the 75th percentile. The vertical axis represents fiscal balance (fiscal revenues + grants – fiscal expenditures) measured as a percentage of GDP.

path dependent. In some models, the coefficient of economic growth is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that a strong economy improves fiscal balance.

Taken together, the overall results suggest that autocratic elections create a larger size of economic maneuvering when elections are partially free and fair: the magnitude of PBCs (election-year increases in fiscal deficits) becomes larger when elections allow opposition parties, are less fraudulent, and adopt PR systems.

### Additional Analyses and Robustness Checks

To validate whether the results are robust, I conduct a couple of additional analyses. First, the timing of both elections and economic maneuvering may be influenced by unmodeled confounders such as international shock

TABLE 5.3. Electoral Systems and PBC in Dictatorships

| | Model 5 Autocracy System GMM | Model 6 Autocracy System GMM |
|---|---|---|
| Sample | Autocracy | Autocracy |
| Estimator | System GMM | System GMM |
| Lagged fiscal balance | 0.223*** | 0.0535 |
| | (0.0458) | (0.111) |
| Competitive legislative elections (CL) | –3.929 | –12.47* |
| | (8.490) | (6.427) |
| Effective electoral threshold (EET) | 0.0319 | 0.373 |
| | (0.379) | (0.329) |
| CL*EET | 0.165 | 0.503* |
| | (0.304) | (0.288) |
| Noncompetitive legislative elections (NCL) | 6.161 | –2.130 |
| | (6.235) | (9.452) |
| NCL*EET | –0.192 | 0.182 |
| | (0.266) | (0.380) |
| Competitive presidential elections | –1.313 | –0.633 |
| | (1.352) | (2.146) |
| Noncompetitive presidential elections | –2.510 | –1.698 |
| | (4.171) | (2.464) |
| Non-election years in closed autocracy | –2.204 | –0.432 |
| | (3.343) | (3.865) |
| Logged GDP per capita | | –10.50 |
| | | (8.373) |
| Economic growth | | 0.240* |
| | | (0.135) |
| Trade openness | | 0.117 |
| | | (0.0994) |
| Capital openness | | –0.0176 |
| | | (9.919) |
| Population over 65 | | 3.672 |
| | | (6.488) |
| Fixed exchange rate regimes | | 0.606 |
| | | (4.583) |
| Constant | 6.339 | 71.80 |
| | (29.55) | (78.26) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,552 | 1,158 |
| Number of countries | 90 | 79 |
| Arellano-Bond test for AR(2) ($p$-value) | 0.330 | 0.126 |
| Hansen test ($p$-value) | 0.425 | 0.320 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.
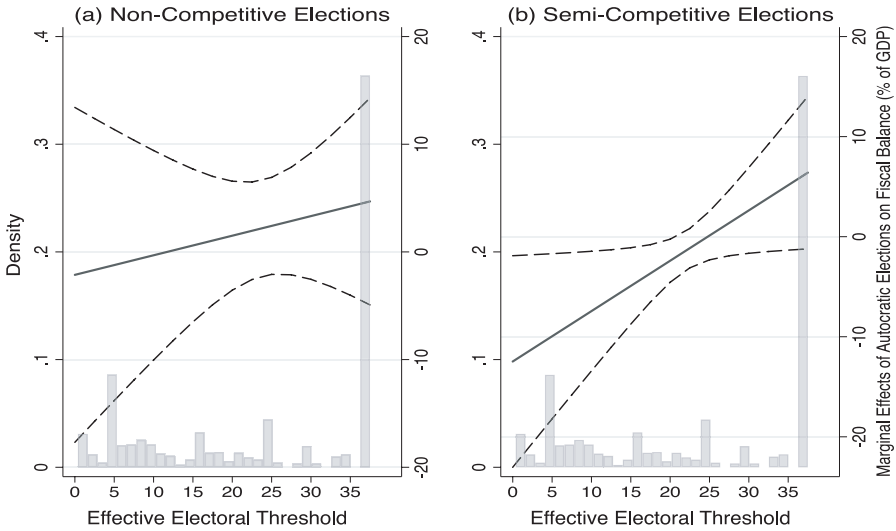
Fig. 5.4. Electoral Systems and Economic Maneuvering in Dictatorships
*Note:* The estimation is based upon Model 6. The dashed lines are the 90% confidence intervals. The horizontal axis represents EET with higher values indicating more majoritarian electoral systems. The vertical axis stands for fiscal balance (fiscal revenues + grants – fiscal expenditures) measured as a percentage of GDP.

and political instability. These factors may influence both a dictator's calculus with regards to election timing and fiscal deficits. Put differently, authoritarian leaders may violate scheduled dates of elections and postpone them as much as possible when their economic performance is not good (i.e., due to economic recessions, revenues may be lowered and public spending levels may become high to stimulate the economy). As a result, fiscal deficits before postponed elections may be not the consequence of the dictator's economic maneuvering but rather the result of bad economic performance in election time. To reflect upon these endogeneity issues, following Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2018), I distinguish regularly scheduled elections from those that had been scheduled but then postponed. Using Higashijima and Yanai's (2019) data of election timing, I show that regularly scheduled elections still have negative associations in statistically significant ways with fiscal deficits for competitive elections, relatively clean elections, and elections with PR systems. In contrast, in two out of three models (models with opposition participation and electoral systems), the coefficients of postponed elections are not statistically distinguishable from the zero effect (appendix B5.1).

Second, the theory of autocratic elections predicts that as a result of his

high mobilization capabilities, the dictator can afford holding less manipulated elections, which then leads to worsening fiscal deficits as a result of economic maneuvering. Yet, the correlations between less manipulated elections and fiscal imbalance may be yielded through different causal paths. For instance, the correlations may be, as a result, that "weak, incompetent" dictators who are unable to control both electoral manipulation and an economy suffer from high levels of fiscal deficits in election years. However, simultaneously modeling both levels of electoral manipulation and mobilization capabilities makes statistical modeling extremely complicated since it demands the inclusion of several of three- and four-way interaction terms between election years, election fairness, and measures of mobilization capabilities (i.e., natural resource wealth, dominant parties, EOP, and opposition strength). Therefore, as an alternative test, I control for the measures of mobilization capabilities in the PBC models to investigate whether the election variables turn statistically insignificant after controlling for these variables of mobilization capabilities.[18] If the election variables become statistically insignificant after controlling for mobilization capabilities, then the results serve as convincing evidence that the effects of less manipulated elections on election-year fiscal deficits mostly go through those of mobilization capabilities. The estimation results show that after controlling for the variables of mobilization capabilities, all the election variables (competitive elections, relatively clean elections, and elections with PR systems) fail to reject the null, that is, are in support of my theoretical expectations.[19]

### 5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the conditions under which PBCs emerge under authoritarian regimes. By using a new, global dataset of fiscal balance, the statistical analyses have demonstrated that the magnitude of PBCs tends to change depending on opposition participation in elections, blatant electoral fraud, and electoral system types: Fiscal deficits in election years exist in statistically significant ways when dictators allow opposition parties to participate in elections, hold less fraudulent elections, and adopt PR systems. In autocracies with "open" elections, election results become credible, such that the opposition and citizens more generally gauge regime

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18. I thank Carl Henrik Knutsen for suggesting me to conduct this analysis.
19. The estimation results are available upon request.

strength and dictators receive additional benefits by holding those elections. The need to win big in relatively free and fair elections incentivizes authoritarian governments to adopt expansionary fiscal policies in order to gather public support, resulting in fiscal deficits in election years.

The analysis presented in this chapter has shed light on one particular dimension of distributive politics within dictatorships, yet it also leads to some important implications for regime change in authoritarian countries. The results suggest that in authoritarian regimes with open elections, dictators need to engineer a large portion of electoral business cycles simply to sustain high levels of political support. This means that when authoritarian rulers are able to successfully distribute extensive economic favors to citizens, authoritarian elections contribute to consolidating authoritarian rule by maximizing the benefits of autocratic elections. On the flip side, however, if authoritarian leaders fail to engage in economic maneuvering even though elections are relatively free and fair, election results may in turn credibly reveal the *weakness* of current regimes. The next chapter will consider the political consequences of autocratic elections: *Why do autocratic elections sometimes backfire on dictators?*

# Backfiring at the Ballot Box

> Authoritarian rulers who sponsored elections to bolster legitimacy
> were in a no-win position. If they played the game fairly, they suf-
> fered a "stunning" defeat. If they stole the election, they lost legiti-
> macy rather than gaining it.
>
> —Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*

## 6.1. Popular Protests and Leadership Turnover
## in the Aftermath of Autocratic Elections

Since the end of the Cold War, growing pressure from the international
community has made it difficult for authoritarian leaders to avoid hold-
ing periodical elections. Coinciding with the proliferation of autocracies
accommodating elections (Diamond 2002; Schedler 2006; Levitsky and
Way 2010), scholars of authoritarian politics began to focus their atten-
tion on elections' role in authoritarian regimes. As discussed in chapter 1,
those scholars assert that authoritarian leaders may use elections as a tool
to consolidate their rule (Magaloni 2006; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009;
Blaydes 2011). However, a puzzling fact about autocratic elections is that
elections do not always benefit autocrats to the extent these studies suggest.
Ironically, some autocratic elections induce political conflicts like popu-
lar protests that have the potential to undermine authoritarian stability.
For example, the color revolutions in the post-Soviet countries (Georgia,
Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan) during the mid-2000s all occurred immediately
after elections (Tucker 2007; Kuntz and Thompson 2009; Bunce and Wol-

chik 2010). Likewise, after the Côte d'Ivoire 2000–2001 elections, massive protests erupted in favor of opposition parties, which subsequently ousted the incumbent president, Robert Guéï. Post-electoral protests allow the opposition to send a clear signal of public dissent to the international community. Even if subdued by dictatorial governments,[1] electoral misconduct and the subsequent eruption of serious protests may undermine authoritarian stability in the long run, with international actors enforcing democratic norms by imposing material and reputational costs (Donno 2010; Hyde and Marinov 2014).

Another form of post-electoral political conflict is leadership turnover as a result of the elections producing surprising results for the incumbent. For instance, the unpopular incumbent Prime Minister Bandaranaike lost the 1977 Sri Lankan elections by the largest margin in the country's history to increasingly popular opposition parties (Samaraweera 1977: 1201). Similarly, in December 1991, Algerian president Chadli Bendjedid called the first multiparty national election in Algeria's history. This election also unexpectedly brought a sweeping victory to the radical Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), triggering a military coup (Bouandel 1993). In the 1989 Polish elections, the opposition Solidarity movement obtained an overwhelming majority in both the lower and upper houses, paving the way for an unexpected electoral turnover. These cases are distinct in the manner in which the incumbent stepped down from office (ruling elites' coups or the opposition's election victories).[2] However, they are very similar in the sense that stunning election results revealed regime weaknesses and then led to leadership change.

Cross-national data on post-electoral popular protests and turnover[3] (1960–2010) demonstrate that a small but significant minority of authoritarian leaders face either leadership turnover or popular protests after elections. During that time period, 7.1 percent of authoritarian elections expe-

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1. For example, closely scrutinizing all seventeen cases of electoral revolutions since 1991, Kalandadze and Orenstein (2009) conclude that most electoral protests were unsuccessful at unseating authoritarian leaders while the most successful cases where autocrats stepped down did not result in democratization thereafter.

2. In this book, coups and the opposition's electoral turnover are seen as two subtypes of leadership turnover because both happen as a result of autocrats' revelation of their weaknesses through elections, which is the theoretical focus of this book when dictators "overliberalize" elections.

3. The data draw from NELDA (Hyde and Marinov 2012). Popular protests are measured by using NELDA29 ("Were there riots and protests after the election?"). Leadership turnover is based upon NELDA39 ("Was the incumbent replaced after the election?") after careful recoding detailed in section 6.4.

TABLE 6.1. Post-Electoral Protests and Leadership Turnover

| 1960–69 | 1970–79 | 1980–89 | 1990–99 | 2000–2009 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| **Total number of autocratic elections** | | | | |
| 188 | 218 | 228 | 279 | 236 |
| **Number of post-electoral protests (percentage of autocratic elections)** | | | | |
| 31 (16.4%) | 39 (17.88%) | 46 (20.1%) | 49 (17.56%) | 66 (27.96%) |
| **Country examples** | | | | |
| Haiti (1961) | Benin (1970) | Egypt (1987) | Albania (1991) | Peru (2000) |
| Iran (1961) | Burkina Faso (1978) | Mexico (1988) | Ghana (1992) | Georgia (2003) |
| Malaysia (1969) | Cambodia (1972) | Philippines (1986) | Indonesia (1997) | Zimbabwe (2002) |
| Rwanda (1965) | El Salvador (1978) | Senegal (1988) | Kenya (1997) | Iran (2009) |
| South Korea (1967) | South Africa (1970) | Taiwan (1989) | Zimbabwe (1995) | Serbia (2000) |
| **Number of post-electoral leadership turnover (percentage of autocratic elections)** | | | | |
| 11 (5.85%) | 15 (6.68%) | 17 (7.45%) | 26 (9.31%) | 14 (5.93%) |
| **Country examples** | | | | |
| Peru (1962) | Ecuador (1979) | Pakistan (1988) | Algeria (1991) | Senegal (2000) |
| Argentina (1962) | Bolivia (1978) | Poland (1989) | Guinea-Bissau (1999) | Kenya (2002) |
| Laos (1960) | Dominican Republic (1978) | Chile (1989) | Burundi (1993) | Mexico (2000) |

*Note:* Post-electoral protests were drawn from NELDA. The data of post-electoral turnovers are also drawn from NELDA, yet the coding rule was adjusted in light of theoretical interests of this book (explained in section 6.4).

rienced leadership turnover, whereas popular protests occurred in 19.6 percent of them. Political leaders in dictatorships like Indonesia (1997), Cameroon (1993), Azerbaijan (2000, 2003), and Mexico (1988, 1994) experienced post-election popular protests, whereas Uruguay (1984), Bolivia (1980), Chile (1988), Haiti (1995, 2000), Sri Lanka (1977), and Liberia (1997) saw their elections lead to leadership turnover via coups or the opposition's election victory. These variations in post-electoral outcomes in authoritarian states present us with several important puzzles: *Why do authoritarian elections, which are expected to help autocrats stay in power, often backfire? Specifically, why do autocrats face different types of threats—popular protests, coups, and opposition victories—after elections, and how can we understand the sources of these distinct post-electoral conflicts in dictatorships?*

## 6.2. Literature on Post-Electoral Political Order

Scholars have suggested that elections in autocracies often contribute to political change. According to this literature, elections increase the likelihood of regime change by stunningly bringing election victories to the opposition and then the incumbent accepting the election results. For instance, Lindberg (2006) and Teorell and Hadenius (2009) contend that repetitive elections in multiparty contexts may contribute to further democratization and improve the quality of democracy, because repeated elections, although they are manipulated, form a basis of norms conducive to democratization. In a similar vein, Roessler and Howard (2009) and Brownlee (2009) both assert that competitive authoritarian regimes are more likely to democratize than are both hegemonic and closed authoritarian regimes. In this context, Huntington (1991: 174) notes that "the lessons of the third wave [of democratization] is that elections are not only the life of democracy; they are oftentimes also the death of dictatorship."

Other research also contends that autocratic elections may cause coups and popular uprisings by overcoming coordination problems in rebelling against the incumbent. Potential opponents within ruling coalitions may be unsure about the dictator's strengths when aspiring to plot a coup d'état. The opposition faces collective action problems when mobilizing their supporters. In such situations, elections serve as a focal point that permits opponents to organize around election time. Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig (2017) argue that the effects of autocratic elections on regime durability differ between electoral and non-electoral periods: Authoritarian elections increase the risk of regime breakdown immediately after elections. In the long run, however, autocratic elections help dictators hold onto power by bringing informational and other benefits.

Taken together, previous studies suggest two different perspectives regarding autocratic elections: stabilizing and destabilizing effects. In reconciling these different findings, scholars illuminate the background conditions altering authoritarian elections' effects on post-electoral political order. With regard to regime change by elections, research suggests that post-electoral regime change is influenced by differences in opposition strengths and international influences. For instance, Howard and Roessler (2006) find that election results become more open when opposition parties succeed in forming coalitions and launching pre-election protests. Donno (2013b) also asserts that competitive authoritarian states democratize when domestic oppositions form coalitions and international actors impose political and economic conditionality. Kelley (2012) finds that

election observers are more likely to cause government turnover through elections.

Post-electoral coups d'état are also provoked by the incumbent's weaknesses. When autocratic elections demonstrate regime strengths by rolling out impressive electoral campaigns and popular support, autocratic elections effectively deter internal elites' coup attempts (Magaloni 2006; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2018). Conversely, when the autocrats fail to produce impressive election outcomes, elections convey a credible but negative signal of a regime's might, facilitating coups d'état. In fact, Wig and Rod (2016) argue that, in elections where opposition parties emerge in strength, regime elites engage in coup attempts to preempt opposition threats while also punishing the low-performing incumbent.

Some autocratic elections are followed by popular protests. Scholars find excessive electoral manipulation as important predictors of this. Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski (2014) provide cross-national evidence that pre-electoral violence is positively associated with the probability of post-electoral protests. Fraudulent elections also provide an opportunity for opposition parties and anti-regime supporters to protest (Tucker 2007). Echoing these studies, Trejo (2014) contends that increasingly free and fair elections and a subsequent prospect of the opposition's election victories motivate opposition parties to discourage radical mobilization, leading to a reduction of popular protests. Although most protests are repressively subdued, some post-electoral manifestations of public dissent include large-scale, anti-government demonstrations. In some cases, these demonstrations led to the breakdown of authoritarian regimes, which occurred in the Philippines (1986), the post-Soviet countries (i.e., the color revolutions, Tucker 2007; Thompson and Kuntz 2009), and Côte d'Ivoire (2000–2001). Bunce and Wolchik (2010) emphasize that opposition parties that can carry out sophisticated, energetic electoral campaigns successfully lead political protests.

Resonating with these past studies, I also posit conditional hypotheses about authoritarian elections' effects on leadership turnover and popular protests. This chapter contributes to the literature in three different ways. First, by explicitly taking into account the costs and benefits of authoritarian elections, this chapter endogenizes the authoritarian leader's calculus over electoral manipulation. Scholars are different in which aspects of authoritarian elections they emphasize—the stabilizing or the destabilizing effects of autocratic elections. However, most research estimates autocratic elections' impact on post-electoral political order without considering that electoral institutions are endogenously selected by autocrats in the first

place (Pepinsky 2014).[4] Assuming that autocrats strategically decide on a level of electoral manipulation, I argue that autocrats are likely to face post-electoral conflicts when they make mistakes on the extent of electoral manipulation.

Second, I focus on two forms of electoral manipulation when I consider the likely outcomes of the strategic failure of electoral design—blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation. The previous literature has mostly focused on blatant electoral fraud. However, institutional manipulation also significantly influences election outcomes in dictatorships. Empirically assessing the extent to which autocrats optimally design electoral systems, this chapter sheds new light on the impact of electoral systems on post-electoral conflicts, as well as that of blatant electoral fraud.

Finally, I explain post-electoral coups, opposition victories, and popular protests in a unified theoretical framework by focusing on the relationship between the electoral dilemma and dictators' mobilization capabilities. The literatures of electoral turnover, protests, and coups in authoritarian rule tend to be developed independently.[5] However, in reality, autocrats face these different types of threats simultaneously—one comes from ruling elites and the other comes from the opposition (Svolik 2012)—and they are incentivized to minimize those threats. I argue that the optimal design of autocratic elections enables authoritarian leaders to cope with these risks simultaneously. Put differently, both popular protests and leadership turnover result from two different types of mistakes that autocrats could make when designing autocratic elections.

## 6.3. Destabilizing Effects of Autocratic Elections

Elections have the potential to work as an institutional device to benefit authoritarian rulers through three mechanisms—the demonstration, information gathering, and divide-and-conquer functions. However, for authoritarian leaders to exploit those benefits of elections, they are required to permit less manipulated elections. It is precisely this process where autocrats face a trade-off between the certainty of winning big and the credibility of election results.

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4. One important exception is Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig (2017), who adopt an instrumental variables estimator to mitigate the endogeneity threat.

5. Beyond electoral periods, some research suggests that protests go hand in hand with coups. For instance, Casper and Tyson (2014) argue that, by understanding mass protests as a public signal of popular dissatisfaction, inner elites are more likely to coordinate coups.

When an autocrat wins an election by a crushing margin, the total number of votes that he obtains consists of "honest" and "dishonest" parts. The "honest" part is the total number of real votes from his supporters. These citizens vote for the dictator after positively evaluating his economic and policy performance. Specifically, authoritarian leaders' popular support depends on the breadth of economic distribution to the citizenry. Gaining voluntary support is costly because governments must invest large amounts of financial resources to satisfy their citizens. Hence, although manipulation of policy instruments is also another form of electoral strategy for autocrats, costly mobilization of citizens' support through the distribution of pork and patronage contributes to making election results "honest"—in the sense that citizens vote for autocracy in return for receiving patronage and club goods.

The "dishonest" element is the total number of votes resulting from electoral manipulation—blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation. As already detailed in chapter 3, blatant electoral fraud deviates election results from voters' initial vote preferences, in favor of the political leader. As analyzed in chapter 4, SMD systems generate a significant seat premium to ruling parties. Both blatant electoral fraud and electoral system manipulation, though different, contribute to an electoral victory with a margin that could not be achieved without such manipulations. In the sense that these techniques of electoral manipulation distort election outcomes away from citizens' actual support level for the dictator, they make election results less credible.

Making sense of his mobilization capabilities, if the autocrat matches the extent of electoral manipulation with them, he can exploit as much electoral benefit as possible while maintaining an overwhelming majority. When this is the case, elections are likely to contribute to authoritarian stability. In fact, as chapters 3 and 4 have empirically demonstrated, authoritarian regimes with substantial discretionary resources, strong disciplinary organizations, and a weak opposition tend to have lower levels of blatant electoral fraud and to adopt more proportional electoral systems. These results imply that authoritarian leaders strategically manipulate elections based on their ability to cultivate popular support through the effective distribution of patronage and pork: dictators with high mobilization capabilities strategically open the electoral field, while those with low mobilization capabilities manipulate elections by coercive and institutional measures. Contrary to this, however, when the autocrat fails to adequately deal with the electoral dilemma depending upon his mobilization capabilities, the elections are more likely to backfire on him. More specifically,

autocrats fail to deal with the electoral dilemma in two ways: *undersupply* and *oversupply* of electoral manipulation.

### "Undersupply" of Electoral Manipulation and Leadership Crisis

Stability may not be achieved when authoritarian leaders are overconfident about their popularity and strengths, hold multiparty elections, and then lose a supermajority (or even an electoral victory to opposition parties). The failure to win big reveals the dictator's weakness, activating within-regime threats and increasing the likelihood of coups. Even if ruling elites do not punish the low-performing incumbent, excessively free and fair elections may lead to stunning opposition victories. Researchers have offered substantial anecdotal evidence that autocrats' mistakes stemming from miscalculation and/or political uncertainty unexpectedly paved the way for leadership turnover in, for example, Brazil (1974), Peru (1980), Uruguay (1980), Guatemala (1981), Turkey (1983), Pinochet's Chile (1988), Marcos's Philippines (1986), Myanmar (1990), Algeria (1992), and Burundi (1993) (Huntington 1991: 174–78; Diamond 2008: 53–54). Observing the so-called third wave of democratization, Samuel Huntington (1991) succinctly depicts the processes through which stunning election results led to initiating leadership change in authoritarian regimes:

> When their performance legitimacy declined, authoritarian rulers often came under increasing pressure and had increasing incentives to attempt to renew their legitimacy through elections. *Rulers sponsored elections believing they would either prolong their regime or their rule or that of associates. The rulers were almost always disappointed.* With very few exceptions, the parties or candidates associated with authoritarian regimes lost or did very poorly in the regime sponsored elections. The results of these elections often surprised both the leaders of the opposition and the leaders of the government. In the first fifteen years of the third wave this "stunning election" pattern was a pervasive one. (175; italics added)

In Poland, for example, the communist government held multiparty parliamentary elections in 1989 with virtually no blatant electoral fraud. The preceding roundtable talks between the government and the opposition had decided that the country would introduce a new bicameral parliament. In the new bicameralism, senators would be chosen through free elections, while in the Diet the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR) and

its allies were guaranteed 65 percent of seats and the remaining 35 percent of the seats were contested with opposition parties and independents. Prior to the elections, the ruling communist party, the PZPR, did not doubt its popularity, and the opposition Solidarity Party also did not expect its eventual electoral triumph. "No one in the political elite anticipated the replacement of a communist government by a Solidarity government. . . . The purpose of . . . election procedures was to permit Solidarity to enter Parliament but to preserve the continuation of communist rule," said Lech Walesa, the leader of Solidarity. He also declared, "It would be tragic and even fatal if we attempted to . . . take over power" (Olson 1993: 417, 420). In fact, he went so far as to publicly state that obtaining 20 percent of the seats in freely contested portions of the Diet could be seen as a victory for Solidarity (Lewis 1990: 95).

Confident of election victory, the PZPR did not carry out visible election campaigns by, for example, actively advertising the party's name and nationally endorsing their candidates (Olson 1993: 425–26). Nevertheless, the outcome was stunning. After the vote count, Solidarity scored a sweeping electoral victory: It won 99 out of 100 seats in the Senate, and the remaining 1 seat was won by an independent, while all the 161 seats contested in the Diet also went to Solidarity (Wróbel 2010: 173). The PZPR accepted the landslide victory by Solidarity without annulling it, resulting in Poland's transition to democracy.

Algeria's 1991 parliamentary election exhibited similar characteristics to that of Poland; however, partially free and fair elections there did not result in an electoral turnover but a military coup and then a full-blown civil war. In the country, revenues from oil had plummeted since the global oil glut that began in 1985. Owing to the lack of resources caused by nontax revenues, "the regime's capacity to distribute services became constricted, dissatisfaction with the government's performance began to grow in various sectors of the society" (Mortimer 1991: 577). In the midst of the economic crisis and shortages in jobs and food, the country had been experiencing violent protests. For example, on October 5, 1988, a series of violent riots erupted in the capital, Algiers, and then rapidly spread to other major cities in the country, which killed and wounded more than four hundred people (Brumberg 1991: 59). Furthermore, during the economic crisis, Islamist groups emerged in strength, while possessing a considerable organizational edge over their competitors in the opposition. As the numbers of the poorly educated, unemployed, and badly housed swelled in the process, the FIS took hold and increasingly gained support from the masses.

In this situation—where the ruling party lost mobilization capabili-

ties and the opposition gained their popularity—President Benjedid made a self-destructive decision for the regime and himself. He embarked on political reform, expecting that steps toward political pluralism and competitive elections would help him buy popular support. Depriving the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) of its status as a single party, the president decided to amend the constitution in February 1989, which then accorded the right to form political parties. Importantly, President Benjedid also allowed the Islamists to participate in multiparty elections by recognizing them as a political party. His decision to hold free and fair multiparty elections seems to have been supported by his assessment of the strength of the FLN, which he thought could at least remain at the status of a dominant party after elections. According to Mortimer (1991: 580), the president "acknowledged the appeal of the Islamists and gambled on governing with them rather than against them. He may well have further calculated that the FIS could be neutralized by a proliferation of other parties that would leave the FLN in a dominant—if no longer hegemonic—position."

Leading up to national parliamentary elections in 1991, the country held local elections in a free and fair manner in 1990. In the first transparent elections since independence, the FLN suffered a big loss: the ruling party won only 28 percent of the popular vote, while the FIS obtained 54 percent of the total votes, taking control of about 850 of the more than 1,500 municipalities (Mortimer 1991: 584). However, the FLN's big election loss in the local elections did not lead the president to rethink his commitment to political reform. Delayed from the originally scheduled date, the national parliamentary elections finally took place on December 26, 1991. In the first round of the elections, the FIS emerged victorious with 87.7 percent of the total seats decided (Bouandel 1993: 13). Fearing the rise of the radical Islamists ever since the local elections, the army finally intervened in politics and annulled the election results, removing the president from power by having him announce his resignation as a "sacrifice in the service of the higher interests of the nation" (Mortimer 1993: 40). This military intervention then led to the civil war between the newly installed government and Islamist rebel groups.

The Polish and Algerian cases suggest that when an autocrat does not increase electoral manipulation to the extent that his de facto weakness demands, election results could credibly reveal his regime's weakness to potential opponents and lead to a leadership change. Revealed weakness in an election is likely to result in leadership turnover via electoral victory of opposition parties, as with the cases of Poland (1989) and Chile (1988), or,

like Guatemala (1981) and Algeria (1991), where the dictator's weakness may urge members of ruling coalitions to forcibly replace their leader via a military coup.

As autocrats wield at least two kinds of electoral manipulation in their toolbox—blatant electoral fraud and electoral system reform, both of which are expected to affect the electoral dilemma in dictatorships—I derive the following two hypotheses. The former hypothesis (Hypothesis 6.1a) is on the relationship between blatant electoral fraud and leadership turnover, while the latter hypothesis (Hypothesis 6.1b) is about the relationship between electoral system reform and leadership turnover.

> **Hypothesis 6.1a:** *When an autocrat undersupplies blatant electoral fraud relative to his mobilization capabilities, political turnover by opposition victory and coup d'état are more likely to occur after an election.*
>
> **Hypothesis 6.1b:** *When an autocrat adopts excessively proportional electoral systems relative to his mobilization capabilities, political turnover by opposition victory and coup d'état are more likely to occur after an election.*

### "Oversupply" of Electoral Manipulation and Popular Protests

Autocrats may likely face another type of post-electoral political conflict—popular protests—after they use excessive electoral manipulation that activates the opposition threats. Popular protests are more likely to occur when dictators excessively manipulate elections in the following three mechanisms. First, excessive electoral manipulation widens a gap between the opposition's belief in their strength and revealed election outcomes, which in turn may encourage opposition leaders to speculate that the regimes are weaker than they had previously thought. In cases of blatant electoral fraud, after observing the extent of electoral misconduct and election results, opposition parties compare their mobilization capabilities with revealed election results and conclude that the election results are largely driven by the dictator's electoral fraud rather than citizens' genuine support for the dictator. Therefore, the signals conveyed by the elections to the opposition may in fact be mixed when it comes to comprehending an autocrat's true popularity and strength, leading to challenging the dictator by launching protests. In cases of electoral system manipulation, differences between shares of seats and votes for each party become visible after the vote counts, forming a basis for the opposition to claim that the elections were illegitimate. Specifically, previous studies suggest that "sticks" (electoral manipulation) without sufficiently accompanying "car-

rots" (economic maneuvering) encourage the opposition to speculate that the regime is now too weak to hold up its anti-regime collective action. As Bunce and Wolchik (2010: 38) have noted, "While signals in the admittedly murky political environment of mixed regimes are always hard to read, repression can also be read as an indication that political leaders have become increasingly nervous about their hold on power."

Second, excessive electoral manipulation unifies the opposition camp. Pro-regime electoral manipulation—blatant electoral fraud and majoritarian electoral systems—is more likely to prevent opposition parties from gaining their legislative representation and political influence within the regime. The extreme pro-regime bias in elections, however, undermines the credibility of electoral processes and thus urges the opposition to unify in adopting anti-system approaches, including post-electoral popular protests, rather than participating in regime-sponsored elections.

Third, excessive electoral manipulation serves as a coordination mechanism for the opposition to overcome collective action problems and leads to protest movements in the aftermath of elections (Tucker 2007). Organizing and joining mass protests runs the risk of state repression—especially when participants are uncertain about whether other people would join them. In this context, as Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig (2017: 108) succinctly point out, "elections constitute an easily identifiable focal points around which the expectations of different opposition actors, who otherwise cannot freely communicate, can converge. When first movers among the opposition can coordinate, a collective action logic may generate further snowballing since the probability of success increases and the cost of participation decreases as the number of participants grows."

In fact, various studies show that both harsh repression and excessive election cheating *without* accompanying sufficient goods provisions serve to fuel the escalation of protests in authoritarian regimes. Both Bratton and van de Walle (1997) and Wood (2000) argue that African autocracies (when failing to provide goods to citizens) have faced anti-regime popular mobilization after deploying harsh state repression. Investigating the experiences of Southeast Asian countries during the Cold War era, Goodwin (2001) also asserts that political revolution is more likely to occur in the countries where the government has relied on indiscriminate violence against anti-government forces. The color revolutions in post-Soviet countries were all preceded by fraudulent elections (Tucker 2007). In the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, violence perpetrated by state police—as well as electoral fraud exercised by incumbents—fueled opposition forces' grievances, which in turn activated anti-regime mobilization against the Akaev regime (Jones 2007; chap. 8, this volume).

Madagascar's 2001 presidential election is a typical case of an electoral authoritarian regime where blatant electoral fraud sparked a massive scale of popular protests, taking the country to the brink of a civil war. Just a few months prior to the December 2001 elections, the incumbent president Ratsiraka had been seen as the only candidate who was virtually certain to win another term of office among the other presidential candidates who ran from fragmented opposition parties (Randrianja 2003: 314). However, the popular mayor of the capital and a leading businessman, Marc Ravalomanana, unexpectedly proclaimed he would run for president, which transformed the elections into highly competitive ones. Making full use of his religious and business networks in both rural and urban areas, he began carrying out intensive election campaigns, which caused the election tide to gradually shift in his favor as the election approached (Marcus and Razafindrakoto 2003: 33–35). For example, by early October, opinion polls suggested that Ravalomanana was ahead of President Ratsiraka (Cornwell 2003: 2). In addition, major politicians, including a former prime minister who withdrew from the race, leaders of other opposition parties, and even some members of the governing coalition, declared support for Ravalomanana (Randrianja 2003: 314).

In the shadow of growing political support for Ravalomanana, the government responded with a variety of methods to manipulate election results. Prior to the elections, "candidates were only allowed to campaign between November 25 and December 15, thereby significantly limiting the exposure of lesser known rivals outside the capital. . . . The only news allowed to directly cover the electoral process was comprised of journalists chosen by the president. . . . No political advertisements could be associated with purchasable goods. The last edict was aimed directly at the candidacy of Marc Ravalomanana" (Marcus and Razafindrakoto 2003: 36). Election campaigning was marred by incidents of violence, and people were worried about the accurateness of the electoral roll, which suggested that the number of registered voters on the island had declined inexplicably by some two million in the past five years (Cornwell 2003: 2).

On December 28, 2001, the Interior Ministry released the preliminary results showing that Ravalomanana had obtained 46.49 percent of the vote, while Ratsiraka had acquired 40.64 percent, suggesting that a second round would be necessary to identify the winner of the presidency. With these results, the Ravalomanana camp claimed that the president's vote count had been fabricated by ballot stuffing, based upon their own estimation that Ravalomanana had actually won 53.32 percent, which was an absolute majority for him to get elected in the first round. As it turned out, a recount by the election supervisory body made only minor adjust-

ments to the released election results, and the High Constitutional Court ruled that a second round would indeed be held. This triggered a series of massive protest rallies that erupted in the capital on January 28, 2002, and that then escalated into violent confrontations that were on the edge of a civil war over the next six months. On July 5, President Ratsiraka flew into exile in France, ending his twenty-three-year rule in the country.

The above discussion and the case of Madagascar suggest that when autocrats oversupply electoral manipulation, elections are then more likely to backfire on them in the form of popular protests. Therefore, I derive the following hypotheses:

> **Hypothesis 6.2a:** *When an autocrat oversupplies electoral fraud relative to his mobilization capabilities, post-election popular protests are more likely to occur.*
>
> **Hypothesis 6.2b:** *When an autocrat adopts excessively majoritarian electoral systems in light of his mobilization capabilities, post-election popular protests are more likely to occur.*

## 6.4. Cross-National Statistical Analysis of Post-Electoral Political Conflicts

### *Data and Modeling Strategies*

To empirically test the two hypotheses, I conduct a cross-national statistical analysis. The unit of analysis is country-election-year in authoritarian countries. Concerning blatant electoral fraud, I include authoritarian regimes with any elections (both competitive and noncompetitive elections), assuming that excluding opposition parties is also a blatant form of electoral manipulation. For electoral system manipulation, I include only legislative elections in electoral authoritarian regimes, since electoral systems vary only in parliamentary elections and manipulating electoral systems makes sense in elections where opposition parties are allowed to join.

To measure the gap between the extent of electoral manipulation and the autocrat's mobilization capability, I adopt two-stage models based on estimators and model specifications adopted in chapter 3 (on blatant electoral fraud) and chapter 4 (on electoral system change).[6] The first-stage

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6. For example, a similar approach was taken by Wright (2008), who measures the autocrat's time horizon by calculating predicted probabilities of leadership survival in a first-stage model. Using the predicted probabilities computed in the first stage, he tested the relation-

models predict the levels of electoral manipulation that autocrats are expected to use according to their mobilization capabilities. Hence, predicted values of the dependent variable in the first-stage models are the "appropriate" extent of electoral manipulation if autocrats had strategically designed elections given their abilities to mobilize regime supporters.[7] By contrast, observed values of electoral manipulation on data are the real levels of blatant electoral fraud and the EET that dictators actually utilized.

Using these two values of the extent of electoral manipulation, I calculate the gap between them (i.e., predicted values in these first-stage models and observed values of electoral manipulation [blatant electoral fraud or the EET]). In the second stages, I regress these gap variables (i.e., *observed values—predicted values*) on the two dependent variables—leadership turnover and popular protests. Capturing these gaps enables us to measure the extent to which dictators successfully match the extent of electoral manipulation with their mobilization capabilities. In other words, by adopting these two-stage estimations, we can empirically assess the extent to which the electoral dilemma is resolved by autocrats. If the gap variables take more positive values, then it suggests that the dictator is likely to supply more electoral manipulation than he needs via blatant electoral fraud or pro-regime seat bias through majoritarian electoral systems. My theoretical expectation is that excessively manipulated elections should be associated with a higher probability of popular protests and a lower likelihood of leadership turnover. When the variables take more negative values, elections are less manipulated in light of the autocrat's mobilization capabilities. Thus, I expect that leadership turnover is more likely to follow such elections.

### The First-Stage Model: The Dictator's Strategic Calculus over Electoral Manipulation

As outlined above, there are two dependent variables for the first-stage models: (1) blatant electoral fraud and (2) electoral system types (i.e., from the pure SMD, or EET = 37.5, to PR systems, where the EET takes lower values). Consistent with chapter 4, electoral system types are continuously measured by the EET.

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ship between the dictator's time horizon and the likelihood of institutionalizing a legislature in a second-stage model.

7. Specifically, for blatant electoral fraud, the first-stage model predicts the extent of blatant electoral fraud by adopting a random effects (RE) estimator. For electoral system change, the first-stage model predicts the magnitude of the EET by adopting a country fixed effects (FE) model.

To cross-nationally measure the distribution of mobilization capabilities in a country, this book focuses on three factors: (1) discretionary financial resources, (2) disciplinary political organizations, and (3) opposition strength. Consistent with the previous chapters, I use oil-gas value per capita to measure discretionary financial resources. Following this, the oil-gas value per capita variable is interacted with the dominant party regime dummy and the size and cohesiveness of politically dominant ethnic groups (the EOP index) to capture the efficiency of resource distribution to the masses. For the opposition strength, I use an indicator counting the number of demonstrations, riots, and strikes.[8]

In appendixes A6.1 and A6.2, I show statistical results of the first-stage models. For blatant electoral fraud, the oil-gas value is negatively associated with blatant electoral fraud when autocrats have dominant parties or more coherent, larger dominant ethnic groups. The collective action variable is positively correlated with the extent of electoral fraud. These results suggest that dictators with high mobilization capabilities tend to refrain from using electoral chicanery. $R$-squared is 0.471, suggesting that the first model explains approximately 47 percent of total variations in blatant electoral fraud.

Concerning electoral system manipulation, abundant natural resources decrease the likelihood that the autocrats adopt electoral systems with high EET (i.e., more majoritarian electoral systems), and this association tends to become stronger if autocrats are armed with dominant parties. Additionally, the presence of anti-government collective action tends to increase the likelihood that the autocrats adopt electoral systems with a low EET, suggesting that weak autocrats vis-à-vis the opposition rely upon majoritarian electoral systems. Here, $R$-squared is 0.829, implying that the model explains approximately 83 percent of total variations in the EET. Based on these results, I compute predicted values of blatant electoral fraud and electoral systems, which are shown in appendix figure A6.1.

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8. In addition to these variables measuring the autocrat's mobilization capabilities, I also add control variables consistent with the model specifications in chapters 3 and 4. For blatant electoral fraud, I introduce authoritarian regime type (military and monarchy regimes), political rights and civil liberties in non-electoral periods (measured by Freedom House Index), election administrative capacity (using Kelley's [2012] QED), election types, logged GDP per capita, GDP growth (*World Development Indicators*), and foreign aid (percentage of GDP). For electoral system change, I introduce authoritarian regime type (military regimes), trade openness (sum of imports and experts measured as a percentage of GDP), logged total population, duration of electoral authoritarian regimes, proportions of democratic countries, and civil war.

The Second-Stage Models: Leadership Turnover and Popular Protests

To measure the dependent variable for Hypothesis 6.1a and 6.1b, leadership turnover, I use a variable capturing broadly defined post-electoral leadership turnover from Hyde and Marinov (2012). This variable is coded as 1 if the incumbent leader is replaced after the election and as 0 otherwise (NELDA39). To accurately measure leadership turnover in light of my research interest, I adopt several modifications. First, the original variable in NELDA does not include post-electoral political turnover by coup d'état.[9] Since my theory expects that revealed regime weaknesses due to the undersupply of electoral manipulation also invite coup d'état as well as stunning opposition victories, I recoded the original variable by referring to Powell and Thyne's (2011) coup d'état dataset. Second, the original NELDA variable of leadership turnover includes leadership change brought by hereditary successions and nomination of the next leader by the current ruler before an election. As these types of leadership change are confirmed before the elections and thus do not relate to an incumbent's electoral performance, I do not count them as a form of leadership turnover. To do this, I refer to another variable from NELDA (NELDA23), which captures if a successor assumes power after elections. Further, in both models, I do not count cases that experienced leadership turnover as a result of large-scale popular protests (e.g., Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and Madagascar in 2002), because these leadership change cases are driven not by stunning election results but by protests.

The second dependent variable, popular protests, is also measured using the NELDA dataset to test Hypotheses 6.2a and 6.2b. NELDA includes a variable indicating whether there were riots and protests after the election (NELDA29). If either riots or protests occur after the election, then the variable is coded as 1. Descriptive statistics of both leadership turnover and popular protests are found in appendix A3.

I calculate gaps in electoral manipulation using predicted values from models calculating the difference between predicted and real values of fraud (i.e., *real values – predicted values*). Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of the gaps. Using the gap variable as the main independent variable, I estimate a random effects (RE) probit estimator with robust standard errors, which enables us to take into account unit (country)-specific heterogeneity as well as error correlation within a unit.[10] My empirical tests consist of

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9. Not including coups to the variable does not change the main results.
10. I do not employ country FE models because the FE estimator drops countries that do not experience any change in the dependent variables in binary dependent variables models, which risk sample selection bias.
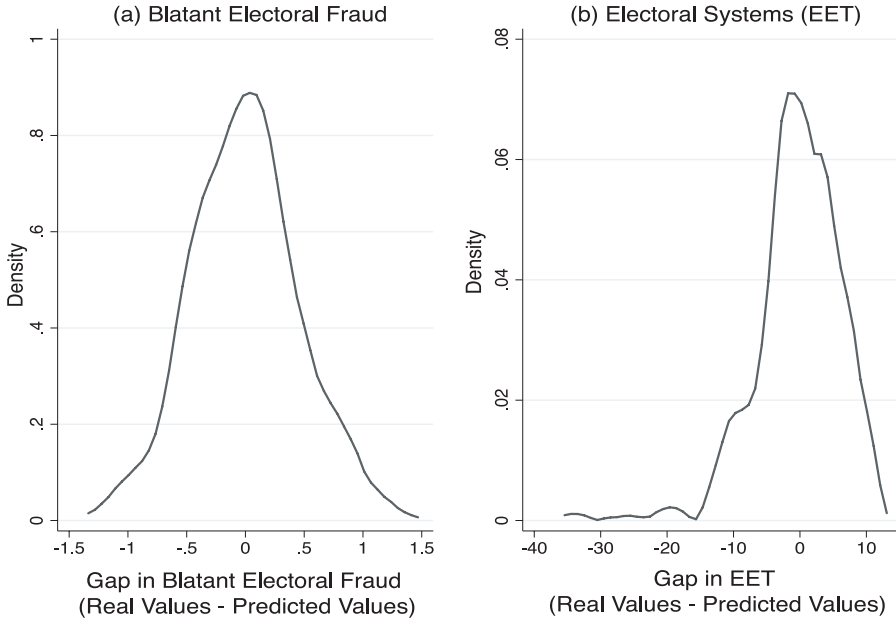
Fig. 6.1. Gaps in Electoral Manipulation
*Note:* The plots indicate kernel density functions for the distribution of gaps in blatant electoral fraud and effective electoral threshold (EET). The horizontal axis (a: blatant electoral fraud, b: EET) is gaps in electoral manipulation, which measures differences between real values and predicted values of blatant electoral fraud and EET. Negative values indicate undersupply of electoral manipulation given an autocrat's mobilization capabilities, whereas positive values indicate oversupply of electoral manipulation relative to an autocrat's mobilization capabilities.

four parts: a protest model and a turnover model for blatant electoral fraud and those for electoral system manipulation. To cope with the possibility that the determinants of electoral manipulation also directly affect the consequences of elections, such as protests and turnover (Pepinsky 2014), the control variables included in the second-stage models are identical with the first-stage ones. To consider possible temporal dependence, time lapse since the last turnover or protests and their time polynomials are included in all models (Carter and Signorino 2010).

### Estimation Results

Figure 6.2 and table 6.2 report the results of the probit analysis for blatant electoral fraud.[11] In Model 1, where the dependent variable is lead-

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11. As the protest variable from NELDA has a couple of missing observations, the number of observations between the turnover and protest models is slightly different.

TABLE 6.2. Blatant Electoral Fraud, Leadership Turnover, and Popular Protests

| Estimator<br>Dependent variable | Model 1<br>RE probit<br>Turnover | Model 2<br>RE probit<br>Protest |
|---|---|---|
| Gap in fraud | –0.878** | 1.129*** |
| | (0.436) | (0.275) |
| Military regimes | 2.293*** | –0.310 |
| | (0.681) | (0.368) |
| Personalist regimes | 0.468 | 0.777* |
| | (0.768) | (0.400) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | 0.119 | 0.0102 |
| | (0.103) | (0.0656) |
| Election administrative incapacity | –0.393 | 0.496** |
| | (0.311) | (0.208) |
| Main elections | 0.186 | 0.172 |
| | (0.249) | (0.148) |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.532 | –0.0916 |
| | (0.406) | (0.237) |
| Economic growth | 0.00405 | 0.0455* |
| | (0.0357) | (0.0233) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | –0.0660 | –0.0442 |
| | (0.0459) | (0.0297) |
| Civil conflict | 1.678** | –0.146 |
| | (0.796) | (0.405) |
| Constant | 0.491 | –2.021 |
| | (3.027) | (1.839) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Time lapse and polynomials | Yes | Yes |
| Log pseudolikelihood | –95.52 | –112.96 |
| Observations | 316 | 315 |
| Number of countries | 78 | 78 |

*Note:* Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Model specifications are based upon the first-stage model. The time lapse since the last turnover/protests and their time polynomials are included.

ership turnover, the fraud gap is negative and statistically significant at the 5 percent level. This suggests that if autocrats do not increase the level of electoral fraud despite their need to do so, they are more likely to experience political turnover through coups or the opposition's electoral victories following elections. Based on Model 1, figure 6.2a graphically illustrates the pattern in which a predicted probability of post-electoral leadership turnover changes as the fraud gap variable increases. When the gap variable takes more positive values, the predicted probability becomes closer to 0. In contrast, when the variable becomes more negative, the probability of leadership turnover increases in a statistically significant way. When the variable is 1.35 (the maximum value), the probability of turnover is about 5 percent and statistically insignificant,
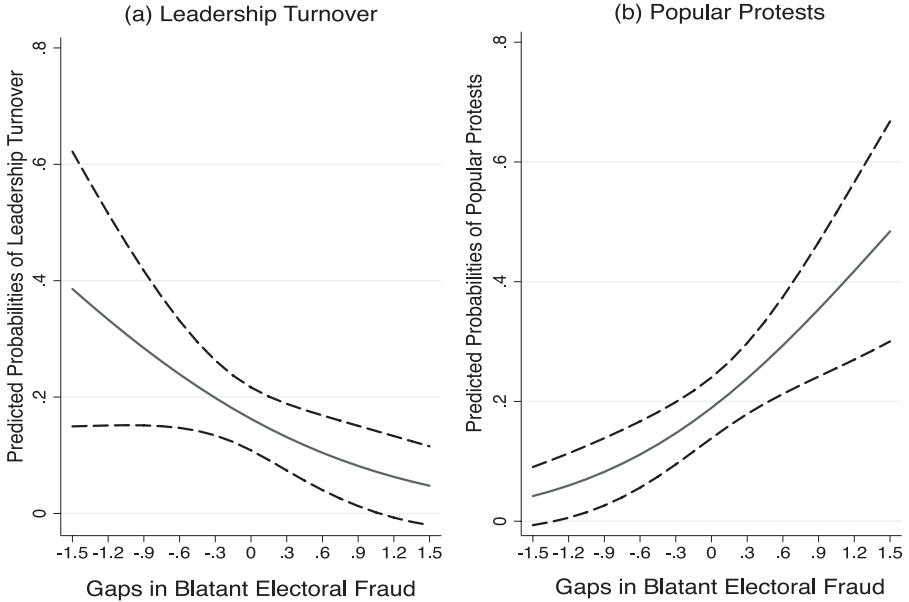
Fig. 6.2. Gaps in Blatant Electoral Fraud and the Likelihoods of Leadership Turnover and Protests

*Note:* The dashed lines represent the 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal axis stands for gaps in blatant electoral fraud. Zero indicates that authoritarian leaders match the extent of electoral fraud with their mobilization capabilities. Positive values indicate that authoritarian leaders overuse blatant electoral fraud, whereas negative values suggest that authoritarian leaders underuse it. The vertical axis in figure 6.2a is predicted probabilities of leadership turnover through coups and opposition victories after the elections. The vertical axis in figure 6.2b is predicted probabilities of post-electoral popular protests.

whereas the probability increases to approximately 35 percent when the gap variable is –1.2 (the minimum value). These results support Hypothesis 6.1a. If we look closely at the data, we can find that countries such as Sri Lanka (1977), Bolivia (1980), Honduras (1981), Guatemala (1981), Uruguay (1984), Zambia (1991), Azerbaijan (1992), Haiti (1995, 2000), Liberia (1997), and Niger (1999) underused blatant electoral fraud in their elections. This resulted in leadership turnover via coup d'état or stunning election victories by opposition parties.

Model 2 then estimates the fraud gap's impact on the likelihood of popular protests (Hypothesis 6.2a). In Model 2, the fraud gap has a positive coefficient, which is statistically significant at the 1 percent level, meaning that when elections are more exposed to excessive electoral manipulation

relative to dictators' mobilization capabilities, they are more likely to face protests in the aftermath of elections. Using estimation results of Model 2, figure 6.2b shows the pattern in which the probability of protests changes with the values of fraud gap. When the gap variable is more negative, the likelihood of post-electoral popular protests becomes smaller. However, as the variable gets more positive, the impact of the fraud gap on popular protests also tends to increase. For instance, when the gap variable is –1.2 (the minimum value), the probability of protests is no more than 3 percent and statistically insignificant, whereas when the gap variable is 1.35 (the maximum value), the probability increases up to approximately 43 percent. Some examples in which overused electoral manipulation induced post-electoral protests include Haiti (1984), Senegal (1988), Kenya (1992, 1997), Mauritania (1992), Cameroon (1992), Togo (1994), Indonesia (1997), Algeria (1999), and Côte d'Ivoire (2000–2001).

The results so far suggest that the oversupply of blatant electoral fraud fuels popular protests, while leadership turnover is likely to occur when autocrats undersupply blatant electoral fraud. Simply stated, autocrats are able to reduce the two risks simultaneously when they successfully balance the use of blatant electoral fraud in light of their mobilization capabilities. What, then, about the other form of electoral manipulation, that is, institutional manipulation? Table 6.3 shows the results of the probit analysis for electoral system manipulation. Model 3 tests Hypothesis 6.1b and shows that the gap variable is negative and statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Figure 6.3a graphically shows predicted probabilities of leadership turnover depending upon gaps in the EET. It suggests that leadership turnover is more likely to occur as the gaps in the EET turn more negative (i.e., electoral systems are too proportional in light of the dictators' mobilization capabilities), which is consistent with Hypothesis 6.1b, yet change in the effect is very small (although it is statistically significant across a wide range of the horizontal axis). This suggests that gaps in electoral systems may not be as pertinent as those in blatant electoral fraud when it comes to explaining leadership turnover. One possible interpretation of this result is that, as suggested in chapter 4, all other things being equal, opposition parties in electoral authoritarian regimes may not be powerful enough to achieve stunning election victories even under highly PR systems. Furthermore, the analysis focuses on legislative elections and does not include presidential elections, which may render leadership turnover more difficult. In particular, stunning election results may be unlikely to lead directly to the opposition's stunning election victories in legislative elections under

TABLE 6.3. Electoral Systems, Leadership Turnover, and Popular Protests

| Estimator<br>Dependent variable | Model 3<br>RE probit<br>Turnover | Model 4<br>RE probit<br>Protests |
|---|---|---|
| Gap in EET | –0.0256** | 0.0597*** |
| | (0.0119) | (0.0204) |
| Trade openness | –0.0139** | –0.00574* |
| | (0.00695) | (0.00348) |
| Population (log) | –0.0939 | 0.130 |
| | (0.254) | (0.103) |
| Duration of electoral autocracy | –0.0262* | –0.000744 |
| (EA) | (0.0154) | (0.00568) |
| Regional democracy | 0.0595 | 0.0173 |
| | (0.0482) | (0.0393) |
| Civil conflict | | 0.138 |
| | | (0.427) |
| Military regimes | 0.537 | –0.716 |
| | (0.390) | (0.597) |
| Constant | 0.525 | –2.741 |
| | (4.139) | (1.783) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Time lapse and polynomials | Yes | Yes |
| Log pseudolikelihood | –15.29 | –95.05 |
| Number of countries | 63 | 63 |
| Observations | 257 | 253 |

*Note:* Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Model specifications are based upon the first-stage model. The time lapse since the last turnover/protests and their time polynomials are included. The civil conflict variable is not included in Model 3 because the variable predicts failure perfectly.

presidential systems where leadership is *directly* elected through presidential elections.

Model 4 estimates the impact of gaps in the EET on the likelihood of popular protests (Hypothesis 6.2b). The gap in the EET is positive and statistically significant at the 1 percent level. Figure 6.3b visualizes changing predicted probabilities depending upon different gaps in the EET. When the gap variable is negative, the likelihood of post-electoral popular protests tends to be low. This suggests that if an electoral system is too proportional in light of the dictator's mobilization capabilities, then the election is less likely to experience post-electoral popular protests. But, the more positive the gap variable is, the more likely elections are to provoke popular protests. For example, when the gap variable takes the value of –15 (i.e., excessively proportional), the predicted probability that an election will trigger popular protests is approximately 10 percent. By contrast, when the gap variable is 15 (i.e., excessively majoritarian), then the predicted probability that an election will generate protests is as much as 45 percent.
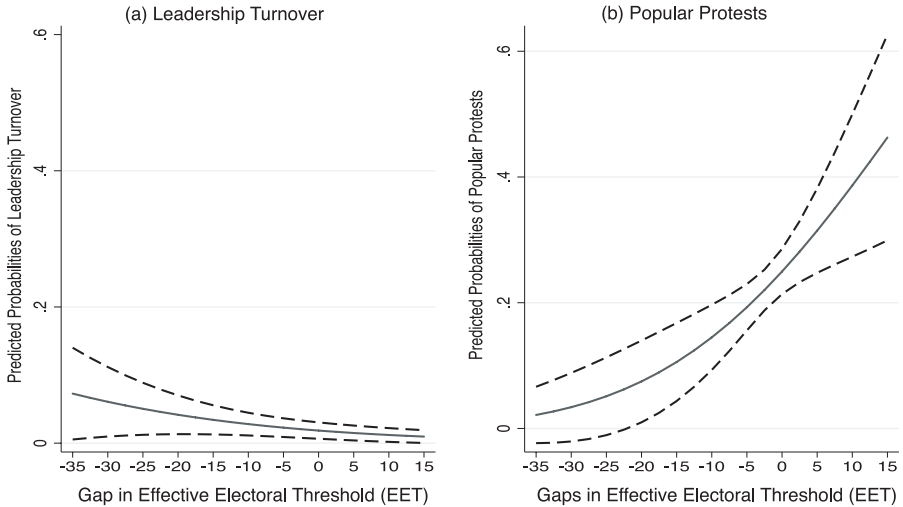
Fig. 6.3. Gaps in Electoral Systems and the Likelihoods of Leadership Turnover and Protests
*Note:* The dashed lines represent the 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal axis stands for gaps in the effective electoral threshold (EET). Zero indicates that authoritarian leaders match the size of EET with their mobilization capabilities. Positive values indicate that authoritarian leaders adopt excessively majoritarian electoral systems, whereas negative values suggest that authoritarian leaders adopt excessively PR systems. The vertical axis in figure 6.3a is predicted probabilities of leadership turnover through coups and opposition victories after the elections. The vertical axis in figure 6.3b is predicted probabilities of post-electoral popular protests.

This is consistent with Hypothesis 6.2b: excessive electoral manipulation through majoritarian electoral systems fuels people's grievances and radicalizes the opposition, leading to post-electoral riots and demonstrations. Countries that correspond to such cases are Belarus (2004, 2006), Georgia (2003), Côte d'Ivoire (2000–2001), Sierra Leone (1977), Togo (1994, 1998), Congo (2002), Zimbabwe (2002), and Kyrgyzstan (2000, 2005).

## Additional Analyses

The theory of autocratic elections that I put forward assumes that the threat of coups becomes salient when electoral margins are small, whereas the threat of popular protest turns imminent where electoral manipulation is extensive. Put differently, it assumes that ruling elites care more about the size of electoral margins than the extent of electoral manipulation, whereas the opposition is more sensitive to the extent of electoral manipulation than the size of electoral margins. Given these two threats, autocrats optimize the extent of electoral manipulation according to their mobiliza-

tion capabilities. The two-stage models endogenize the dictator's strategic decision of electoral manipulation, based upon these assumptions of the threats. Yet, one may wonder about the extent to which the assumptions are valid. Specifically, protests may occur when electoral margins are small, especially in fraudulent elections, rather than as a result of people's observations on the extent of electoral manipulation. To examine this, I conduct several additional tests. First, I regress the extent of electoral manipulation and the size of electoral margins on leadership turnover and popular protests.[12] A model of leadership turnover shows that leadership turnover is more directly associated with electoral margins than the extent of electoral manipulation (both blatant electoral fraud and majoritarian electoral systems). In contrast, popular protests are correlated more with the extent of electoral manipulation than electoral margins. Therefore, the results suggest that electoral margins are important for the within-regime threat, while the extent of electoral manipulation clarifies people's motivation for protests. Second, I interact the electoral manipulation measures with electoral margins to examine conditional effects. In both models, interaction effects are statistically insignificant. For the protest model, the effect of electoral margins on protests does not change according to the extent of electoral manipulation. Likewise, the effect of electoral fraud on leadership turnover is stable across different levels of electoral margins. These additional tests confirm empirical validity of the underlying assumptions (appendixes B6.1 and B6.2).

## 6.5. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the determinants of two major forms of post-electoral political conflict: leadership turnover and popular protests. I have argued that where autocrats successfully determine the extent of electoral manipulation according to their mobilization capabilities, autocratic elections do not provoke either leadership turnover or popular protests. When dictators are unsuccessful in fully comprehending the electoral dilemma, however, autocratic elections backfire on them. On the one hand, when autocrats undersupply electoral manipulation, it is more likely that they fail to win big or that they may even lose elections to opposition parties,

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12. For presidential elections, I calculate margins of victory as differences in shares of votes between the winner and the runner-up in the first round of elections. For legislative elections, I calculate margins as differences in shares of votes between ruling parties and opposition parties.

both of which may increase the likelihood of a coup d'état. On the other hand, when autocrats oversupply electoral manipulation, elections are more likely to provoke protests. Cross-national statistical analysis provides strong supporting evidence for these hypotheses.

The analysis of this chapter produces several policy implications. First, when dictators embark on reforming elections, one may need to draw attention to the extent to which the regime has an ability to mobilize supporters using economic resources and political organizations, in order to access whether the subsequent free and fair elections are just and adequate as the dictator's tool to stabilize the regime or represent an opportunity to legitimately further democratization. If political reform is being introduced without the backup of these resources, then autocratic elections may constitute a significant chance of leadership turnover. Consequentially, the wider global community may prepare necessary assistance for the subsequent processes of political change.

Second, according to the manner in which autocrats fail to adequately deal with the electoral dilemma, international assistance on post-electoral conflict may require adjustment. For instance, when a reform-minded dictator begins liberalizing elections in an autocracy, opposition parties may need to credibly commit to a deal that they will protect ruling elites' interests after the elections. Without such a deal, ruling elites may be tempted to annul the election results via a coup, leading to yet another autocracy or violent conflict. With the salience of internal threats in mind, international assistance may better be directed to mitigating ruling elites' concerns in this context. On the contrary, when autocrats manipulate elections excessively, the opposition is more likely to resort to organizing the masses: this may well transform into a violent confrontation between the government and the opposition or even into brutal state repression. Indeed, we have ample evidence of this very process. Given that these two patterns of post-electoral political conflict stem from different threats and the decisions that dictators make, election monitoring and democratization assistance need to be tailored differently according to each of these two different scenarios.

The four chapters in part II have investigated the causes and consequences of autocratic elections by cross-national statistical analyses to identify the correlations between the variables of interest. The next two chapters in part III will conduct comparative case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Through the controlled comparison between the two countries, I will posit qualitative and quantitative evidence on the causal mechanisms assumed in the theory of autocratic elections.

# PART III

## Comparative Case Studies

# From Electoral Manipulation to Economic Maneuvering

*Nazarbaev's Kazakhstan*

## 7.1. Introduction

Kazakhstan experienced limited political liberalization for a couple of years after its independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, the nascent democratization efforts in the country were completely reversed beginning in 1995. An intriguing puzzle here is that, although the Kazakh government continued to permit opposition parties to participate in elections after the authoritarian turn, President Nursultan Nazarbaev successfully maintained his rule, overwhelmingly "winning" elections until his abrupt resignation in 2019.[1] Interestingly, electoral fraud had become less blatant and Kazakhstan's electoral system had become more proportional over time between 1995 and 2007. This stands in stark contrast with Kyrgyzstan (see chap. 8), where elections were increasingly designed in a way that yielded significant biases in favor of an authoritarian regime during almost the same period. *Why was Nazarbaev able to continue winning elections overwhelmingly despite the fact that he became less dependent on electoral manipulation?*

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1. To make structured and controlled comparisons with the Akaev regime (1991–2005), which will be examined in chapter 8, I limit the time scope of my case analysis of Kazakhstan from its independence (1991) all the way up to 2007, when the Nazarbaev regime reached the pinnacle of power by the ruling Nur Otan's complete occupation of the seats in the Mazhilis (the lower house).

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I briefly illustrate political processes through which Kazakhstan experienced limited liberalization and transformed into an electoral authoritarian regime. I then describe how Nazarbaev became less dependent on blatant electoral fraud while pursuing the country's electoral system reform wherein the government changed electoral systems from majoritarian electoral systems to proportional representation (PR) systems from the middle of the 1990s to the late 2000s. The third section posits my argument that electoral manipulation became less blatant due to Nazarbaev's ability to mobilize public support from the early 2000s through the distribution of pork and patronage. He dramatically increased his abilities to distribute economic favors to citizens by utilizing natural resource wealth and incorporating local elites' patronage networks through political and fiscal centralization as well as the construction of the dominant party, Nur Otan. Furthermore, by the middle of the 2000s, the opposition had become too weak to be a real option for voters. The fourth section provides systematic quantitative evidence of political business cycles (PBCs) in Kazakhstan, demonstrating that the magnitude of pre-electoral economic maneuvering tended to become larger over time as the government was able to enjoy abundant natural resources, strong disciplinary organizations, and a weak opposition.

## 7.2. Limited Liberalization and Autocratization

### *Limited Liberalization*

Kazakhstan declared independence in December 1991. The collapse of the Soviet Union and national independence prompted the Kazakh president, Nursultan Nazarbaev, to implement political and economic reforms. President Nazarbaev took a series of measures to promote political liberalization. As he stated in a newspaper interview in October 1991, "I see Kazakhstan as a democratic, presidential republic, with a professional parliament, elected on a multiparty basis, and with strong executive power in the center and in the region" (Cummings 2005: 24).

The first constitution of Kazakhstan, which was adopted in January 1993, was indeed more liberal than those of other Central Asian countries such as Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Although it gave the president decisive control over the local governments (Olcott 2002: 96–101), it formally divided the government into three branches: the executive, represented by the large presidential staff; the legislative, embodied in the unicameral

Kazakh Supreme Council, whose representatives were elected on a territorial basis; and the judiciary. Furthermore, the Supreme Council "enjoyed a wide range of formal rights including the right to approve the budget, amend the constitution and elect the constitutional court" (Anderson 1997: 307), and by utilizing the power of the parliamentary institution, legislators had the ability to challenge the president over the issue of economic reforms.

Nazarbaev also allowed the formation of new political parties. For example, the Nevada-Semipalatinsk Movement, Kazakhstan's largest noncommunist public organization during the Glasnost era, transformed itself into an opposition party called the People's Congress of Kazakhstan (NKK) in October 1991. Headed by a Kazakh writer and political activist, Olzhas Suleimenov, the NKK received substantial financial support from big sponsors and private businesses, which provided the party with an independent power base to challenge the president (Isaacs 2011: 58). Moreover, the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan (SPK) was founded in August 1991 as the successor to the Communist Party of Kazakhstan (KPK), which had previously been dissolved by Nazarbaev. After dissolving the KCP, Nazarbaev lost control of the successive party (Olcott 2002: 93), as the SPK consisted of many deputies in the Supreme Soviet anxious about radical economic reforms (see, e.g., Isaacs 2011: 57). Given its large membership and powerful organizational base, the SPK emerged as the strongest oppositional group. With the SPK having turned into the opposition, Nazarbaev himself launched a pro-presidential party, the Union of People's Unity of Kazakhstan (SNEK)—the precursor of the current dominant party, Nur Otan—and included ruling elites who would later play important roles in sustaining his authoritarian rule in the country (Isaacs 2011: 57).

Various social movements were highly active before and after independence.[2] For instance, the aforementioned Nevada-Semipalatinsk Movement was formed in 1989 in an attempt to halt Soviet nuclear testing in the northeastern region of Semipalatinsk (Uyama 2003: 49). The organization encouraged more than a million people to sign petitions demanding to ban nuclear tests in the country's territory, and enormous crowds participated in this group's rallies (Olcott 2002: 90). Moreover, the Kazakh nationalist group (and political party) Alash was established with the slogan "Islam, Turkism, Democracy" and a political agenda supporting the exclusion of the Russians from Kazakhstan. In addition to Alash, three other Kazakh ethni-

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2. For more detailed discussions on the social movements in Kazakhstan, see Zhovits (1999) and Uyama (2003).

cally based groups were launched, namely, the Azat (Freedom) movement, the Zeltoksan (December) National Democratic Party, and the Republican Party of Kazakhstan, each of which had a popular support base divided between Kyzylorda, South Kazakhstan, and Zhambyl Oblasts, respectively. In addition, at least six pro-Russian groups with nationalist and federative agendas were formed, including Edinstvo (Unity), Civic Contact, Democratic Progress, Russkaya Obshina (Russian Community), Russian Center, and Lad. These civic organizations' main goal was the protection of Russian culture. The Russkaya Obshina and the Lad particularly carried out active campaigns for bilingualism and dual citizenship, receiving the bulk of their popular support from North and East Kazakhstan Oblasts, respectively (Jones Luong 2002: 144). Last, minority ethnic groups such as the Koreans and Germans had established cultural centers during Gorbachev's Perestroika era and were quite active and in constant communication with the governments of their external national homelands (Oka 2003: 473).

By 1994, Kazakhstan had developed relatively free and fair media that provided legislators with opportunities to freely convey their opinions to the wider public. Although the two largest official newspapers, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Vesti Kazakhstana*, supported the government's positions, they also reported on the speeches of opposition legislators. The other major independent newspapers were fully reporting the opposition's political campaigns. The largest and most popular of these was *Karavan*, which engaged in reporting corruption scandals. The other major independent newspaper, *Panorama*, covered parliamentary maneuvering as well as social and economic issues (Olcott 2002: 104). Furthermore, Kazakhstan had a few independent radio stations and one large independent television company, the KTK, which also freely broadcasted these issues.

By 1993, Kazakhstan had come to be perceived in the West as one of the least autocratic states in authoritarian Central Asia due to the presence of substantial political competition, a relatively free press, and its commitment to rapid privatization. However, radical marketization policies introduced by Nazarbaev provoked a confrontation between the president and the parliament, which led to the backsliding of the nascent Kazakh democracy. Confronted with increasing legislative resistance, the government pressured the city, raion (region), and oblast (state) soviets (councils) to dissolve in November 1993. Nazarbaev then ordered the Supreme Council to "voluntarily" dissolve itself in December and called for snap elections for the new legislature in March 1994.

Nevertheless, the opposition movements in Kazakhstan were still highly vigorous at the time of the 1994 parliamentary election. Facing strong

opposition during the election campaigns, Nazarbaev resorted to various undemocratic measures to preserve his hegemony. For example, the new parliament had only 177 seats (the Supreme Soviet had 270 seats; Olcott 1995: 263), of which 42 were to be filled from a "state list" from which the president selected legislators. Moreover, electoral districts were drawn in a fashion to guarantee Kazakh pluralities wherever possible (278). Nonetheless, the election results showed that the opposition was still considerably strong; the distinct opposition parties, NKK, SPK, Lad, Azat, and the new Communist Party of Kazakhstan (KPK), occupied a total of 43 seats, which was roughly equal to the number held by the pro-presidential SNEK.

Immediately after the opening of the new parliament, an opposition bloc called Respublika was formed largely by members of Azat, Lad, SPK, and NKK, as well as a few members from the SNEK and the state list. In all, the opposition group controlled at least 40 percent (69 seats) of the parliament and, by some estimates, a slim majority of 90 seats (Bremmer and Welt 1996: 191).

Directing its criticisms toward the government, the members of Respublika particularly opposed the government's radical economic reforms. The opposition's strength was very clear given that members of Respublika passed a vote of no confidence against Prime Minister Sergei Tereshchenko, a champion of radical economic reforms, with a majority of 111 to 28 in May 1994. However, since the constitution did not provide for a vote of no confidence, Nazarbaev declared that Tereshchenko would remain in his position until privatization was completed, a decision that drew more members into the Respublika camp and led to the formation of an opposition bloc called Otan-Otechestvo (Fatherland), which similarly called for Nazarbaev's resignation (Olcott 2002: 103). By July 1994, the opposition succeeded in overriding Nazarbaev's veto regarding two consumer protection bills. After a scandal over the financial improprieties of two ministers in the Tereshchenko cabinet, Nazarbaev was forced to accept the resignation of the prime minister and his government in mid-October (104).

### Autocratization since 1995

Since Nazarbaev established the second constitution in 1995, the government has strengthened its authoritarian rule. On March 1995, Tatyana Kvyatkovskaya, a journalist and failed candidate in the 1994 election, claimed that the electoral districts had been disproportionately drawn, and legislators therefore represented constituencies of vastly differing sizes. Kvyatkovskaya also charged that the cross-out voting method had enabled

vote counters to accept a single ballot for more than one candidate if the voter had improperly marked his or her ballot. Indeed, more votes were recorded than the number of voters in several districts (Olcott 2002: 110; Cummings 2005: 26). Consequently, the Constitutional Court declared the entire 1994 parliamentary election to be illegal and ordered the dissolution of the parliament.

Ironically, Kvyatkovskaya's court appeal provided Nazarbaev with an opening to redraft the constitution and thus avoid presidential elections. While the parliament was dissolved, he held two nationwide referenda to strengthen his powers and extend his tenure. In April 1995, the first referendum concerning the latter issue attracted a voter turnout of 91.3 percent, of which 95.8 percent voiced their support for extending Nazarbaev's presidential term until 2000 (Olcott 2002: 111). Nazarbaev presented an entirely new constitution for vote in a second referendum held at the end of August of the same year, the result of which further bolstered the president's power.

The second constitution arguably expanded presidential power at the expense of the legislature and judiciary. First, the unicameral legislature was transformed into a bicameral system composed of the Senate and the Mazhilis (the lower house), both of which would be in the hands of Nazarbaev and his inner circle. The president himself would directly appoint seven senators, whereas the remainder would be installed by the oblast council that he controlled. The new constitution also stipulated that the lower house would not be able to initiate legislation and would have to terminate parliamentary deliberation on bills within a month, thus further severely undermining legislative power. Second, the Constitutional Court was abolished and replaced with the Constitutional Council, for which the president, the senate, and the lower house each would select two members to form a total of six members. Moreover, any possibilities for the council to display independence were nullified by a simple tool, the presidential veto.[3]

After the adoption of the second constitution, ruling parties began dominating the parliament by increasing the proportion of their seats all the way up to 2007 (fig. 7.1).[4] When parliamentary elections finally took

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3. For more detailed descriptions of the second constitution, see, e.g., Bremmer and Welt (1996: 193) and Cummings (2000).

4. Figure 7.1 illustrates time-series changes in seat shares rather than vote shares of ruling and opposition parties. Detailed data on vote shares are not available for the 1994 and 1995 elections; thus, seat shares are more useful for the purpose of comparison between the elections. One may think that seat shares are easily biased through electoral systems, and this was the case for Kazakhstan. However, even under SMD systems that bring seat premiums to rul-
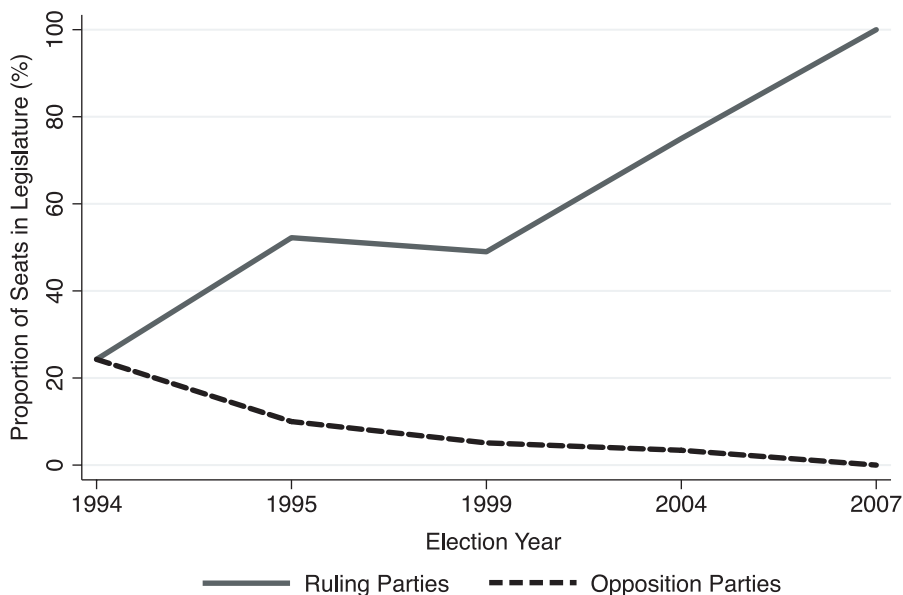
Fig. 7.1. Increasing Dominance of Ruling Parties in Kazakhstan (1994–2007)
*Source:* Olcott (2002); Inter-Parliamentary Union (http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp)

place in December 1995, "candidates were arbitrarily banned; Russians were underrepresented on the candidate list; and Nazarbaev supporters dominated" (Bremmer and Welt 1996: 193). As a result, many opposition parties decided to boycott the election due to accusations of electoral fraud (Bremmer and Welt 1996; Oka 2003: 474). The proportion of seats held by pro-presidential parties in the lower house gradually rose. In the 1995 legislative elections, the revamped SNEK, now called the Party of People's Unity of Kazakhstan (PNEK), and the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan (DPK) won 52 percent of all seats, a proportion more than two times that of their seats in the 1994 election.

The ruling parties experienced some realignment between the 1995 and 1999 elections. The Otan Party was established by coalescing between pro-presidential parties like the PNEK, the DPK, and others to support Nazarbaev's electoral campaigns in the 1999 presidential elections. Two other new pro-presidential parties, the Civic Party of Kazakhstan and the Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan, were also created before the 1999 parlia-

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ing parties, ruling parties in Kazakhstan could not be sufficiently dominant in the late 1990s, thus suggesting that they were much weaker than those in the 2000s.

mentary elections. However, despite those efforts, the ruling parties (Otan, Civic, and Agrarian) occupied only the same total of seats in 1999 as in the post-1995 parliament (49 percent of all seats).

In 2003, the president's daughter Dariga Nazarbaeva and her husband, Rakhat Aliev, launched a new pro-presidential party called Asar (All Together). After the Civic and Agrarian Parties formed a pre-electoral coalition called the Agrarian-Industrial Union of Workers (AIST) bloc, three ruling parties joined together prior to the 2004 parliamentary elections (Otan, Asar, and the AIST bloc). Although the ruling parties suffered mutual competition within and between the parties in each electoral district, they dramatically increased their seats as a result of the 2004 elections (75 percent).

In September 2006, Otan merged with Asar. Three months later, the Civic and Agrarian Parties announced that they would also join the Otan Party, which resulted in the foundation of the dominant party, Nur Otan, of which Nazarbaev proclaimed he would serve as the party leader. In the August 2007 parliamentary election, the newly established dominant party occupied all of the seats in the lower house, thus completing the process of gradual dominance of the legislature by ruling parties in the country.

In contrast, opposition parties had gradually lost their presence in the Kazakhstan parliament. In the 1994 parliamentary elections, they obtained as many seats as the ruling parties (24 percent); however, their proportion of seats was reduced from 24 percent to 10 percent in the elections of the following year. In the 1999 legislative elections, the two main opposition parties, the KPK (led by the former presidential candidate, Serikbolsyn Abdildin) and the Republican People's Party (led by the former prime minister, Akezhan Kazhegeldin), obtained only three seats and one seat, respectively, thus leading to further declines in their political influence in the legislature. In the 2004 parliamentary elections, the Ak Zhol Party (Bright Path), which had been created as a result of the strong opposition movement Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DVK) launched in 2002, obtained a single seat in the parliament although there were several other opposition parties participating in the elections. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, which were the country's first to be held under a pure PR system with a 7 percent electoral threshold, all opposition parties failed to obtain a sufficient number of votes to make it into the parliament.

## 7.3. Electoral Manipulation in Kazakhstan

As discussed in the previous section, party system formation in Kazakhstan was a process through which ruling parties gradually dominated the

parliament and opposition parties incrementally lost their political influence. However, the electoral dominance of the ruling parties cannot simply be attributed to the authoritarian government's exclusive reliance on blatant electoral fraud. Nor can it solely be explained by the president's maintenance of electoral systems in favor of ruling coalitions. Kazakhstan is an electoral authoritarian regime in which elections fall far short of international standards for democratic elections. Although the government has sometimes resorted to violent measures to repress opposition groups, the regime has become less contingent on repressive, fraudulent tools to gain big election wins. Moreover, the president even changed the country's electoral system from a single-member district (SMD) based system (1994–2006) to a pure PR system (2007), which resulted in bringing a smaller pro-regime seat premium. As Schatz (2009) rightfully argued, the Nazarbaev regime can be more accurately depicted as a "soft authoritarian regime" rather than a highly repressive, closed authoritarianism such as those of neighboring Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Schedler (2013: 4–5) similarly referred to Kazakhstan as one of the typical electoral authoritarian regimes. In this section, I demonstrate that the government became less dependent on blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation—at least in comparison to its reliance on these measures in the 1990s.

### Blatant Electoral Fraud

Hyde and Marinov's (2012) NELDA dataset shows that all Kazakhstan elections since independence until 2007 were competitive in the sense that opposition parties and multiple candidates were allowed to participate, thus suggesting that the country was an electoral authoritarian regime during the period. Table 7.1 depicts time-series changes in the extent of blatant electoral fraud in parliamentary and presidential elections between 1995 and 2007. The level of blatant electoral fraud in the 1995 parliamentary elections, as the elections after limited liberalization, is relatively lower (6) than in the 1999 elections, which faced the most severe electoral manipulation (9). Since 1999, the degree of electoral fraud gradually became less extensive up to 2007.

The 1999 elections were marked by the most extensive electoral fraud during the time period under study.[5] The elections were minimally competitive in the sense that ten political parties and 547 candidates were reg-

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5. In table 7.1, I primarily rely upon OSCE final reports on elections, which are also often referred to by the U.S. Department of State's country reports, to qualitatively assess changes in the extent of electoral fraud in Kazakhstan (1995–2007). The 1994 legislative elections are not included because neither of the above-mentioned reports was available.

TABLE 7.1. Blatant Electoral Fraud in Kazakhstan (1995–2007)

| | 1995 Par | 1999 Pres | 1999 Par | 2004 Par | 2005 Pres | 2007 Par |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competitive elections | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Election violence | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pre-electoral cheating | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Election-day cheating | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Problems on electoral law | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Overall electoral fraud | 6 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 5 |

*Source:* Kelley (2012); OSCE (2005, 2007); U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/).

*Note:* Data for each election were accessed via Kelley's (2012) *Quality of Elections Data* and the author's own coding for the 2005 and 2007 elections. Each component has four scales (0 = no problems; 1 = minor problems; 2 = moderate problems; 3 = significant problems). I aggregated each component to assess overall election fraud. "Par" represents parliamentary elections, whereas "Pres" stands for presidential elections.

istered for the single-mandate constituencies; however, an OSCE report identified extensive electoral fraud. First, electoral cheating was widely observed during election campaigns; international observers found numerous practices of proxy voting among regime supporters particularly in rural areas (OSCE 2000: 16). Official election activities were often mingled with election campaigns conducted by the Otan Party (13). Unfair campaign practices by ruling parties were closely associated with the government's domination of media. For example, Khabar, a large, state-controlled TV station operated by Dariga Nazarbaeva, played an important role in biasing broadcasting in favor of the ruling parties. Otan, which obtained only 31 percent of seats in the 1999 parliamentary election, enjoyed nearly 60 percent of the media coverage (14). Election commissions had become more effective in presiding over election processes compared with past elections, and electoral bias was also imposed through lower-level election commissions, whose members were overrepresented by the ruling parties. As a result, only 70 percent of polling stations were positively assessed for voting procedures and less than half were considered as fair in counting procedures (17–18). As I will discuss later, these evaluations were much worse than those for the elections during the 2000s.

Another irregularity in the elections was the widespread nonviolent intimidation of the opposition. For instance, former prime minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, who had declared his intention to stand for the presidential elections on the basis of his high popularity, was disqualified as a candidate and detained in Moscow on dubious charges of money laundering and other criminal activities (Isaacs 2011: 68). As a result, his new opposition party, the Republican People's Party, was forced to withdraw

from the party-list PR section of the election and ended up obtaining only one seat in a SMD in the parliamentary election.

Second, the government and ruling parties were highly repressive from the mid- to late 1990s, during which time opposition parties were often violently intimidated and prevented from conducting effective electoral campaigns. One of Kazhegeldin's secretaries was suddenly beaten by unknown assailants during one campaign, and Kazhegeldin himself was also the subject of a failed assassination attempt (Furman 2006: 228). According to a political scientist,

> These five years [1996–2001] were really difficult, really nightmare for the opposition in Kazakhstan. This was a time of stagnation. . . . When they [opposition activists] wanted to organize protests in the 1999 presidential elections, the activists' doors of flats were not able to open. This is how the regime was intimidating the opposition. There were threats, and they [ruling parties] were even throwing drugs to opposition figures' houses in order to be able to prosecute them. This menu of intimidation, a tool to crack down on the opposition, was so huge at that time that the regime was extremely repressive by the end of the 1990s. (author's interview with a political scientist [#11])

Likewise, looking back on the 1990s, an opposition political activist stated that

> he [Nazarbaev] was using administrative resources to *threaten* political movements on behalf of the government. . . . There were intimidations, not allowing to organize party meetings with voters. At that time, it wasn't always directly against opposition parties, but sometimes they employed repressive measures. I remember how they switched off electricity in a building where we were gathering. They were preventing opposition parties and groups from campaign activities. They had a variety of methods to do that. (author's interview with a political activist [#20])

Compared to those of the late 1990s, elections in the mid-2000s became less fraudulent when Kazakhstan held three national elections (2004 and 2007 parliamentary elections and 2005 presidential elections). According to table 7.1, total scores of electoral fraud in the 2004, 2005, and 2007 elections are 7, 7, and 5, respectively. First, the parliament's adoption of

amendments of the electoral law in March 2004 was assessed by the OSCE as embodying considerable progress, although further improvements were required in order to align with international criteria on democratic elections (OSCE 2004a: 5). The legal framework in the subsequent 2007 parliamentary elections did not exhibit any significant progress in further improvement of the 2004 electoral law (OSCE 2007: 7);[6] however, it was no worse than that of 1999. The *Quality of Elections Data* (QED) reflects the improvements in the electoral law by evaluating the 2004 and 2007 parliamentary elections as 2 (intermediate fraud) in the section "legal problems on electoral law," which can be compared with 3 (major fraud) in the same category for the 1999 parliamentary elections (see also OSCE 2004b: 1; 2007: 7).

Among the many improvements in the 2004 electoral law, important changes to prevent ruling parties from relentlessly using fraud included (1) the prohibition of undue interference by the authorities in the work of the election commissions;[7] (2) the prohibition of unauthorized persons at polling stations; (3) greater observer access to the entire election process and their receipt of relevant election documents; (4) posting of election results protocols in precinct and district election commissions for public scrutiny; (5) stronger efforts to provide equal conditions for candidates during the election campaign; (6) procedures for the compilation of voter lists and verification of their accuracy; and (7) expansion of the list of prohibited activities that could interfere with the election process (OSCE 2004a: 5–6). Additional improvements in the electoral law were applied to the 2007 parliamentary elections. For instance, a previous provision banning public meetings between the end of electoral campaigns and the publication of final election results was removed from the electoral law amended in December 2006.

However, significant parts of the law remained out of accord with international standards of democratic elections. The electoral law still denied the "suffrage right of a citizen 'who has a prior conviction not cancelled or withdrawn,' regardless of the seriousness of the crime" (OSCE 2007: 7). The revised constitution in May 2007 added a provision stating that eligible electoral candidates must have been permanent residents in Kazakhstan for

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6. The OSCE reported that "despite a constructive dialogue with the authorities since 2006, recommendations to improve the legal framework made by the OSCE/ODIHR (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) were, in general, not addressed by the amendment of June 2007."

7. Local authorities' interference in electoral commissions in each oblast was among the most serious problems in the 1999 elections (OSCE 2000: 2).

at least ten years. "Such a long time period can constitute an unreasonable restriction on the right to seek public office" (8). Moreover, improvements on paper in the electoral law did not necessarily mean that pro-presidential parties and the government abided by the law without any infringements. In fact, there were considerable degrees of pre-electoral and election-day cheating in the 2004, 2005, and 2007 elections. That being said, the QED and the U.S. Department of State country reports suggest that levels of electoral meddling still decreased over time (total cheating scores of the 2004, 2005, and 2007 elections are 5, 4, and 3, respectively).

First, media outlets were still significantly biased toward the ruling parties in all the elections, and far from equal media access was stipulated in the electoral law, although unlike in the past, there were no reports that media outlets were shut down or journalists were prosecuted in any of the three elections. Moreover, media provided all party leaders with more opportunities to debate political issues during electoral campaigns (OSCE 2004b, 15). In this respect, the OSCE's analysis of media coverage provides evidence indicating that the dominance of media by ruling parties tended to be less heavy-handed and the government was less inclined to resort to intimidation against the opposition media in comparison with the previous elections. In the 2004 parliamentary elections, the major state channel, Kazakhstan TV (Kazakhstan-1), devoted 64 percent of its political news coverage to Otan and 9 percent to the other ruling parties (the AIST bloc and Asar). Likewise, the other well-known station, TV Khabar, aired 44 percent and 31 percent of political news favorable for Asar and Otan, respectively (14–15). In contrast, in the 2007 parliamentary elections, the newly established dominant party, Nur Otan, was covered by only 20 percent on TV Khabar and 17 percent on Kazakhstan TV (OSCE 2007: 18). However, unlike the 2004 elections, these media outlets broadcast political news about the government and the president (30 percent in total), which generated additional bias in favor of the dominant party, given that it was heavily fused with the government (as I discuss later). Even with that in mind, the total media coverage for the dominant party was still significantly less than in previous years at about 50 percent. Considering that Nur Otan was already a far larger party in size and had stronger organizational bases than the preceding Otan and Asar Parties, the difference in media coverage suggests that despite its continuing bias, the government refrained from relying exclusively on media bias to make election results favorable to the ruling parties.

Second, both the voting and counting procedures of all three elections were more positively assessed by the OSCE compared with those of the

1999 elections. The proportions of polling stations where voting procedures were positively assessed were 87 percent (2004 elections), 92 percent (2005 elections), and 94 percent (2007 elections), all of which were significantly improved over the 70 percent positive assessments in the 1999 elections (OSCE 2000, 2004b, 2005, 2007; Bader 2012: 53). Moreover, the percentages of polling stations where counting procedures were positively assessed were 72 percent (2004), 72 percent (2005), and 61 percent (2007). Although the figure for the 2007 elections is somewhat worse than those for the other two years, they were still better than the proportions recorded for the 1999 elections, in which more than half of polling stations were negatively evaluated in terms of vote counting (OSCE 2000).

The registration and participation of the main opposition parties went very smoothly and do not appear to have been highly problematic, thus representing a stark contrast with the experience of Akezhan Kazhegeldin's Republican People's Party, an opposition party in the 1999 elections that was exposed to various obstacles in electoral participation and campaigns. It is true that the government prevented the main opposition from carrying out effective campaigns; however, such cases were relatively rare. Activists from the DVK were detained by police only three times in Almaty city and Pavlodar Oblast, and local authorities inhibited opposition parties from holding campaign events in only a few instances (OSCE 2004b: 11). Main opposition parties like the DVK and the Communist Party in the 2004 elections and the Nationwide Social Democratic Party (OSDP) and Naghyz Ak Zhol (True Bright Path) in the 2007 elections were all registered without any problems. There were hardly any complainants from the opposition parties, and no appeals were filed concerning the registration process (OSCE 2004b: 10; 2007: 14). Nonetheless, according to one of my interviews with a political analyst, the Ak Zhol Party had actually obtained 25–30 percent of total votes; however, the official election results totaled just 12.8 percent, thus indicating continued electoral falsification by the government (author's interview with a political analyst [#8]).

Finally, extensive electoral violence against opposition parties declined significantly. No such incidents were observed during the 2004 parliamentary elections.[8] Although election-time violence was exercised toward pres-

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8. This does not mean that the government did not use violent repression during non-election times. The regime sometimes used violent repression and intimidation against opposition leaders and arrested them, although they tended to be detained for relatively short periods of time. However, the repression was not sufficiently severe to label the regime as one of closed authoritarianism. Furthermore, electoral violence has clearly been reduced in the 2000s, thus indicating that the government may be reluctant to use overt repression during

idential candidate Zharmakhan Tuyakbay during his 2005 campaign, this was a relatively isolated occurrence. And the government did not resort to violent measures or intimidate the opposition parties in the 2007 elections (author's interview with an opposition activist [#20]).

### Institutional Manipulation: From SMD to PR

Meanwhile, the Kazakh government had changed electoral systems in the lower house elections a couple of times since independence. Specifically, the government changed from the SMD-based structure characterized by a high effective electoral threshold (EET) to a lower-threshold PR system (table 7.2 and fig. 7.2). As previously discussed, the first constitution adopted in 1993 provided a 177-seat parliament in which 135 lawmakers were elected based on SMDs and the remaining 42 were not subjected to electoral competition but rather selected by the president from a "state list." In September 1995, the president issued a presidential decree on the electoral law in which the number of seats in the lower house was reduced to 67 and all the lawmakers would be elected under the SMD system. In May 1999, Nazarbaev changed electoral rules by introducing a mixed-member majoritarian system in which 67 lawmakers would be elected in single-mandate constituencies whereas an additional ten members would be determined through a party list via a national PR system with a 7 percent electoral threshold. The 1999 and 2004 parliamentary elections were held under that electoral system. In June 2007, subsequent to the substantial amendments to the constitution made in the previous month, Nazarbaev again revised the electoral law. He initiated a significant change in Kazakhstan's electoral system whereby the government adopted a full PR system by a nationwide party list with the same 7 percent electoral threshold. In sum, the EET in Kazakhstan had decreased since 1994 from 37.5 percent (1994 and 1995; SMD with a state list for the 1994 elections), through 33.5 percent (1999 and 2004; mixed-member majoritarian system; 7 percent threshold for the ten additional members), to 7 percent (2007; a pure PR system with a 7 percent threshold).

   Importantly, majoritarian electoral systems significantly protected the president from losing elections with a landslide to opposition parties. The government designed the 1994, 1995, and 1999 elections such that ruling elites would be able to maintain a dominant position in the legisla-

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election, when the international community scrutinizes the country more closely (Bhasin and Gandhi 2013).

TABLE 7.2. Electoral System Change and Effective Electoral Threshold in Kazakhstan (1994–2007)

|  | 1994 elections | 1995 elections | 1999 elections | 2004 elections | 2007 elections |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SMD | 76% | 100% | 87% | 87% | 0% |
| PR | 0% | 0% | 13% | 13% | 100% |
| *Notes:* | 24% appointed by the president |  | Electoral threshold (7%) | Electoral threshold (7%) | Electoral threshold (7%) |

*Note:* In the 1994 elections, 24 percent of lawmakers in the lower house were selected by the president via a "state list."

ture. Selecting forty-two legislators via no electoral competition (in the 1994 parliamentary elections) and electoral manipulation (particularly in the 1999 elections) did contribute to preventing landslide victories for the opposition camp during this period (author's interview with a political analyst [#4]). Owning to the pro-regime seat premium under SMD systems, the ruling elites side received more seats than vote shares. Although vote shares for each party and candidate in the 1994 elections were not formally documented and published, the Central Election Commission of Kazakhstan published vote shares of elected candidates in each electoral district of the 1995 elections, which enables us to estimate the extent to which ruling elites received seat premiums (Tsentralnaya Izbiratelnaya Komissiya Respubliki Kazakhstan 2010). According to the data, average vote shares of elected candidates were 61 percent in the 1995 elections, whereas the ruling camp (including pro-regime independents) occupied approximately 80 percent of parliamentary seats, thus indicating that the government was enjoying an approximately 19 percent seat premium under the SMD system.

The SMD portion of the electoral system also provided large seat premiums to ruling elites in the 1999 parliamentary elections. The ruling parties and independents who were mostly pro-presidential (Olcott 2002: 252) obtained 80.6 percent of seat shares with 61.7 percent of vote shares, whereas the main opposition party, the KPK, obtained only 3.9 percent of seat shares despite earning 17.7 percent of total votes (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001: 420–23). Thus, the SMD systems appear to have undercounted opposition parties' votes when translating votes into seats in the parliament.

In the 2004 elections, the ruling parties and pro-regime independents became stronger and increased their vote shares to 79 percent under the
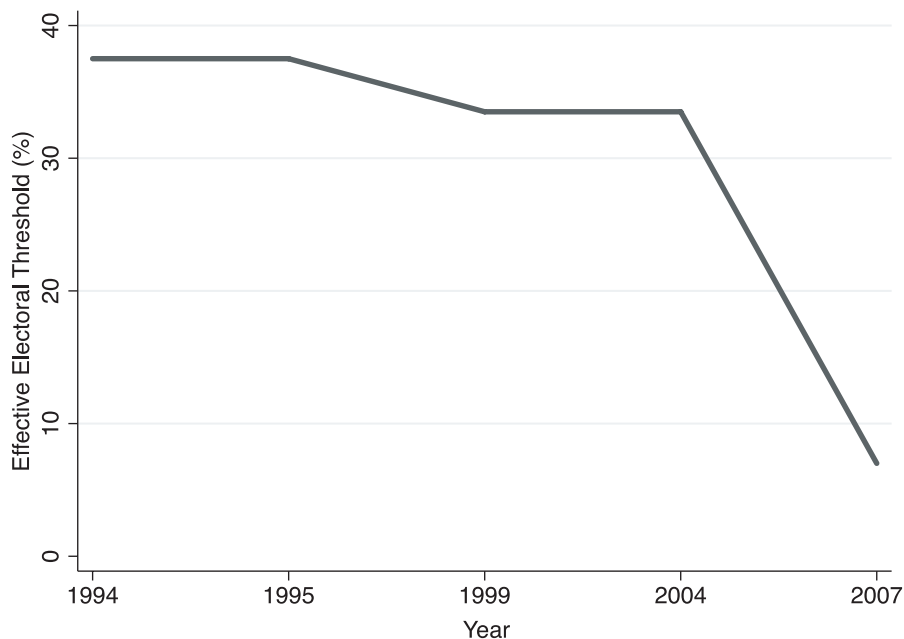
Fig. 7.2. Effective Electoral Thresholds in Kazakh Parliamentary Elections (1994–2007)

SMD system,[9] thus resulting in the occupation of all the seats determined under SMD. Moreover, ruling parties received 21 percent more seat shares than their vote shares, which is a considerably large seat premium.

After the adoption of the PR system ahead of the 2007 legislative elections, the gap between shares of votes and seats decreased significantly. This suggests that PR systems brought smaller pro-regime seat premiums toward the governing parties. Having obtained all of the seats determined by the elections (98 seats), Nur Otan scored an overwhelming electoral victory with 88.41 percent of total votes.[10] Even under the pure PR system, the dominant party received a favorable bias toward its seat shares (11.59 percent); however, the bias was only half that of the previous elections. The gap between votes and seats in the new electoral system derived more from the fact that, in contrast to the 1999 and 2004 elections, when some oppo-

9. The calculation is based on district-level election data from Nurmukhamedov and Chebotarev (2005: 47–49). As I could not find vote shares of the second-round voting, I used proportions of vote shares obtained by the three ruling parties and independents.

10. The figure was taken from the website of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan (election.kz).

sition parties had succeeded in meeting the 7 percent electoral threshold, none of them, whether radical and moderate, were able to do so in the 2007 elections.

However, the PR system also yielded several positive effects that could be considered beneficial for the regime. First, voter turnout in parliamentary elections increased after the adoption of the PR system, enhancing the demonstration effects of elections. Although voter turnout in the first election after independence was relatively high with 73.5 percent, the numbers later decreased, including 62.5 percent and 54.29 percent turnouts in 1999 and 2004, respectively (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001: 420; Nurmukhamedov and Chebotarev 2005:11). Interestingly, once Kazakhstan switched to the PR system, voter turnout bounced back dramatically, reaching 68.41 percent in the 2007 election. According to Nazarbaev himself, the PR system "provided a real reflection of the distribution of political forces and the valid will of the population" (Isaacs 2011: 90).

Second, the opposition built a pre-electoral coalition to compete in elections under the SMD system. For instance, in the 2004 elections, two outright opposition parties, the KPK and the DVK, forged a bloc to coordinate their election campaigns (Isaacs 2011: 89–90). However, prior to the 2007 elections under the new PR system, serious internal divisions had emerged in the opposition camp, and opposition parties failed to unite for the elections, which then resulted in the failure of obtaining seats in the legislature. Although a couple of factors seemingly contributed to the failure of opposition coordination in the 2007 elections (discussed later), the elections with the PR system did not observe a robust pre-electoral opposition coalition.

## 7.4. The Strengthening of Nazarbaev's Mobilization Capabilities

The previous sections have shown that, although Nazarbaev became less dependent on electoral manipulation techniques—both blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation—between 1994 and 2007, he successfully maintained overwhelming victories and kept most ruling elites in line with the regime after the elections. As numerous extant studies on politics in Kazakhstan have clarified, the regime continued to employ blatant electoral fraud to a certain extent. Particularly in the late 1990s, the government relied heavily on the disproportionality feature of the SMD system, as well as extensive electoral cheating, blatant election violence, and the manipulation of the electoral law. However, given that the extent of blatant

electoral fraud gradually declined and the government switched electoral systems from a pure SMD system to a full PR system, electoral manipulation tactics alone are unable to explain the dictator's electoral dominance in the country. This poses important puzzles concerning authoritarian elections: *Why did the president become less reliant on blatant electoral fraud? Why did the regime give up the seat premiums under SMD systems and decide to adopt the PR system?*[11]

I argue that an answer can be found in President Nazarbaev's successful enhancement of his mobilization capability, which cements political support from ruling elites and the citizenry. Since the 1995 parliamentary elections, ruling parties increasingly improved their vote shares in the lower house (fig. 7.4a). In particular, from 1999 until 2007, the growing mobilization capabilities of ruling parties can be well observed by comparing vote shares in the PR portion of the electoral systems in the 1999, 2004, and 2007 legislative elections. As the PR part is under a nationwide electoral district without any gerrymandering and malapportionment, vote shares are relatively comparable. That the mobilization capability of ruling parties during the 1999 parliamentary elections was still weak is well illustrated by the fact that vote shares of the ruling parties were smaller under the PR portion (ten seats). They obtained only 54.75 percent of total votes under the PR system (Ashimbaev and Khlyupin 2008: 840): Otan scored just 30.89 percent, whereas the other two ruling parties, Agrarian and Civic, garnered 12.63 percent and 11.23 percent, respectively. In the 2004 parliamentary elections, the three ruling parties (Otan, Asar, and the AIST bloc) obtained 79.06 percent of total votes under the PR system determining ten seats, thus suggesting that ruling parties significantly enhanced their mobilization power by approximately 25 percent compared with the

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11. One alternative explanation might be that, because by the late 2000s Kazakhstan had already been a closed authoritarian regime in which opposition forces were severely repressed by the government, Nazarbaev no longer needed to rig elections. The government's continued use of some repressive measures during non-electoral periods in the 2000s contributed to weakening opposition parties. However, it has also been argued that Kazakhstan is far from being a highly repressive authoritarian regime like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, where opposition parties are barred and completely excluded (e.g., Schatz 2009; Hale 2015). During the period under study, elections had formally provided multiple options other than ruling parties, which is an important criterion to define electoral authoritarianism (Hyde and Marinov 2012; Kinne and Marinov 2013). In this circumstance, I suggest that in addition to the role of state repression, the opposition's strategic failure to coordinate their actions before elections contributes to explaining variations in electoral manipulation in the country. Moreover, in addition to opposition strengths, there are other important factors such as financial resources and the government's organizational strengths to explain electoral manipulation. I also consider the government's strategy of buying off people's support through such "soft" measures.

1999 elections. In the 2007 legislative elections, Nur Otan achieved an overwhelming victory with 88.41 percent of total votes, thus indicating that their mobilization power had increased by about 10 percent. Given the aforementioned findings that blatant electoral fraud tended to be less extensive, growing vote shares in the portion of PR systems suggest that the president had successfully gained higher, nationwide mobilization capabilities from 1999 to 2007.

How did Nazarbaev succeed in improving his mobilization capability? This section demonstrates the process in which that became possible by focusing on the president's mobilization capabilities through extensive economic distribution. In particular, I focus on the following three elements that are closely related to the president's mobilization capabilities, namely, (1) natural resource wealth, (2) centralizing disciplinary organizations, and (3) the opposition strength. I argue that the president was able to reduce the need for manipulating elections with blatant electoral fraud and the adoption of SMD systems during the aforementioned period because he was able to rely more on the efficient distribution of material benefits toward citizens over time.

### *Natural Resource Wealth as a Source of Economic Maneuvering*

Similar to the other postcommunist countries, Kazakhstan had suffered a serious economic decline in the immediate years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. To recover from the recession, the Kazakh government adopted a major economic strategy to liberalize its trade policy and become part of the international market. Particularly after 1995, when most firms except for large corporations had been privatized,[12] the country began to lower tariffs and export natural resources such as oil, gas, and minerals at higher volumes. Subsequent to 1999, when the international oil price rapidly increased, natural resource sectors substantively boosted the economy, which allowed the country to keep almost two-digit economic growth until 2007 (Pomfret 2006: 7). Figure 7.4b shows that oil-gas value per capita grew by fourteen times between 1998 (US$207) and 2008 (US$2,975). This drastic increase in natural resource wealth was largely driven by a rapid surge in international oil prices during the same period (fig. 7.4c).

The economic recovery induced by exporting natural resources greatly enhanced the state resources available to the president. Figure 7.3 shows

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12. On the processes of economic reform in Kazakhstan, see Pomfret (2006).
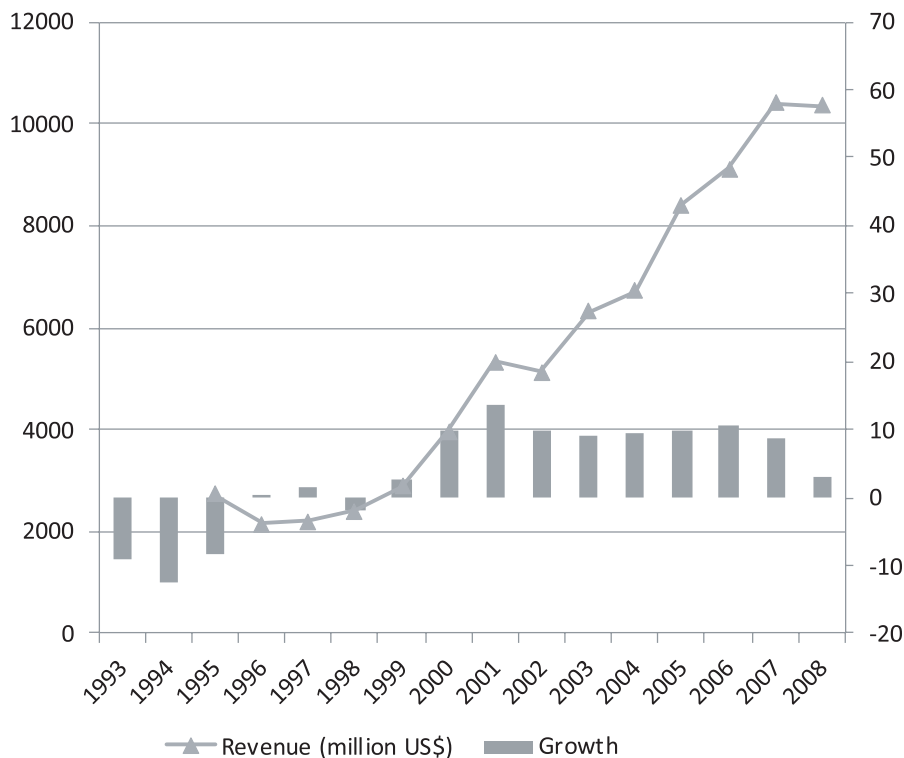
Fig. 7.3. Economic Growth and Fiscal Revenues in Kazakhstan (1993–2008)
*Source:* International Monetary Fund, *IMF Country Report (1993–2008); World Development Indicators* (1993–2008, https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators).
*Note:* The left vertical axis denotes revenue (million US$), whereas the right vertical axis represents economic growth (%).

that the government increased fiscal revenues with impressive speed between 1995 and 2008, when they reached US$10 billion, or five times the total revenues in 1995. Growing financial resources, mostly achieved by rich natural resource wealth, dramatically enhanced the government's ability to extensively distribute pork and patronage to voters.

During nascent years after independence, the president was not fully in charge of these resources, as the country's energy sector, including the state oil and gas company Kazakhstanmunaigaz, was the prerogative of the Ministry of Oil and Gas (Hoffman 2000: 281). Most natural resources in Kazakhstan are concentrated in the western regions, and local elites maintained considerable control over natural resource management (Ostrowski

## (a) Pro-Regime Politicians' Vote Share

SMD          Mixed System          PR

Pro-regime vote share (%)

1995          2000          2005          2008

## (b) Oil-Gas Value per capita

SMD          Mixed System          PR

Oil-gas value per capita

1995          2000          2005          2008

## (c) International Oil Price (Constant 2000 USD)

Oil price (US Dollars)

1995          2000          2005          2008

Year
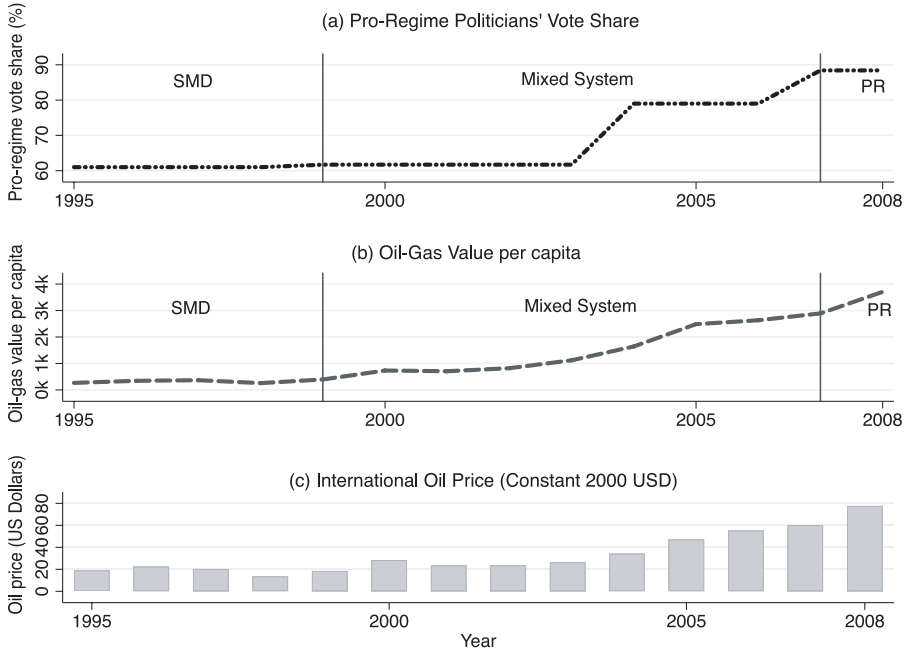
Fig. 7.4. Electoral Performance and Natural Resource Wealth in Kazakhstan
*Source:* Author data; Ross (2011).
*Note:* Oil-gas value per capita is calculated by multiplying the country's total oil-gas production by
the constant 2000 oil-gas price and dividing it by total population.

2010). The failure to seize control of the country's natural resources, as
well as their relative shortages in earlier periods, made it difficult for the
president to use oil money for the purpose of sufficient distribution.

Nazarbaev was under pressure from the internal elites in both the minis-
try and the oil-rich western regions, who aspired to seize full control of the
industry and increase their political influence in the central government.
In particular, ruling elites, who had ascended their career ladders within
the oil industry during the Soviet era and thus were closely connected to
indigenous oil enterprises and the ministry, attempted to strengthen their
grip on natural resource sectors. A case in point is the appointment and
dismissal of Ravil Cherdabaev as the minister of oil and gas. Born in oil-
rich Atyrau Oblast into a family whose members had worked in oil enter-
prises since the beginning of the twentieth century, Cherdabaev was one
of the most influential "oil men." Having taken over the Ministry of Oil
and Gas, he planned to create a vertically integrated oil company, which

he would monitor. "This plan, if successfully executed, would spell a significant degree of control over the republic's most important industry and allow the ministry to regain the authority" (Ostrowski 2010: 37). Fearing the growing influence of Cherdabaev, Nazarbaev forced him to step down in October 1994.

To better exploit this source of wealth, Nazarbaev began to centralize the management of natural resource sectors, thereby facilitating the efficient distribution of patronage for his political purposes. To prevent the indigenous "oil men" from dominating the industry, Nazarbaev accelerated the privatization of the oil sector by introducing foreign direct investment. As a result, "by the end of the 1990s, Kazakhstan's oil and gas industry no longer reflected its indigenous roots" (Jones Luong and Weinthal 2010: 259). Prominent politicians such as Kazhegeldin, as well as wealthy businessmen, emerged in strength as a result of the large profits yielded by the privatization of state-owned companies and also helped to establish the DVK. In an attempt to contain strong opponents without harming the privatization process, Nazarbaev decided to take charge of the oil sector himself. In March 1997, he signed a decree dissolving the Ministry of Oil and Gas and other related state committees and established in their place KazakhOil, the national oil and gas company (Ostrowski 2010: 47–48). By transferring many of the ministry's functions to KazakhOil, which presided over contracts with foreign companies, Nazarbaev successfully strengthened his control over the country's oil industry (a sector that provides an estimated 37 percent of state revenues), taking it firmly within his own presidential apparatus and away from the executive powers of Prime Minister Kazhegeldin (Hoffman 2000: 282).

In making KazakhOil work as a political machine through which he was able to cement political support for himself, Nazarbaev began to construct direct patron-client relationships with other ruling elites and his family members within the newly founded national oil company. Nazarbaev's close ally Nurlan Balgimbaev was installed as the president of KazakhOil, and Nazarbaev's son-in-law Timur Kulibaev became a financial director and vice president (Ostrowski 2010: 49). Nazarbaev also recruited many young technocrats to the oil company who did not have close connections with the oil-rich regions and thus were loyal to the president (49–50).

President Nazarbaev and his ruling parties were able to spend vast amounts of oil money for electoral purposes by utilizing the centralized management of the oil industry and dramatically increasing natural resource wealth after 2000. Analyzing the 1999 elections, Hoffman (2000:

287) succinctly points out the likely connection between oil resources and electoral processes in the elections when suggesting the importance of KazakhOil as an informal political organization:

> Kazakhoil's political importance stems not only from the strategic nature of petroleum in Kazakhstan; the organization also serves an important budgetary role for the Presidency. Politically prioritized projects, such as the construction of Kazakhstan's new capital, Astana, and the financing of early presidential elections, require huge amounts of capital, yet are not officially funded from the republican budget. It is widely rumored that Kazakhoil has been used as a tool for redirecting state financing to such off-budget items. If true, this would help to explain not only the funding sources of these activities, but the reluctance by top oil officials to open Kazakhoil to privatization, which would require more transparent operations and bookkeeping. It may also serve as a partial explanation for why Kazakhoil through October 1998 had only returned a total of $2.3 million to the state budget—fully 14 times less than the anticipated amount.

In the mid-1990s, both central and local authorities possessed a very limited ability to finance pensions, utilities, health care, and other fiscal policies because serious economic decline a couple of years after the collapse of the Soviet Union had significantly deprived the government of its fiscal power (author's interview with a political activist [#29] who had been working in a local government during the 1990s). However, a great deal of anecdotal evidence indicates that the government and ruling parties distributed economic favors to voters in the 2000s when natural resources dramatically enriched state coffers (author's interview with an officer of the Soros-Foundation [#2] and a political analyst [#9]). Rakhat Aliev, a son-in-law of Nazarbaev who fell from power and defected from the regime in 2007, criticized the president and alleged that Nur Otan used US$10 billion from a "secret fund" to carry out electoral campaigns prior to the 2007 legislative elections.[13]

Large-scale pre-electoral economic maneuvering does not necessarily mean that the government alleviated economic inequality among citizens

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13. Radio Free Europe /Radio Liberty. "Aliev Urges Election Ban For Kazakh Presidential Party" (17 August 2007, available at https://www.rferl.org/a/1078211.html).

by engaging in extensive public goods provisions covering every citizen in an equal manner. However, it is also difficult to deny that widespread popular support derived from the provision of pork and patronage that played a crucial role in the electoral victories of the ruling party along with blatant electoral fraud and manipulation of electoral systems. Sharipova (2018) concluded that access to state resources such as public jobs, high-quality public hospitals, and state housing was largely determined by close connections with powerful and wealthy people.[14] The government mainly targeted those who were most likely to vote for the ruling parties after having received various economic benefits from the government, including government officials; doctors in public hospitals; staff, teachers, and professors in public schools; and elderly people dependent upon public pensions. The government also encouraged heads of schools, hospitals, and universities to mobilize votes for the ruling parties, often in return for increases in salaries, bonuses, pensions, and various other accommodations (author's interview with a political analyst [#4]). For example, one opposition activist, who had been working as a deputy in a local legislature, succinctly described the system:

> I myself was a deputy and I know this process. . . . The thing is administrative resources. Let's say we're holding an election in a village. This is especially true in small villages, home to 1,000 people. . . . Before the election, the mayor of the village collects headmasters, all who work in the state budget section, as doctors, or in small and medium-sized businesses and those who can get access to credit and tax commitments. And, they hold meetings and say, "we need to ensure people will be participating in the election and also they have to vote for us." (author's interview with a political activist [#20])

The Kazakh government employed several distribution strategies before elections to garner votes from citizens,[15] and those who voted for the governing parties received various types of material benefits. First, the government increased public spending by raising salaries for public officials and by implementing new education and social policies prior to elections to buy off their support (Kendall-Taylor 2012). For example, the cen-

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14. Sharipova (2018) used survey data taken in 2013 and conducted qualitative case studies on health care and housing policy in Kazakhstan.

15. I provide systematic quantitative evidence of these PBCs in Kazakhstan in section 7.5.

tral government allocated US$2 billion to raise salaries for more than one hundred thousand professionals at central and local governments before the 2012 parliamentary elections, which resulted in an increase in wages by about 20–30 percent countrywide (author's interview with an economist [#25]; *Tengri News*, December 26, 2011). In the run-up to the 2007 legislative elections, the government announced that they would increase wages of public servants, and real wages had indeed annually increased by 30 percent in the election year, which was about twice as large as wage increases in the preceding nonelection year in 2006 (17.3 percent) (OECD 2011).

Second, the government often raised pensions in election years as a means to appeal to elderly people. For example, pensioners, who made up an eighth of the country's total population of sixteen million, continuously enjoyed annual pension increases from 2009 to 2011. In nonelection years (2009 and 2010), pension increases were 25 percent, whereas they were raised to 30 percent in the 2011 election year—the presidential election was held in April 2011 and the parliamentary election was held in January 2012 (author's interview with an economist [#25]). "It is the retired people that support Nur Otan because they think this is the party doing something beneficial for them. They think the leader of Nur Otan, Nazarbaev, is the only person who can keep political stability in Kazakhstan. . . . Because many in the old generation as well as the middle-aged generation still believe that Nazarbaev brings stability, they also think Nur Otan is a real powerful instrument to keep stability and development" (author's interview with a political analyst [#4]).

Third, as many people became more dependent on state resources in terms of salaries, pensions, and loans, it became difficult for them to not vote for the governing parties. Beneficiaries knew that if they did not vote for the governing parties and such behavior was detected by the authorities, they would likely be deprived of income sources such as public jobs, tax exemptions, and pensions (author's interview with a political activist [#18]). As a political analyst who had been working in a public university pointed out:

> Public employees—teachers in schools, professors in universities and doctors in hospitals—are mobilized to vote for ruling parties. During election campaigns, these institutions not only ask their staff to vote for Nur Otan, but sometimes they threaten employees by saying "if you do not vote for Nur Otan, then there would be some measures, some implications for you, even being fired from your institution." (author's interview with a political analyst [#4])

## Increasingly Strengthened Disciplinary Organizations

Kazakhstan was highly decentralized in real terms until the end of the 1990s; however, the country subsequently began to become more centralized financially and politically. A first dimension is fiscal centralization. Although the second constitution stipulates that Kazakhstan has a centralized government, de facto fiscal decentralization was advanced in the 1990s, as decision-making power on economic and social policies was transferred from the central government to local governments in order to enhance their ability to respond to the demands of local populations. Moreover, although the central government officially had the sole authority to collect tax, regional governments in fact seemed to have wielded considerable discretionary power in tax collection during the 1990s (Jones Luong 2004). Having interviewed state officials in regional governments at the end of the 1990s, Jones Luong (188–89) reported that directives from regional governments tended to be prioritized over those of the central government when the two conflicted.

However, the tide of fiscal decentralization began to be reversed in the 2000s (author's interview with an economist [#6] and a political analyst [#9]), as the central government tightened fiscal control over regional governments via government transfers (Dave 2013). Makhmutova (2005: 287) showed that the central government tended to withdraw more money from Almaty city and oil-rich Mangistau and Atyrau Oblasts to poor, pro-presidential regions such as South Kazakhstan Oblast by 2004. Table 7.3 depicts time-series changes in central government transfers to regional governments between 2001 and 2009. As it shows, regional governments received most of their revenues by taxing local populations in 2001, and only 19.34 percent of total revenues derived from government transfers. However, the amount of the central government transfers had dramatically increased by 2009, when 59.83 percent of regional governments' revenues were subsidized by the state. Their increasing fiscal dependence on the central government encouraged regional governments to be more loyal to the president (author's interview with a political activist [#29]). As Sharipova (2018: 51) cogently explained, "The main problem of the regions is their dependence on the center. The hands and legs of every single akim (local governor) are tied. . . . If an akim is 'good,' then he receives financial resources; if he is not good and if he does not manage to regulate social tension, then he does not receive money from the center. To be a good akim means to be loyal and provide the right and 'appropriate' indicators of socio-economic development. The functions of akims then are to squeeze

TABLE 7.3. Percentage of Central Government Transfers in Total Revenues of Regional Governments

| Region | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aktobe | 13.81 | 14.05 | 15.21 | 27.42 | 44.82 |
| Atyrau | – | 12.04 | 8.96 | 25.44 | 24.41 |
| Akmola | 38.58 | 47.77 | 58.34 | 61.75 | 73.21 |
| East Kazakhstan | 9.43 | 19.06 | 46.54 | 54.72 | 68.73 |
| Jambyl | 43.5 | 56.69 | 66.07 | 68.68 | 81.56 |
| Karagandy | 0.65 | 0.62 | 27.28 | 34.62 | 53.37 |
| Kostanai | 7.12 | 25.56 | 47.13 | 55.9 | 69.67 |
| Kyzyl Orda | 17.73 | 47.53 | 52.17 | 66.19 | 68.34 |
| Mangistau | – | – | 7.09 | 18.93 | 26.8 |
| North Kazakhstan | 31.79 | 39.42 | 61.99 | 67.34 | 77.3 |
| Pavlodar | 4.9 | 2.54 | 20.54 | 31.72 | 47.97 |
| South Kazakhstan | 48.29 | 43.3 | 62.91 | 67.06 | 82.05 |
| West Kazakhstan | 0.04 | 6.12 | 33.4 | 45.44 | 42.51 |
| Astana City | 16.21 | 16.16 | 50.54 | 61.39 | 76.89 |
| Dependence on central government | 19.34 | 25.45 | 39.87 | 49.04 | 59.83 |

*Source:* Sharipova (2018: 51).

money from the center rather than to develop the region." Although regional governments had discretionary power over expenditures such as education, health care, and local economic policies, the center's strong grip on revenues limited the real options that were available to akims.

A second dimension is de facto political centralization. Although the 1995 constitution had already conferred strong presidential powers (as discussed before), a great deal of evidence indicates that Nazarbaev was not as strong in the 1990s as he became in the 2000s. First, the ruling parties tended to be weaker and fractionalized until Nur Otan was founded in December 2006. Figure 7.5 shows the decreasing fractionalization of the ruling parties between 1995 and 2007. The PNEK, the then pro-presidential party that Nazarbaev seemingly aspired to make the dominant party, could not obtain the dominant position amid so many other ruling parties as well as opposition parties in the parliament. In February 1999, eight months before the legislative elections, Otan was established as a result of the merger between the PNEK and several pro-presidential parties, although three other ruling parties remained outside this conglomeration—Asar and the Agrarian and Civic Parties. In fact, these political parties were not necessarily satellite parties completely subject to the president, and they engaged in fierce political competition with each other (Dave 2004: 9). For instance, pointing to this interparty competition in the 2004 parliamentary elections, the leader of the Civic Party, Azat Peruashev, noted that "leaders from Otan
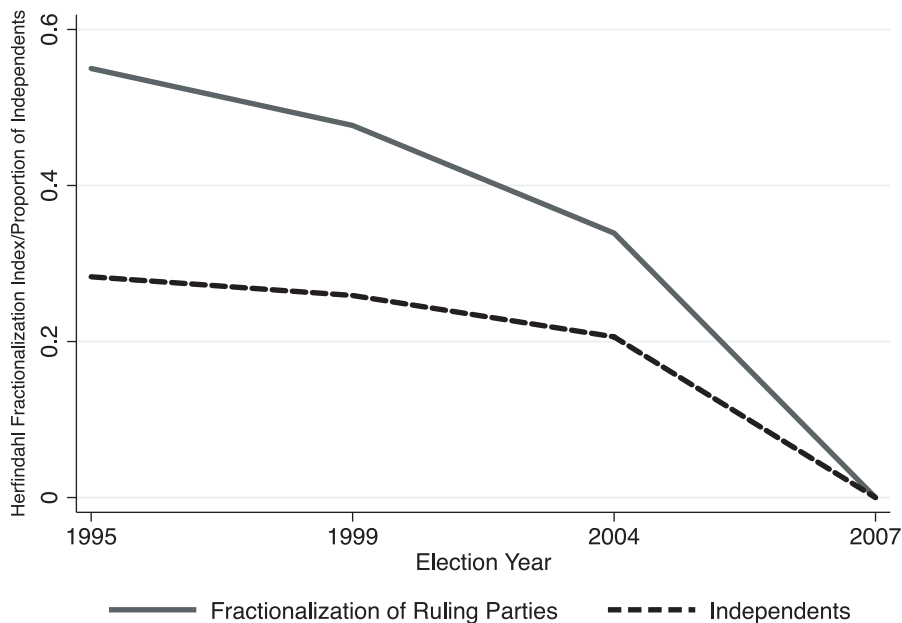
Fig. 7.5. Cohesiveness of Ruling Parties and Proportion of Independents
*Note:* Fractionalization of ruling parties is computed by using the Herfindahl index, where seat shares of ruling parties are squared and then summed up. Higher scores indicate more fractionalized ruling parties.

called me up and said 'deal with your candidate in the region—he is trying to compete with the Otan candidate.'" (Isaacs 2013: 17). However, the ruling parties failed to coordinate their candidates and put more than two candidates per district in 38 out of 67 electoral districts (56 percent of all electoral districts).[16] Asar, which was directed by the president's daughter Dariga Nazarbaeva and her husband Rakhat Aliev, was not only subject to their father but also acted as a powerful independent force arguing for democratic reform (Isaacs 2013: 17). As I detail later, however, Nazarbaev had successfully merged all the ruling parties by December 2006 and founded Nur Otan, the dominant party in the country.

Second, independent politicians had been thriving throughout the 1990s until the mid-2000s; however, they disappeared prior to the 2007 legislative elections. As most independent politicians in Kazakhstan were pro-presidential (Olcott 2002: 252), it would be more accurate to regard

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16. This is the author's calculation based on electoral district data in Nurmukhamedov and Chebotarev (2005).

them as members of the ruling coalition. Nonetheless, independent politicians had their own patron-client networks in their strongholds and thus retained more autonomous power than lawmakers affiliated with ruling parties. Figure 7.5 shows that the proportion of independent legislative politicians changed from 1995 to 2007. The percentage of legislators in the lower house who did not belong to any political party tended to decrease over time. Even in the 2004 parliamentary elections when ruling parties became stronger than in the past elections, 14 of the 18 self-nominated candidates who won seats ran for elections from the regions where they were born and/or started their political careers.[17] Such figures indicate that self-nominated politicians had strong, independent support bases built upon informal connections with local populations via kinship or clan ties (Dave 2004). By the time of the 2007 parliamentary elections, the new electoral law and the adoption of the PR system encouraged independent politicians to be affiliated with political parties, and most joined the dominant party, Nur Otan.

Third, the center-periphery relationship had also changed in the sense that the center tightly controlled regional governments. Since independence, the president has reserved the right to appoint and dismiss akims of oblasts. However, a couple of years after independence, the president began appointing elites from regions as akims in an attempt to achieve a balance of power between the political elites in the center and periphery. For instance, Cummings (2005: 106) reported that in 7 out of 20 cases, former regional executive First Secretaries from the Soviet period became akims soon after independence, and Jones Luong (2002: 287–88) documented that 35 out of 71 akims, or about 50 percent, were regional elites who held a political position in the same region. Schatz (2004) similarly argued that during the 1990s the president appointed regional as well as central elites, focusing much attention on maintaining a good balance among three Zhuz, or clans.

In the early 2000s, however, the president began to centralize akim appointments via several strategies. First, beginning around 1997, more members of the national elite, who had spent through their careers in the central government, were parachuted into regions as akims than ever before (Cummings 2005: 107), whereas regional elites were appointed to central government positions or elected as legislators. Such "national-regional crossovers," combined with the frequent reshuffling of akim appointments

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17. This is the author's calculation based on Tsentralnaya Izbiratelnaya Komissiya Respubliki Kazakhstan (2010), Ashimbaev (2012), and Nyrmukhamedov and Chebotarev (2005).

every two or three years (e.g., Cummings 2005; Junisbai 2010), enabled the president to effectively weaken local elites who had strong support bases in their home regions. Second, it seems that the president implemented not only crossovers between the center and periphery, but also "parallel appointments" of akims between regions (Siegel 2014). By employing these strategies, the president successfully tightened his control over regional governments in order to use them as a political machine for his own purposes.

Lastly, Nazarbaev successfully constructed a dominant party that enabled him to incorporate local elite networks to streamline the technique of economic maneuvering.[18] Built upon the government's fiscal and political centralization, the dominant party Nur Otan was founded in December 2006 as a result of the merger between Otan and three other pro-presidential parties, the Asar, Civic, and Agrarian Parties. Even at its inception, the party's organization was more extensive than the previously existing ruling parties. Currently, it officially claims to have approximately 835,000 party members,[19] a large representation for a country of 17 million people. As of January 2015, the party had 225 regional branches and 5,605 primary party organizations across all the oblasts and the two cities Almaty and Astana.[20]

At the time of its inception, the dominant party did not have strong power independent of the president, but rather served more as an instrument by which Nazarbaev aimed at incorporating various patron-client networks of local elites into a centralized political structure peaked by himself as the president. Therefore, the party's strength derives directly from its close fusion with the centralized government. The party mobilizes supporters using various "administrative resources." As of January 2015, akims in most regions other than Almaty and Karaganda Oblasts also serve as the chairmen of the Nur Otan's regional branches.[21] It is a well-known fact that akims have become main actors in localities and mobilize supporters

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18. The Varieties of Party Identity and Organization (V-Party) (Lührmann et al. 2020) dataset indicates that, compared to the preceding Otan, the Nur-Otan Party increased local organizational strengths (v2paactcom, the degree to which party activists and personnel permanently are active in local communities) while also increasing the personalization of party (v2paind). This suggests that while the party did not have the collective decision-making mechanism among ruling elites, it had been strengthening the grassroots-level party organizations (mostly fused with the state apparatus).

19. The number was drawn from "Baibek obyavil o priostanovke priema v Nur Otan," *Tengri News*, September 11, 2020, https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/baybek-obyyavil-o-priostanovke-priema-v-nur-otan-413855/ (accessed March 1, 2021).

20. The numbers were taken from the website of Nur Otan, http://nurotan.kz/ru/regions

21. From the website of Nur Otan, http://nurotan.kz/ru/regions

on the eve of elections by using financial and other kinds of administrative resources in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the party and the president (author's interviews with political analysts [#8] and [#9]). Mobilized by the akims, both high and low ranks of state officials in oblasts are strongly encouraged to work for the party during election campaigns, with the possibilities of salary reduction and/or losing their jobs being strongly implied if they do not comply with their bosses' orders (author's interview with a political analyst [#4]). As discussed above, similar mobilization structures can be also found in public hospitals and schools;[22] local government officials are entitled to appoint the deans of these public organizations, who are then encouraged to work as brokers of electoral mobilization in their workplaces (Del Sordi 2012).

Although all of these strategies certainly existed before the foundation of Nur Otan, the efficiency of political mobilization increased enormously after the party successfully integrated previously informal networks into a single-pyramid system administered by the president at the top (author's interview with a political analyst [#22]). Using these hierarchical mobilization structures, the president succeeded in effectively using the state's financial resources to mobilize large numbers of supporters nationwide before elections. As Isaacs (2013: 132) astutely pointed out, "Nur Otan's preponderance, which was achieved primarily through its relationship with the president and other state executive actors, means that it is the dominant channel between society and the state. Nur Otan, however, is also the personal political vehicle for the president to establish greater control of formal political institutions. It is not a channel to articulate societal interests."

### Weakening of the Opposition

As discussed in the previous sections, opposition movements were relatively stronger and retained considerable mobilization capabilities during elections in the 1990s. Particularly before 1995, opposition activities and ethnic movements were highly powerful and differences in mobilization capabilities between opposition and ruling parties were more balanced.

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22. Nur Otan also organized a youth wing called Zhas Otan, the members of which carried out intensive election campaigns mainly at public universities to encourage students to vote for Nur Otan (Del Sordi 2012). Many of them became party officials after graduating and aspired to climb the career ladder to become party cadres, which gave them strong incentives to work hard for the party in the youth organization (author's interview with a student [#19]). In a broad sense, they collectively were also an important political actor, mobilizing potential supporters for Nur Otan in return for benefits.

This near parity was among the most important factors that prompted the president to resort to blatant electoral fraud, make a "state list" to select pro-presidential legislators in the 1994 legislative elections, and adopt pure SMD systems in the 1994 and 1995 elections.

Even after 1995, opposition parties remained popular—at least among city voters. For instance, bolstered by his popularity and rich independent resources as the former prime minister, Kazhegeldin challenged Nazarbaev by establishing the opposition Republican People's Party and declaring that he would run for the 1999 presidential elections. As a political activist who had defected from the regime, Kazhegeldin criticized President Nazarbaev and the growing nepotism within the government, critiques that were highly compelling and appealing for a large number of citizens because he had until recently served in the second position and was thought to be well acquainted with the internal workings of the government (author's interview with a political activist [#24]). Serikbolsyn Abdildin, the chairman of the KPK, also garnered high political support, particularly from the urban poor, and ran for the 1999 presidential elections as a strong candidate from the opposition.

In the run-up to the 1999 elections, Nazarbaev responded to these two real opponents with repression, harassment, and ultimately extensive rigging. Kazhegeldin, the most serious contender of the president, was barred from running for the presidential elections due to dubious accusations of money laundering in Belgium as well as his participation in an unregistered political meeting for the Movement for Honest Elections (Cummings 2005: 28). Although permitted to participate in the electoral battles, Abdildin and his Communist Party were exposed to a variety of electoral manipulation in both the pre-electoral period and the election days. The election results were allegedly seriously falsified against Abdildin and the Communist Party (author's interview with an opposition politician [#16]; Olcott 2010: 121).

In November 2001, a significant number of ruling elites defected from the regime and announced the foundation of the DVK. This opposition movement has been described as the largest and most serious organized dissent within the regime since independence. The party had rich, independent financial resources to carry out effective electoral campaigns because the party cadres such as Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, Mukhtar Ablyazov, and Nurzhan Subkhanberdin had come from key business sectors, held important government positions closely related to business people financing the opposition movements, or both (see Junisbai and Junisbai 2005; Junisbai 2010; Chebotariev 2009).

Due to political infighting, as well as a series of repression and harassment efforts exercised by the government, some members of the DVK defected and established the Ak Zhol Party in March 2002. As a political activist who had participated in the DVK before joining Ak Zhol explained, "The movement was so spontaneous that leaders in the movement had not been well prepared for how to lead this new opposition party. We launched the opposition movement to demand more political transparency, but our views on how we could achieve this goal were diverse, which led some people to prefer a moderate course and defect from the DVK" (author's interview with a political analyst [#8]). The division among opposition leaders seriously harmed the unity and strength of this new opposition movement before the 2004 parliamentary elections. First, the financial resources of the opposition were dispersed, thus making it difficult for them to carry out effective electoral campaigns (author's interviews with a political analyst [#8] and an opposition activist [#29]).

Second, although the Communist Party had made a pre-electoral opposition coalition with the DVK, the Ak Zhol Party did not coordinate its candidates and electoral campaigns with the two parties, which helped ruling parties win seats in SMDs. The DVK-KPK bloc and the Ak Zhol Party fielded candidates in forty-eight electoral districts out of sixty-seven. In twenty-one electoral districts, they fielded a candidate from each party in the 2004 parliamentary elections.[23] Due to the lack of coordination among opposition parties and the increasing mobilization capability of the ruling parties using rich oil resources, the DVK-KPK bloc and the Ak Zhol Party failed to win any seats in the parliament and obtained only 3.44 percent and 12.04 percent of total votes in the party list, respectively. There was also blatant electoral fraud that undercounted the votes for the opposition parties; however, its scale was smaller than in the 1999 elections. It is said that Ak Zhol would have obtained 25–30 percent of votes if the elections had been free and fair (author's interview with a political activist [#8]), and the Communist Party claimed to have cleared the 7 percent electoral threshold with 9 percent of total votes (Dave 2004: 9). However, even if the elections had been completely free and fair, the ruling parties and pro-presidential candidates would still have scored more than just a simple majority, thus suggesting that the regime was becoming increasingly stronger, despite the still fragmented ruling coalitions divided between several governing parties and many independent politicians.

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23. These figures are based on electoral results reported in Nurmukhamedov and Chebotarev (2005).

The opposition forces had suffered further divisions and realignments prior to the 2005 presidential and 2007 parliamentary elections. In April 2005, the Ak Zhol split due to its leaders' disagreement over whether they would participate in a pre-electoral opposition coalition (For a Just Kazakhstan) with the KPK and the DVK,[24] and the defectors formed the Naghyz Ak Zhol. In addition, the OSDP was founded in September 2006 by Zharmakhan Tuyakbai, the former chairman of the lower house and an opposition candidate in the 2005 presidential elections. Although the Naghyz Ak Zhol decided to join the OSDP two months before the parliamentary elections in August 2007, the KPK decided not to participate in the election and thus did not make a pre-electoral coalition with the OSDP, which resulted in gaining only 4.54 percent of votes and therefore failing to secure any seats in the parliament. Many analysts have acknowledged that the opposition camp had become much weaker than ever before by the time of the 2007 elections due to factors such as extremely low levels of political support in the rural areas, the highly fragile nature of their nationwide organizational networks, and the absence of financial resources to achieve effective electoral mobilization (author's interviews with opposition activists [#15, #30] and political analysts [#3, #22]).

## 7.5. Economic Maneuvering in Kazakhstan

The previous section argued that the president was able to become less dependent on electoral manipulation to massively win elections because he increased his mobilization capabilities vis-à-vis opposition parties. The qualitative case illustration also suggests that the president distributed more economic favors in various fashions as the country increased its natural resource wealth and developed disciplinary organizations.

This section tests the existence and size of economic maneuvering, namely, the PBCs, by using original monthly economic data of Kazakhstan from 1995 to 2008. I use three indices as dependent variables, all of which capture economic maneuvering from different angles. The first measure is a monthly-specified consumer price index (CPI). Setting the CPI at December 1994 as 100, I calculate the CPI between January 1995 and December 2008. As many studies on the PBC have argued, post-election inflation can be interpreted as strong evidence that governments have adopted expan-

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24. Ibragim Aibekov, "Kazakhstan's Leading Opposition Party Faces Split," United Nations High Commission for Refugees, https://www.refworld.org/docid/46c58edc1c.html (accessed March 1, 2021).

sionary fiscal policies in the pre-election period. Second, the unemployment rate, which is also monthly variant data, is a valuable measure to check whether opportunistic budget cycles can be observed. Because the National Bank of Kazakhstan does not make the unemployment rate publicly available in monthly units, I calculate the unemployment rate by dividing the number of unemployed workers (using monthly data from *Statisticheskii Byulleten* [Statistical bulletin]) by the annual total number in the working population (taken from *Regiony Kazakhstana* [Regions of Kazakhstan]). Finally, the PBCs can be observed by focusing on real wage increases prior to elections. The anecdotes presented in the previous section indicate that the government increased wages of public employees before elections. A statistical analysis using the variable of real wage increases enables me to present systematic evidence on pre-electoral economic maneuvering. Since the National Bank of Kazakhstan reports the quarterly average nominal wage for workers, I transform those amounts into average real wages by dividing nominal wage by the CPI. Data sources for all indices are taken from *Statisticheskii Byulleten*, which is published monthly by the National Bank of Kazakhstan.

Figure 7.6 plots time-series changes in the CPI.[25] A visual inspection reveals some seasonal fluctuations among the CPI's general patterns, and the figure enables us to roughly grasp the tendency of the index to experience a certain amount of variation around election times. For instance, inflation appears to have increased immediately after elections; the country was exposed to higher inflation rates after the elections in 2004, 2005, and particularly 2007. To confirm whether there are significant differences between (pre- and post-) electoral and non-electoral periods for the three variables, I conducted simple t-tests to find that four out of six differences were in the predicted directions.[26] Controlling for seasonal effects and coping with problems accompanied with time-series data, I also perform ordinary least squares time-series regressions with the three dependent variables.[27]

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25. Graphs on unemployment rate and real wage increases are available upon request.

26. (1) Inflation tends to increase around elections. (2) The unemployment rate tends to be mitigated before elections and then to increase after elections. (3) Real wages are more likely to grow before elections and shrink thereafter.

27. Because Dickey-Fuller tests revealed that all dependent variables are nonstationary, I took the first difference to transform them into stationary data. In addition, because both the Breush-Godfrey and the Durbin-Watson tests suggested that CPI and the unemployment rate involve autocorrelation, I adopted the AR (1) process through the Prais-Winsten method. Monthly dummies (reference category is December) are included for CPI and the unemployment rate to control for seasonal effects. For real wage, I use quarterly dummies (the refer-
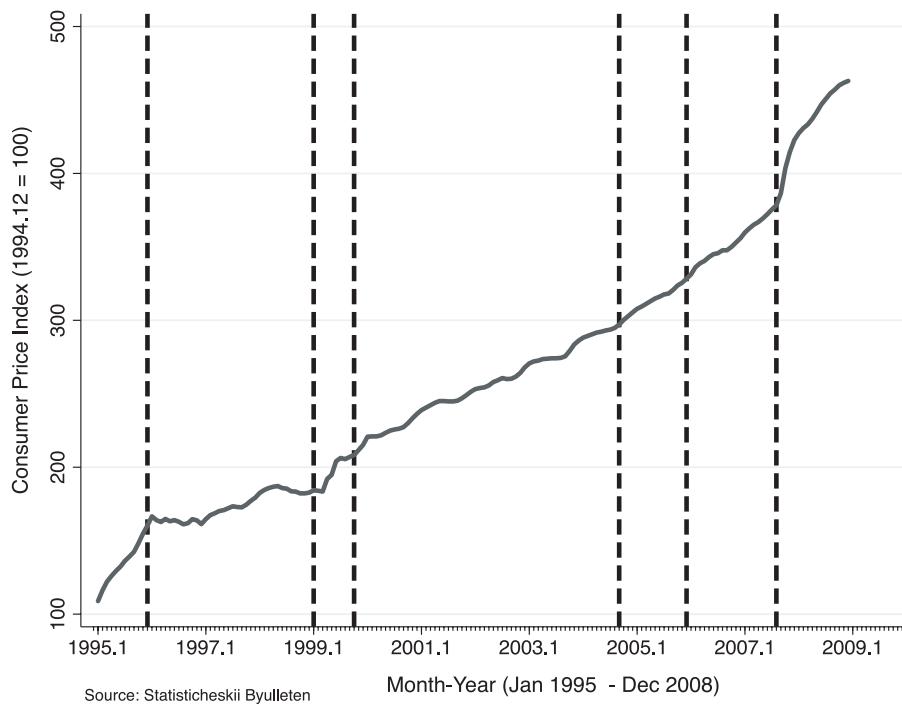
Fig. 7.6. Time-Series Change in Consumer Price Index in Kazakhstan (1995–2009)

Models 1–3 (table 7.4) estimate the effect of (pre- and post-) electoral periods on the three dependent variables. Model 1, in which the CPI is regressed, shows that the inflation rate increased by 1.31 percent at the 5 percent significance level in the first six months after elections. Model 3 confirms that real wages were more likely to increase before elections. Even after controlling for seasonal effects, the rise in salaries is statistically significant at the 5 percent level (534 Tenges per quarter before elections). By contrast, Model 2 shows that there is no correlation between elections and unemployment rates with any statistical certainty. Although unemployment rates tended to decrease before elections, the change is not statistically significant. These results suggest that the PBCs is not observed in real economic outcomes but rather as the manipulation of policy instruments.[28]

The statistical results presented thus far demonstrate the existence

ence category is the fourth quarterly). I set six months (for real wage, three quarters) before/after elections as electoral periods (1); otherwise the months were coded as non-electoral (0).

28. By manipulating policy instruments before elections, the government might try to

TABLE 7.4. Political Business Cycles in Kazakhstan (1995–2008)

| Dependent variable | Model 1<br>CPI | Model 2<br>Unemployment rate | Model 3<br>Real wage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-electoral period (six months) | 0.707 | –0.0008 | 534.78** |
| | (0.56) | (0.02) | (238.50) |
| Post-electoral period (six months) | 1.31** | –0.015 | 178.89 |
| | (0.53) | (0.02) | (244.60) |
| Seasonal dummies | Yes (month) | Yes (month) | Yes (quarter) |
| Number of observations | 167 | 141 | 55 |
| Adjusted R-squared | 0.184 | 0.546 | 0.1663 |
| Durbin-Watson test | 2.029 | 2.00 | – |
| ρ | 0.596 | 0.735 | – |
| F-value | 3.91*** | 14.08*** | 3.19** |

*Note:* ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. The Durbin-Watson test was performed after correcting serial autocorrelation through the AR(1) process.

of the PBCs in Nazarbaev's Kazakhstan. What then are the relationships among disciplinary organizations, financial resources, and the size of the PBCs? According to Models 4–7,[29] inflation rates tended to increase around elections under highly centralized governing institutions or rich financial revenues (table 7.5). Model 4 introduces the cumulative numbers of pre- and post-elections periods experienced since 1995 as two independent variables in order to investigate whether the size of electoral budget cycles became larger as the country experienced more elections.[30] Given that President Nazarbaev had gradually and consistently centralized the government while accumulating financial resources since 1995, the size of the PBCs should have a positive association with the cumulative number of elections. The coefficient is positive and statistically significant below a 1 percent probability of error, which means that, whereas the inflation rate increased by just 0.425 percent after the 1995 election, post-electoral inflation escalated to 2.55 percent at the sixth election in August 2007. The adjusted R-squared of Model 4 has improved by about 4 percent compared with that of Model 1, thus indicating that the former is better at explaining the variation in inflation rates than the latter.

demonstrate their "competence" of economic management to their constituencies (Rogoff and Silbert 1988; Drazen 2000: 228–46).

29. The dependent variable in these models is the first difference of CPI.

30. There were a total of six elections between January 1995 and December 2008. I coded the electoral period variable as follows: December 1995 parliamentary election = 1; January 1999 presidential election = 2; October 1999 parliamentary election = 3; September 2004 parliamentary election = 4; December 2005 presidential election = 5; and August 2007 parliamentary election = 6.

TABLE 7.5. Electoral Cycles, Organizational Strength, and Fiscal Resources

| Dependent Variable | Model 4 CPI | Model 5 CPI | Model 6 CPI | Model 7 Real wage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cumulative pre-electoral periods | 0.08 | | | 116.84** |
| | (0.14) | | | (59.02) |
| Cumulative post-electoral periods | 0.425*** | | | 56.03 |
| | (0.13) | | | (59.66) |
| Pre-electoral period (six months) | | 3.18*** | 24.15 | |
| | | (1.02) | (19.00) | |
| Post-electoral period (six months) | | –1.96* | –29.15* | |
| | | (1.40) | (18.27) | |
| Difference in seat proportion of ruling and opposition Parties (DIFF) | | 2.715*** (0.85) | | |
| Pre-election*DIFF | | –4.99*** | | |
| | | (1.79) | | |
| Post-election*DIFF | | 4.68** | | |
| | | (2.20) | | |
| Revenue (log) | | | 0.0875*** | |
| | | | (0.03) | |
| Pre-election*Revenue | | | –1.06 | |
| | | | (0.85) | |
| Post-election*Revenue | | | 1.339* | |
| | | | (0.82) | |
| Seasonal dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of observations | 167 | 167 | 167 | 55 |
| Adjusted $R$-squared | 0.2235 | 0.3368 | 0.2572 | 0.1618 |
| Durbin-Watson test | 1.984 | 1.96 | 2.06 | – |
| ρ | 0.548 | 0.49 | 0.572 | – |
| F-value | 4.7*** | 6.30*** | 4.61*** | 3.12** |

*Note:* \*\*\*$p < .01$, \*\*$p < .05$, \*$p < .10$. For details, see fig. 7.7. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. The Durbin-Watson test was performed after correcting serial autocorrelation through the AR(1) process.

Models 5 and 6 test the interaction effects of incumbent and opposition strengths/state resources and elections on CPI more directly. I operationalize incumbent and opposition strengths by calculating the difference between shares of parliamentary seats occupied by ruling parties and opposition parties. Given that the centralization of government institutions coincided with the strengthening of the ruling party and the weakening of the opposition in the context of Kazakhstan, the gap between the seat proportions of ruling and opposition parties serves as a good proxy to measure their strengths. To operationalize government resources, I use logged state revenue (annual data from International Monetary Fund country reports).

Model 5 examines how the impact of elections changes according to the level of incumbent/opposition strengths. Figure 7.7a illustrates that
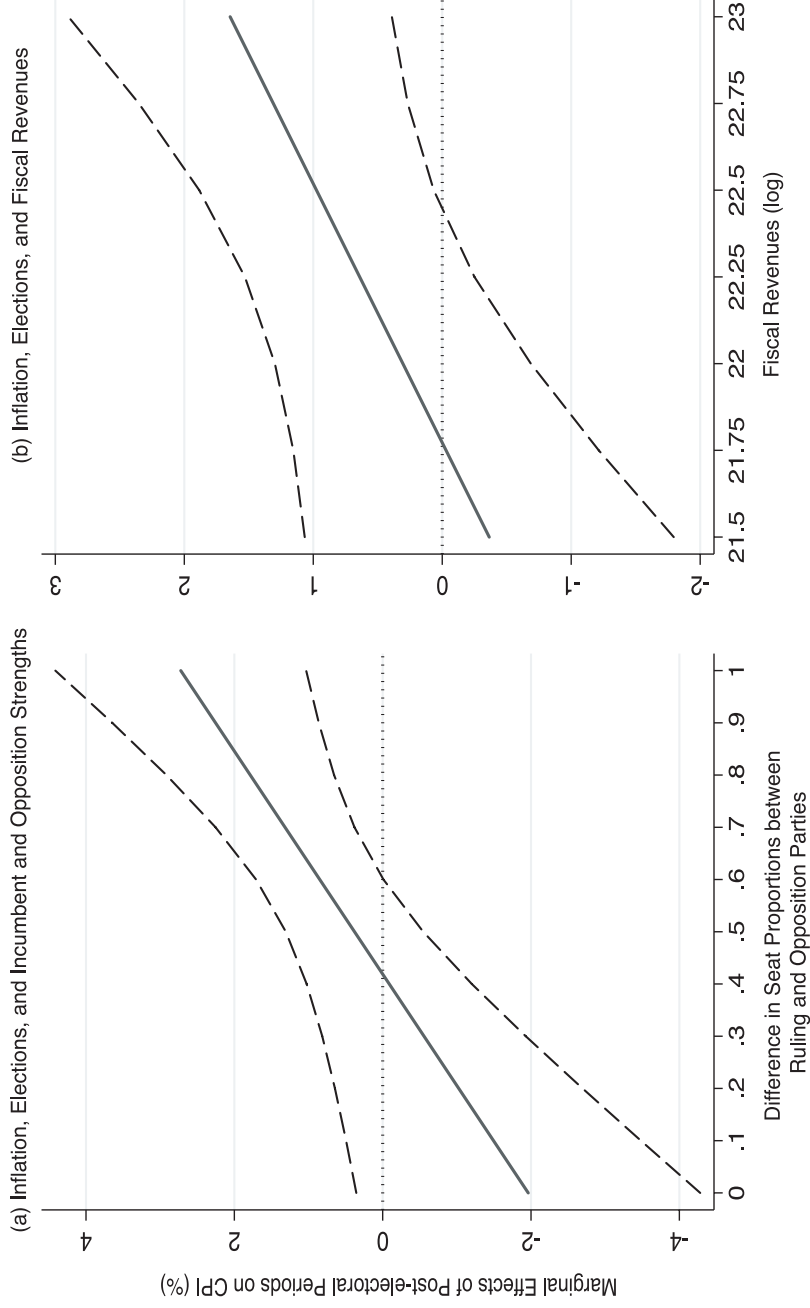
Fig. 7.7. Political Business Cycles, Incumbent and Opposition Strengths, and Fiscal Resources

*Note*: The straight line denotes inflation rates six months after elections. The dotted lines represent the 90 percent confidence intervals.

post-election inflation became more extensive as ruling parties occupied more seats in the parliament (confidence intervals are at the 90 percent level). Notably, when the proportional difference between the parties is more than 0.6, the government is more likely to have manipulated the economy around election times. Model 6 tests the marginal effect of post-electoral periods on the CPI conditional upon the logged state revenue. The coefficient of the post-election dummy changes from –0.3 (when logged state revenue takes the minimum) to 1.8 (when logged state revenue is maximum) and becomes statistically significant when the logged revenue becomes more than about 22.5 (fig. 7.7b).

Model 7 estimates how the real wage increased as the country experienced more elections. The coefficient of the pre-election variable is positive and statistically significant at the 5 percent level, suggesting that distributive policy before elections became more extensive as the autocratic regime became armed with disciplinary organizations and held more abundant financial resources. In sum, all the results support my argument that strong incumbent strength, a weak opposition, and discretionary fiscal resources are three important factors increasing the magnitude of pre-electoral economic maneuvering.

## 7.6. Conclusion

This chapter empirically examined the causal linkage posited in the theory by conducting an in-depth case study of Kazakhstan. The case of Kazakhstan provides us with an intriguing puzzle on electoral manipulation and authoritarian stability: Although President Nazarbaev seems to have become less dependent on blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation to achieve massive wins, he nonetheless successfully maintained overwhelming victories during elections, which stabilized the regime and led to Nur Otan's perfect dominance of the parliament in 2007. I explored this puzzle of authoritarian elections by focusing on the dictator's mobilization capabilities. The case study presented a series of qualitative and quantitative evidence demonstrating that Nazarbaev strengthened economic maneuvering, which helped him score an overwhelming majority without employing extensive electoral fraud and relying on the seat premiums of SMD systems. Further, I also demonstrated that Nazarbaev succeeded in streamlining pre-electoral economic distribution by constructing centralized and hierarchical political organizations such as the dominant party, political and financial centralization of the government, and a top-down

national oil company. In contrast, the opposition parties, which had been powerful in the 1990s, suffered financial difficulties and internal divisions. Their decline reduced the need for the president to employ blatant electoral fraud and to continue to adopt a SMD system that would bring a seat premium to his ruling coalition. The case of Kazakhstan suggests that dictators have incentives to not rely completely on electoral manipulation, so long as they can garner political support from the citizenry through extensive distribution of pork and patronage.

# From Electoral Manipulation to Autocratic Breakdown

*Akaev's Kyrgyzstan*

## 8.1. Introduction

The previous chapter investigated Nazarbaev's Kazakhstan as a positive case to illustrate the processes whereby high mobilization capabilities enable the dictator to gather mass support at elections, which then contribute to consolidating authoritarian rule. In this chapter, I explore Akaev's Kyrgyzstan (1991–2005) as a negative case wherein the dictator's low mobilization capabilities lead to excessive use of electoral manipulation. Centering on the electoral dilemma and the dictator's mobilization capabilities in authoritarian regimes, the theory of autocratic elections expects that excessive electoral fraud and majoritarian electoral systems are more likely to spark popular protests. With that theory in mind, this chapter focuses on the case of Kyrgyzstan to illustrate causal links where the dictator's shrinking financial resources, weak disciplinary organizations, and a strong opposition all contributed to escalating electoral manipulation, which eventually resulted in provoking large-scale mass protests during the 2005 elections.

Kyrgyzstan experienced a political trajectory very similar to that of Kazakhstan after independence: early political liberalization efforts were reversed by the middle of the 1990s. However, different from Nazarbaev's Kazakhstan, where the government ultimately relied less on electoral

manipulation and elections helped the dictator consolidate the regime, the Akaev regime gradually strengthened its electoral manipulation and accordingly faced a larger scale of post-electoral mass protests over time. Ultimately, the 2005 elections sparked massive popular mobilization, which led to the breakdown of the Akaev regime. *Despite many commonalities between the two regimes, why did elections in Kyrgyzstan destabilize authoritarian rule?*

To offer an answer to this question, this chapter focuses on Akaev's mobilization capabilities vis-à-vis the opposition: Akaev was not able to maintain discretionary financial resources for dissemination and also failed to construct strong disciplinary organizations to streamline economic distribution, whereas the opposition gained power as a result of the defections of prominent politicians from the regime. Under these conditions, Akaev could not help relying on electoral manipulation schemes such as blatant fraud and majoritarian electoral systems. An excessive level of electoral manipulation ended up provoking popular protests after the 2005 elections.

This chapter is organized as follows. In the next section, I briefly illustrate the political processes whereby Kyrgyzstan transitioned from an electoral democracy to an electoral authoritarian regime by the middle of the 1990s. Then, I describe time-series changes in two types of electoral manipulation—blatant electoral fraud in both presidential and legislative elections and institutional manipulation (i.e., electoral system change) in legislative elections. In so doing, I demonstrate that President Akaev became more dependent upon blatant electoral fraud as well as majoritarian electoral systems. I also show that Akaev's increasingly excessive reliance on electoral manipulation led to an increasing scale of post-electoral popular protests over the years, eventually leading to the Tulip Revolution in the aftermath of the 2005 elections. In section 8.4, I explore how the dictator's mobilization capabilities related to the extent of electoral manipulation and post-electoral protests in the country. I demonstrate that President Akaev's mobilization capabilities gradually decreased over time. I then go on to argue that President Akaev faced massive protests after the 2005 parliamentary elections due to excessive manipulation rooted in his expectation that he would not collect extensive voter support otherwise. Given the extreme unpopularity of the Akaev regime, such excessive manipulation and overwhelming election victories exposed the regime's weakness to the opposition. Last, similarly to the case study of Kazakhstan, I conduct time-series analyses of the PBCs in Kyrgyzstan to investigate time-series patterns of economic maneuvering throughout the regime. The statistical analysis suggests that PBCs did not exist in a systematic fashion through-

out the period of the Akaev regime and that their magnitude tended to decrease over time as Akaev's mobilization capabilities decreased.

## 8.2. From Electoral Democracy to Electoral Authoritarianism

Much like President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan, President Askar Akaev also embarked on political liberalization after winning the presidential election of the Republic of Kyrgyz in October 1991. Akaev's democratization efforts were more extensive than those initiated by Nazarbaev, and the Western media admiringly broadcasted that Kyrgyzstan was an "island of democracy" in authoritarian Central Asia. Indeed, during the first couple of years after independence, the country was viewed as an electoral democracy that satisfied the procedural definition of democracy. First, Akaev had ascended to the presidency in free and fair presidential elections in October 1991. Although the parliament (Jogorku Kenesh) had banned the Communist Party from participating, no other candidates were prohibited, and Akaev and his backers did not intimidate opposition parties. Positively assessing Akaev's consensus-based, multiethnic approaches, which he had begun taking after the ethnic riots in Osh in June 1990 (Spector 2004: 8),[1] both democratic activists and the opposition Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (DDK) strongly supported Akaev and did not even offer alternative candidates. Despite the lack of an actual contest, the elections were widely recognized as free and fair both within Kyrgyzstan and abroad (Collins 2006: 179).

The separation of powers between the executive and the legislature was guaranteed in the constitution. Since independence, there had been a long process and much debate among various political actors over the constitution, which was established in May 1993 after numerous intragovernmental and public discussions.[2] Although Akaev sought to endow the president with strong powers to implement political and economic reforms, he simultaneously pursued a constitutional framework in which executive power would be checked by the legislature and judiciary. Some political figures in the presidential office such as Felix Kulov wanted a strong president and a weaker legislature; however, Akaev himself rejected the idea of adopting such a "super-presidential" system (Collins 2006: 182–83).

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1. Before the 1991 presidential election, Akaev had served as the president of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic for one year.

2. Regarding detailed political processes on the 1993 constitution, see, e.g., Anderson (1999: 25–27) and Collins (2006: 179–81, 182–84).

Political parties and social movements grew before and after the declaration of independence. In February 1991, Akaev signed an act on social organizations, which created a framework for the activities of associations, interest groups, and political parties. In practice, the law paved the way for people to create various voluntary associations. By February 1993, the Ministry of Justice had registered 258 social organizations, including 15 political movements or parties, 31 professional bodies, 21 national-cultural centers or organizations, 41 sporting bodies, 11 children's and young people's groups, and five women's organizations; the total number was further increased to nearly 1,000 by the summer of 1997 (Anderson 1999: 31). Twelve political parties were registered for the 1995 presidential and parliamentary elections, including the Erkin Kyrgyzstan and the Ata Meken (Fatherland) Socialist Party.

Last, free media emerged during this democratization period. Immediately after October 1990, when Akaev was approved as the president of the Kyrgyz Socialist Republic in the parliament, the official media such as *Sovetskaya Kirgiziya* (later renamed *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*) began to develop an independent tone and informatively explored a variety of political issues, followed by numerous newly established newspapers and other media outlets (Anderson 1999: 29; Collins 2006: 186–88). Among the most critical newspapers was the parliamentary paper *Svobodnye Gory*, which came to severely criticize the president. *Res Publika*, another weekly newspaper, also reported corruption scandals of government officials (Anderson 1999: 30).

For about two years after independence, the parliament and president forged cooperative relationships due to Akaev's tactful co-optation techniques toward legislators (Huskey 1997: 256–57). However, as the country's economic crisis deepened, different views on radical economic reforms contributed to heightening tension between the two branches. Similar to Kazakhstan, members of the assembly began to challenge President Akaev by criticizing alleged practices of political corruption over privatization and foreign trade among government officials.[3] The communists in the parliament went on the offensive against the president because most of them were expected to lose their seats due to the new constitution, which stipulated that the total seats in the two new chambers would be reduced from 450 to 300 in the next elections (Spector 2004: 19; Collins 2006: 227). Amid the increasingly tense confrontation between the parliament and the presidential palace, Prime Minister Tursunbek Chyngyshev was

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3. For a detailed analysis on economic reforms such as privatization and foreign trade, see Pomfret (2006, chap. 5).

forced to resign in January 1994 after an investigation over the selling of mining rights at the Kumtor goldmine to the Canadian firm Cameco (Huskey 1997: 257). This is again very similar to the case of Prime Minister Tereshchenko of Kazakhstan, who presided over privatization processes and ended up resigning after facing privatization scandals. Chyngyshev's resignation impressed upon people that the opposition in the parliament had been enhancing political pressures on the president.

Facing increasing pressures from the parliament, Akaev began to take more draconian measures by late 1994 and turned the country into an electoral authoritarian regime (Huskey 1997; Anderson 1999; Spector 2004; Collins 2006). To overcome the impasse between the assembly and the executive branch, Akaev strengthened presidential power through illiberal measures. In September 1994, some members in parliament refused to attend the opening session of the fall legislature. However, the 1993 constitution stipulated that the president is entitled to dismiss the parliament when it fails to satisfy a quorum, and President Akaev took advantage of this opportunity to dismiss the parliament and call for new elections (Collins 2006: 227). Moreover, during the parliamentary boycott, Akaev convoked a referendum to call for a new, smaller bicameral parliament with a total of only 105 seats (the upper house: 35 deputies; the lower house: 70 deputies) as well as changes in the electoral law that would reduce the parliament's power and strengthen presidential power (Collins 2006: 227–28). Later, despite the 1993 constitution's prohibition on making constitutional changes via referendum, Akaev convoked another referendum in 1996 in which he made amendments that further strengthened the presidency's formal powers (Human Rights Watch 1997: 227).

Media and social movements also started to be exposed to government intimidation in the mid-1990s. Harassment toward the media and opposition became more severe over time during the Akaev regime. In June 1994, the government began to restrict media freedom by closing down two newspapers, including the independent and highly critical parliamentary paper *Svobodnye Gory*. In the spring of 1995, the president launched a criminal prosecution for defamation against Zamira Sydykova and Tamara Slashcheva, the editors of the independent newspaper *Res Publika* (Huskey 1997: 258). In addition to these direct measures, during the period 1995–97, the government pressured state-run newspapers to engage in self-censorship and pushed other media to replace their editors (Anderson 1999: 57). Pluralism in the country was severely threatened as the number of incidents of intimidation against opposition leaders and religious activities increased (56–59). By the late 1990s, the West's optimism regarding

the prospect of democracy in Kyrgyzstan had rapidly faded; an electoral authoritarian regime much like that of Kazakhstan had emerged. The 2003 referendum, which Akaev suddenly announced only two weeks before the actual vote, aimed at further strengthening institutional bases of his power: Approved by a 77 percent vote, the referendum for further constitutional amendments extended his tenure for an additional two years until 2005, greatly increased the president's power vis-à-vis the parliament and the constitutional court, and reduced the number of legislators in the newly established unicameral parliament.[4] This constitutional referendum was heavily criticized by the international society and boycotted by both the opposition and international observers (Toursunof 2004).

Independent politicians were predominant throughout the Akaev regime, and political parties (whether opposition or ruling parties) played a minimum role in Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, investigating the country's party system may not provide equal evidence to that in Kazakhstan to assess the extent to which Akaev furthered autocratic consolidation in the country. With that in mind, I proceed with looking at data that suggest that pro-presidential political parties strengthened parliamentary dominance, particularly at the fraudulent 2005 parliamentary elections, while opposition parties decreased their seat shares in the parliament (fig. 8.1). Opposition parties competed well with the pro-presidential camp in the 1995 parliamentary elections; nonetheless, pro-presidential parties such as the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SPDK) and the Asaba Party took 22 percent of the seats in the legislature. In contrast, the opposition parties (including the Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan [PKK], which was led by Absamat Masaliev, a former leader of Communist Kyrgyzstan) occupied only 14.5 percent of total seats, thus resulting in a 7.5 percent seat gap between the pro-presidential and the opposition parties.[5]

Prior to the 2000 parliamentary elections, pro-government politicians founded the Union of Democratic Forces (SDS), which was an electoral alliance of four pro-government political parties, namely, Asaba, the Unity Party of Kyrgyzstan, the SPDK, and the Party of Economic Revival of the Kyrgyz Republic. Gaps between pro-presidential and opposition parties

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4. Detailed data and descriptions are available through the International Foundation for Electoral System's Election Guide at http://www.electionguide.org/election.php?ID=315 (accessed March 1, 2021).

5. Distinctions between pro-presidential and opposition parties in the 1995 and 2000 parliamentary elections were made based upon Abazov (2003: 549–51), Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann (2001: 441–42), and various issues of the *Political Handbook of the World* (1994, 1995, 1998, 2000, and 2001).
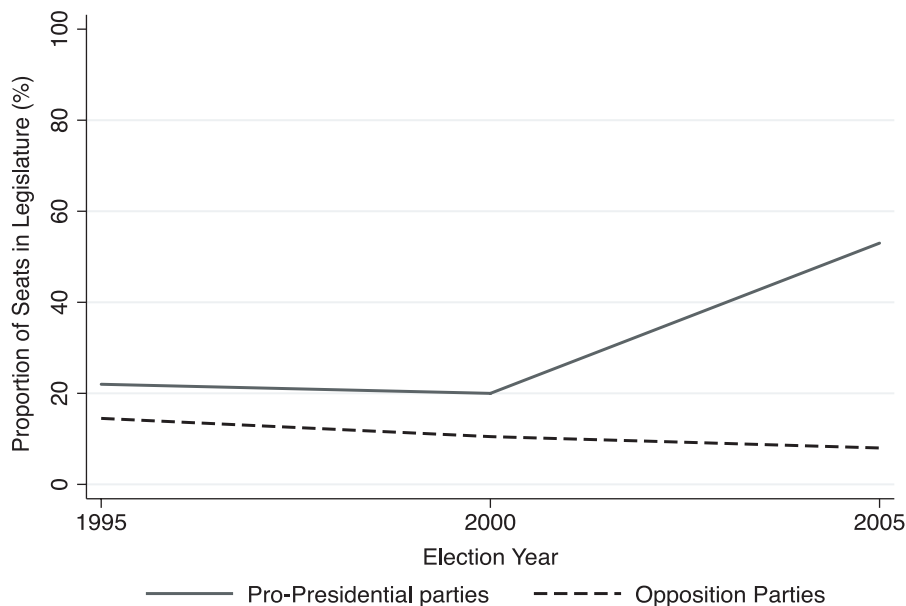
Fig. 8.1. Seat Proportions of Pro-Presidential and Opposition Parties in Kyrgyzstan (1995–2005)
*Source:* Nohlen et al. (2001: 447); Sjoberg (2010: 201–2); and Kurmanov (2005).

became slightly widened during those elections, as pro-presidential parties such as the SDS and My Country took 20 percent of total seats, whereas opposition parties such as the PKK, Ata Meken, and Erkin Kyrgyzstan received only 10.5 percent of total seats, thus resulting in approximately a 10 percent gap in seat shares in favor of the pro-presidential camp.

After Akaev failed to nurture the SDS into a strong "party of power," Alga (Forward) Kyrgyzstan was formed in 2003 by allying small pro-government parties and then merging with another in 2004. Aspiring to be a dominant party like United Russia and Kazakhstan's Otan, Alga Kyrgyzstan was chaired by Akaev's daughter Bermet Akaeva and set up regional and district party offices backed up by state resources (Kurmanov 2004: 14). Alga Kyrgyzstan secured twelve seats in the first round and an additional twenty-four seats in the second round of the 2005 parliamentary elections for a combined total of 48 percent of the seats.[6] Including an additional four seats won by the other pro-presidential party, Adilet, the

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6. The figure for the first round is based upon Sjöberg (2011: 201–2), whereas that in the second round comes from Kurmanov (2005).

pro-presidential camp took an absolute majority in the parliament (53 percent of total seats).[7] By contrast, opposition parties gained only two seats in the first round and an additional four seats in the second round (8 percent of total seats after the second round). As a result, the 2005 parliamentary elections produced a 45 percent seat gap between the pro-government and opposition parties.

## 8.3. Electoral Manipulation and Post-Electoral Protests in Kyrgyzstan

As discussed in the preceding section, the Akaev regime became increasingly authoritarian. Coinciding with this authoritarian turn, Akaev also became more dependent upon forms of electoral manipulation such as blatant electoral fraud and institutional machination. The more rigged the elections, the larger the scale of popular protests Akaev faced afterward. Extensive electoral manipulation in the 2005 parliamentary elections resulted in the massive popular protests that ousted Akaev and led to the breakdown of his regime. In this section, I show evidence that the Akaev regime (1) became more dependent upon blatant electoral fraud compared to earlier elections, (2) relied upon single-member district (SMD) based systems to bias election results in favor of the regime, and consequently (3) experienced a larger size of post-electoral protests in later elections.

Hyde and Marinov's (2012) NELDA dataset demonstrates that elections during the Akaev regime were all competitive in the sense that opposition parties and multiple candidates were allowed to participate. However, table 8.1 shows time-series changes in the extent of blatant electoral fraud at parliamentary and presidential elections between 1995 and 2005. The extent of blatant electoral fraud during the 1995 parliamentary elections was relatively lower (7) than during the 1999 and 2005 elections (8). In other words, based on the definition in the forms of electoral violence, election cheating, and legal problems regarding electoral law, blatant electoral fraud grew more extensive leading up to the 2005 legislative elections.

Although some electoral fraud and irregularities were observed in the 1995 elections (both parliamentary and presidential), the OSCE positively assessed their democratic characters (OSCE 1995; Huskey 1997: 261). An OSCE report indicates that election cheating was at most sporadic and was not systematically exercised by the national government:

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7. When counting the number of pro-government independents, a report suggests that the Akaev camp secured more than the two-thirds majority after the second round (Weinstein 2005).

TABLE 8.1. Blatant Electoral Fraud in Kyrgyzstan (1995–2005)

|  | 1995 par | 1995 pres | 2000 par | 2000 pres | 2005 par |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competitive elections | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Election violence | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pre-electoral cheating | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Election-day cheating | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Problems on electoral law | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Overall electoral fraud | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 |

*Source:* Kelley (2012); U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/).

*Note:* Each election was accessed by Kelley's (2012) *Quality of Elections Data* and the author's own coding for the 2005 elections. Each component has four scales (0 = no problems; 1 = minor problems only; 2 = moderate problems; 3 = serious problems). I aggregated each component (pre-electoral and election-day violence) to assess overall electoral fraud.

The performance of the local election officials in the polling stations visited by the Commission staff was quite mixed. In one instance, they allowed two young men to get on the supplementary voters list without passports or any other documents. Elsewhere, however, they staunchly refused to let people vote for others or vote without the proper documents. (OSCE 1995: 9)

Anderson (1996: 532) argued that "although critics claimed substantive degrees of fraud, it should be noted that the results which suggested substantive regional variations may indeed have reflected popular opinion and a traditional tendency to support existing leaders." Similarly, according to Collins (2006: 224–25), "despite some minor violations—far more circumscribed than had been expected, given Akaev's uncertain chances—the elections were given a pass by the OSCE and other international observers." Specifically, although certain types of blatant electoral fraud were frequently observed, such as multiple voting and nonviolent intimidation in some electoral districts, such cases were not widespread, and many electoral irregularities were attributed to the low quality of bureaucracy and an inexperienced electoral management body in charge of operating the elections. Practices of ballot stuffing were also observed, and many complaints emerged about such overt fraud; however, Akaev closely investigated these allegations by establishing an independent public commission (OSCE 1995: 9).

It was said that the presidential candidate Masaliev, who was the first secretary of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic and the strongest opposition candidate at that time, did not succeed in scoring even a slim

majority in the Osh Oblast, where he held a strong support base. This failure was likely due to Akaev extensively stuffing the ballot box in the region by appointing akims in Osh and Jalal-Abad loyal to him (author's interview with a political activist [#32]; Collins 2006: 236). However, the government neither eliminated strong candidates by deregistering them in advance nor seriously biased media in favor of the president and their pro-presidential candidates, all of which were typical methods of electoral fraud employed in the later elections. Although there was some intimidation of the media, independent media remained active, and Akaev did not attempt to install powerful outlets broadcasting political views in favor of the president. Last, the OSCE report and other sources suggest that both pre-electoral violence and election-day violence were absent during the 1995 elections.[8]

Akaev first resorted to extensive blatant electoral fraud in the 2000 legislative and presidential elections (U.S. Department of State 2001). Indeed, the *Quality of Elections Data* by Kelley (2012) coded that the 2000 elections were more fraudulent than the 1995 elections. Observing numerous and widespread election irregularities, the OSCE similarly concluded that both the legislative and the presidential elections were extensively manipulated and thus fell short of international standards of democratic elections (OSCE 2000b, 2001): "The pre-election period was marred by a high degree of interference in the process by state officials, a lack of independence of the courts, resulting in a selective use of sanctions against candidates, and a bias in the state media" (OSCE 2000b: 1). According to Abazov (2003: 545), "Pressure on the opposition before the elections and irregularities during polling were so blatant and widespread that even the pro-government intelligentsia condemned them as . . . a bad job in the best Soviet traditions."

First, pre-electoral cheating was combined with the new pro-regime election law, which resulted in much more rampant electoral fraud. Leading up to the legislative elections, Akaev introduced new and controversial changes to the election law, which required political parties to register at least twelve months before the elections in order to be eligible for participation (Abazov 2003: 547). Two major opposition parties—Ar Namys (Honor) and Bei Bechara (Party of Poor People)—both of which were formed by powerful opposition politicians who had defected from the government, Felix Kulov and Daniyar Usenov, respectively, were barred

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8. The *Electoral Contention and Violence Data* does not report any pre-electoral violence in any of the elections throughout the Akaev regime.

from registering for the election on the grounds that they had not satisfied the new requirement of electoral registration. Four other parties were also prohibited from participating on legal grounds, including the oldest and most influential of the 1990s, the DDK. The latter exclusion was the result of a local Bishkek court hearing a complaint against the Central Electoral Commission's decision to register the DDK (OSCE 2000: 6).

In addition to coercion against political parties, numerous opposition figures were intimidated by pre-electoral de-qualification as election candidates, abrupt deregistration during election campaigns, and/or post-electoral arrest. Kulov himself ran for the parliamentary elections and obtained the largest vote shares in the first round of votes; however, his votes decreased for unknown and unexplainable reasons in the second round, and he lost the elections (Uyama 2006: 47; Abazov 2003: 551). After the elections, he was indicted for embezzlement and jailed until the end of the Akaev regime. On the grounds that he had not disclosed all his properties, Usenov was also suddenly disqualified as a candidate after he won a plurality in the first round and was imprisoned after the elections. Eight other candidates were also disqualified between the first and second rounds of the elections based on allegations of irregular financial declaration and illegal vote buying.

Second, pro-regime media bias during election campaigns became far more extensive than it had in previous years. State-owned newspapers such as *Slovo Kyrgyzstana* and Kyrgyzstan TV broadcasted political news in favor of leading pro-presidential parties, such as the SDS and the Democratic Party of Women, as well as the president, while exhibiting clear negative tendencies toward opposition candidates such as Felix Kulov and Daniyar Usenov (OSCE 2001: 9). For instance, state-owned radio and television station KTR provided approximately 21 percent of its legislative election coverage to a ruling party, the SDS, with mostly positive tones, whereas the two main opposition parties, Ar Namys and Bei Bechara, received only 5.6 percent and 2.8 percent of the coverage, respectively, characterized by largely negative tones (OSCE 2000b: 12). In the presidential elections, KTR allocated Akaev 99.2 percent of air time, the vast majority of which was positive in tone, while the remaining 13 percent was neutral. Similarly, *Slovo Kyrgyzstana* devoted more than 75 percent of its total political space to Akaev, with 73 percent of coverage being positive, whereas Tekebaev, the main opposition candidate, received only 10 percent, of which 75 percent was negative (OSCE 2000c: 9).

Third, election-day cheating was prevalent in the form of voter intimidation, double voting, and vote count problems. For instance, the manipu-

lation of student votes was employed as a major technique of voter intimidation in Bishkek and Jalal Abad. As the OSCE reported:

> In Bishkek students from the Agricultural University, located in District number 5, had been sent home to collect the passport numbers of three persons each, to be added to voter lists and vote for the head of the university. . . . On election day, there were indeed many additions to the voter lists. Also students turned up at the same "allocated" time and some even acknowledged to observers that they were under pressure to vote for their university head or a specific candidate. This situation was largely replicated during the second round. In District 3 in Bishkek, students acknowledged . . . that their vote was checked. If they failed to vote, then access to cheap university accommodation would be jeopardized. In District number 9 in Jalal Abad, . . . the EOM [Election Observation Mission] observed students with multiple, pre-marked ballots during the second round. (2000b: 14)

International observers reported strong suspicions of multiple voting, proxy voting, family voting, and ballot stuffing, particularly in but not limited to electoral districts where the opposition was strong. In 68 percent of polling stations visited by observers, voters were newly added on voter lists on election day due to inadequate preparation prior to the elections. Such additional lists provided ample opportunities for regime supporters to engage in multiple voting. In particular, systematic electoral fraud and ballot stuffing were widely observed in District 44, where Felix Kulov ran as a candidate, including a massive increase in the number of advance voters, premarked ballots, and illegal vote buying (OSCE 2000b: 15). Similar ballot stuffing footprints were indicated in the presidential elections in Osh, Chui, and Jalal Abad (OSCE 2000c: 12–13).

The incumbent also extensively rigged the 2005 legislative elections, which provoked massive popular protests leading to the Tulip Revolution.[9] The OSCE (2005) reported that the parliamentary elections were relatively competitive on election day in the sense that multiple candidates were contesting in a large number of districts. However, they also documented that prior to the elections, Akaev had resorted to extensive, blatant electoral fraud to bias election results in favor of pro-presidential candi-

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9. The first-round voting was held on February 27, whereas the second-round voting occurred on March 13.

dates as well as the two ruling parties, Alga Kyrgyzstan and Adilet. First, although the government had revised the election law more than ten times since the 2000 elections and some of the amendments had the potential to make progress in free and fair electoral processes, the OSCE and other election observers emphasized that significant shortcomings remained in the election law, including (1) restrictions on candidates' rights, including the possibility of suspension and cancellation of the mandates of elected candidates; (2) the possibility of deregistering candidates on minor technical issues; (3) a lack of pluralism in the compositions of election commissions (due to close cooperation between local election commissions and local state administrations); (4) no clear distinction between public information/government resources and ruling parties' campaign resources; and (5) unclearly defined complaints and appeal processes on electoral malpractices (OSCE 2005: 5; Kartawich 2005: 8; Kurmanov 2005: 9–10).

Second, taking advantage of loopholes in the electoral law, deregistration, and intimidation of powerful opposition candidates were again employed as major techniques of pre-electoral cheating to secure the ruling party's election victory. For example, Roza Otunbaeva, a former diplomat who had resided in Moscow and famous opposition leader, was barred from running because she did not meet the permanent, in-country residency requirement of five years prior to candidate nomination. Because former diplomats had not faced any of these problems in registration in previous elections, the denial of her registration was claimed to be politically motivated. Eleven other candidates were rejected from registration due to similarly minor technical violations such as missing information in campaign materials, "even though in numerous other cases candidates received only a warning for having committed similar or more serious violations such as vote-buying and intimidation of voters" (OSCE 2005: 10).

Third, other types of election-day cheating by pro-presidential candidates were frequently documented by election observers. Similar to the 2000 elections, election monitors also confirmed other problems of election cheating such as multiple voting, family voting, and inadequate voter lists, which undermined public trust in electoral integrity (OSCE 2005: 9).

Fourth, public media outlets remained exposed to extensive control by the government. "Most media monitored by the OSCE/ODIHR failed to provide impartial and fair coverage of the campaign. Almost all media paid extensive attention to the authorities, mainly to the President" (OSCE 2005: 16). For instance, the newly created pro-presidential party Alga Kyrgyzstan could use the major newspaper *Vecherny Bishkek* and TV channels run by the Akaev family free of charge (Kurmanov 2005: 10).

During election campaigns, state-owned KTR television and radio respectively provided Akaev with 33 percent and 46 percent of prime-time news with exclusively positive or neutral tones while negatively referring to the opposition (OSCE 2005: 16). In contrast, the government intimidated the independent and pro-opposition media. For instance, in December 2004, the opposition-affiliated newspaper *MSN* was abruptly indicted for alleged monopolistic activities with a penalty up to five years in prison (14). Five days before the first round of the elections, reporting at the only independent printing house in Bishkek, which offered service to pro-opposition newspapers like *MSN* and *Res Publica*, was suspended after its electricity was suddenly cut off by an involvement of the state-owned Severelektro company (14). Similarly, the state Kyrgyz telecom suddenly stopped broadcasting independent Azattyk radio, which provided more balanced coverage, on February 24, three days before the elections. As a result, "at the end of the campaign and during significant public protests in rural areas, broadcasting of the Azattyk signal was sharply limited to a few urban areas. This restricted voter access to an independent information source at a critical time of the campaign" (OSCE 2015: 15).

### Institutional Manipulation: Continuation of SMD systems

In addition to blatant electoral fraud, the government utilized electoral system changes as another tool of manipulation. The Akaev regime reformed the electoral systems of both the upper and lower houses several times. Interestingly, in stark contrast to Kazakhstan, where a full proportional representation (PR) system had been adopted prior to the 2007 election, Akaev switched the country's electoral system back to a pure SMD system prior to the 2005 elections after utilizing a mixed system for the 2000 legislative election (table 8.2 and fig. 8.2). In the 1995 parliamentary election, all of the 105 seats in the lower and upper houses were decided by SMD systems. Based on the second constitution adopted in 1996 and the electoral law amended in 1998, the 2000 parliamentary elections were held under a mixed system: 15 out of 60 seats in the lower house were decided by a PR system with a 5 percent electoral threshold, whereas the rest of the 45 seats in the lower house and all the 45 seats in the upper house were elected under a SMD system. Then, when Akaev shifted the country's electoral system back to a fully SMD system prior to the 2005 parliamentary elections, the number of seats in the new unicameral parliament was reduced to 75, all of which were decided by SMDs with an absolute majority system. To put it simply, although the country experienced several reforms in the

TABLE 8.2. Electoral System Change and Effective Electoral Threshold in Kyrgyzstan (1995–2005)

|  | 1995 elections | 2000 elections | 2005 elections |
|---|---|---|---|
| SMD | 100% | 85% | 100% |
| PR | 0% | 15% | 0% |
| *Notes:* | Both upper house and lower house adopt a fully SMD system (absolute majority) | All the seats in upper house are decided by SMD (absolute majority). Lower house adopts a mixed system. | Unicameral legislature adopts a fully SMD system (absolute majority) |

system, the government maintained electoral rules under which most of the seats were allocated by majoritarian methods.

In addition to blatant electoral fraud, Akaev utilized majoritarian electoral systems to bias election results in favor of ruling parties and pro-presidential independents. Under the SMD-dominant electoral system, seat distribution in the 2000 legislative elections was biased in favor of pro-presidential politicians. As a result, the opposition camp (the PKK, Bei Bechara, Erkin Kyrgyzstan, and Ata Meken) obtained 40.4 percent of votes nationwide in the PR segment,[10] while gaining only 21.8 percent of total seats occupied by party-affiliated candidates in the SMD segment.[11] In contrast, the pro-presidential parties (SDS, My Country, etc.) occupied more than 53 percent of total seats with 49.2 percent of votes nationwide.[12]

Due to blatant electoral fraud and a pure SMD system, election results in the first round of voting in the 2005 parliamentary election were highly favorable to pro-presidential candidates. Utilizing candidate-level quantitative data on the 2005 parliamentary elections, Sjöberg (2011: 92) reported that candidates nominated by the biggest ruling party, Alga Kyrgyzstan, were 66 percent more likely to win seats under the SMD system. Importantly, the seat premium allowed Akaev to buy off politicians in the legislature. Being a legislator provided ruling elites with various privileges such

10. Because vote proportions obtained by political parties in SMD systems are not available, I used vote shares of each party in the party-list PR portion as a proxy.

11. As I will discuss later, the largest share of seats (69 percent of total seats) was occupied by independents in the 2000 legislative elections. To compare ruling and opposition parties, I use the total number of seats occupied by party-affiliated candidates as the denominator.

12. These figures were calculated by referring to Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann (2001: 447) and Abazov (2003: 551). In reality, many independent politicians were pro-presidential, so the pro-regime bias should have been much more significant when including those pro-presidential candidates.
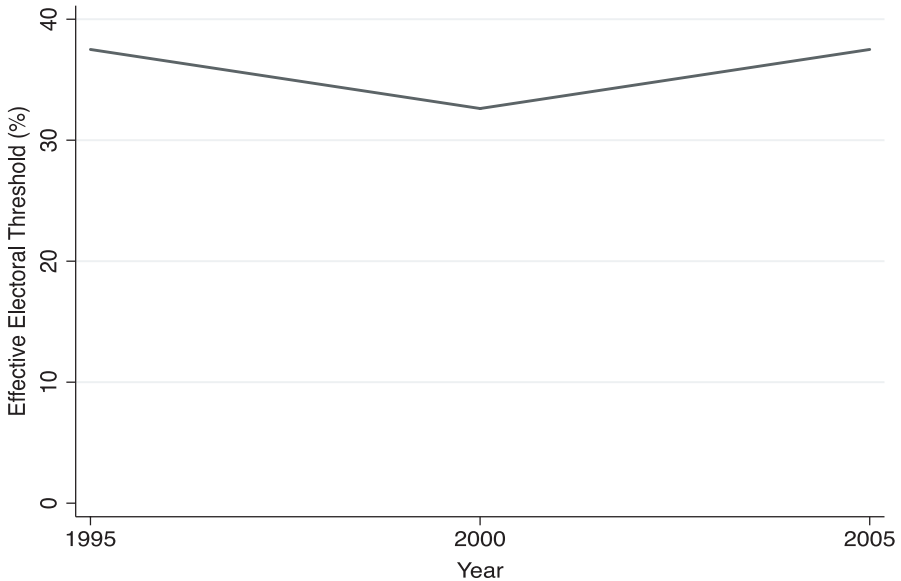
Fig. 8.2. Effective Electoral Threshold in Kyrgyz Parliamentary Elections (1995–2005)

as immunity from prosecution, access to illegal transactions through law-making influence, and protection of their property from special interests (Engvall 2016: 78). By shifting back to the pure SMD system, Akaev was able to count on enjoying the pro-regime seat premiums, which allowed him to co-opt regional elites and thereby maintain his rule. Out of 75 seats in the legislature, 32 electoral districts decided winners, only two of which were won by the opposition, whereas the remainder were taken by pro-government or independent politicians (Radnitz 2010: 136). Competition was rife even among pro-presidential candidates, thus signaling the president's and ruling parties' poor control of their camp (Uyama 2006: 49). For instance, when Akaev's daughter Bermet Akaeva ran for the elections in Bishkek, she only obtained 45 percent of the vote despite enormous pressure on students and restrictions on the campaigns of her opponents (Lewis 2008: 138).

### Post-Electoral Popular Protests

The elections in the three periods (1995, 2000, and 2005) differed not only in terms of the extent of blatant electoral fraud and the types of electoral systems but also in the magnitude of post-electoral popular protests.
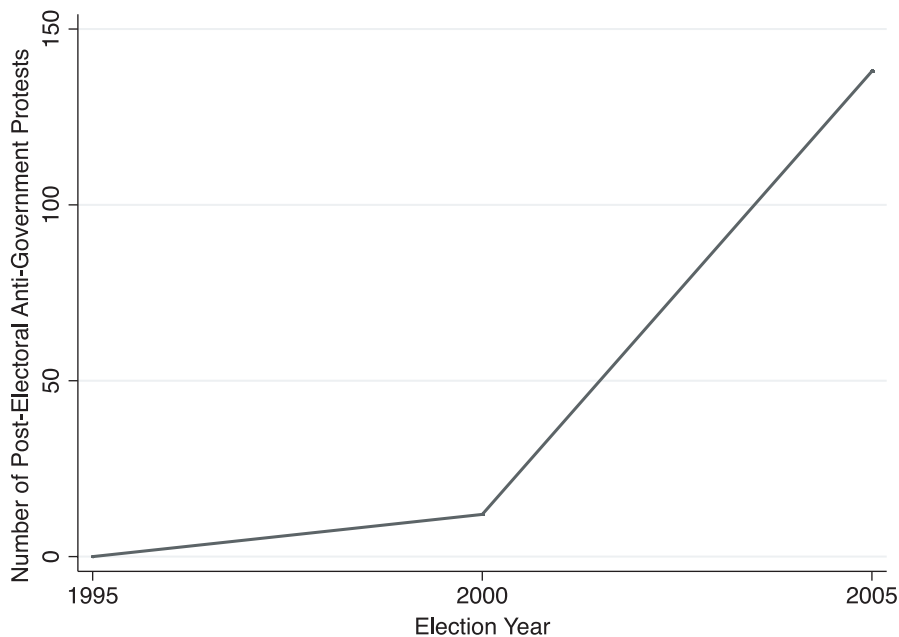
Fig. 8.3. Number of Post-Electoral Protests in Kyrgyzstan (1995–2005)

Using the *Electoral Contention and Violence Data* (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung 2019), figure 8.3 graphically illustrates the number of post-electoral anti-government protests under the Akaev regime. Whereas no post-electoral popular protests were observed in the 1995 legislative and presidential elections, five opposition protests accusing the incumbent of electoral fraud occurred after the 2000 parliamentary elections, and nine popular protests were organized by supporters of presidential candidate Omurbek Tekebaev in the aftermath of the 2000 presidential elections. However, these did not develop into a large, nationwide scale of anti-government protests.

In contrast, the 2005 parliamentary elections sparked popular protests in some electoral districts immediately after the first round of voting on February 27, and these escalated into national-level mobilization followed by the second round of voting on March 13 after the Central Election Commission declared that pro-presidential candidates had obtained an overwhelming majority of seats.[13] Protesters, many of whom came from

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13. For detailed descriptions of the Tulip Revolution, see, e.g., Uyama (2006), Marat (2006), Cummings (2010), and Radnitz (2010: chap. 6).

local places and were therefore mobilized by local elites, set out to the capital at Bishkek and held meetings to demand Akaev's resignation and called for another election on the grounds that the government employed extensive electoral manipulation. By March 24, the number of protesters had reached between fifteen thousand and twenty thousand, and they clashed with pro-presidential supporters as well as the police (Marat 2006: 7). After a few such skirmishes, anti-government protesters stormed the presidential palace, only to discover that Akaev had already escaped from there a few hours earlier: Akaev's fourteen-year rule ended with this dramatic post-electoral popular mobilization.

## 8.4. The Weakening of Akaev's Mobilization Capabilities

Like Nazarbaev's Kazakhstan, Akaev's Kyrgyzstan also experienced autocratization during the same period. However, the temporal dynamics of electoral manipulation were starkly different between these two regimes: Whereas Kazakhstan became less reliant on such techniques over time, Kyrgyzstan experienced more extensive, pro-regime electoral manipulation in the forms of blatant electoral fraud and the adoption of SMD systems. Furthermore, elections served as a focal point of popular protests in Kyrgyzstan, whereas such post-electoral mobilization hardly occurred in Kazakhstan and elections worked as an opposite focal point in which elites and citizens declared their political support for the dictator. *Why did Akaev become more dependent upon electoral manipulation and thereby experience the more intense post-electoral protests that eventually led to the breakdown of his regime?*

In this section, I suggest that the key to solving this puzzle lies in significant differences between the two regimes on temporal changes in the two dictators' mobilization capabilities. I then go on to argue that these differences led to the contrasting impacts of authoritarian elections on political order—massive protests and authoritarian breakdown after the 2005 elections in Kyrgyzstan and post-electoral authoritarian consolidation of the Nazarbaev regime in the 2000s. As discussed in chapter 7, Nazarbaev primarily succeeded in enhancing his mobilization capabilities vis-à-vis other political elites with the help of growing natural resource wealth from the early to late 2000s, thereby reducing the need to use extensive electoral manipulation. Conversely, Akaev deteriorated his mobilization capabilities over time, which left him little choice but to resort to extensive electoral manipulation to secure electoral victories. Facing declining

capabilities to mobilize the masses, he could not help using extensive election fraud such as the majoritarian electoral system for the 2005 elections. However, excessive electoral manipulation consequently triggered massive popular protests, which were mobilized by opposition elites who perceived the weakness of the regime. As I compare the situations in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, I examine Akaev's decreasing power of mobilization by focusing on the three factors highlighted in the theory of authoritarian elections: (1) small and shrinking discretionary financial resources, (2) the weakening of organizational bases, and (3) the emergence of the strong opposition.

### Small and Shrinking Financial Resources: Gold and Aid

Although Akaev initially possessed financial resources stemming from gold and foreign aid, their amounts were essentially small. Furthermore, although gold was an important source of discretionary financial resources, foreign aid was much less discretionary in nature, and the Kyrgyz government's use of foreign aid had been closely monitored and accessed according to democratic progress by international organizations and donor countries. As a result, financial resources that Akaev was able to distribute declined from the mid-1990s up to the 2005 legislative elections, which negatively affected his mobilization capability.

Unlike Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan does not possess rich natural resources such as oil and gas.[14] One of Kyrgyzstan's main sources of natural resource wealth is Kumtor, the country's biggest gold mine, which accounted for nearly 50 percent of industrial output in Kyrgyzstan between 1996 and 2000. An indication of the enormous dependence of the country's economy on this gold mine is that GDP growth dropped to zero when a landslide occurred in 2002 and the accident shut down the gold mine (Pomfret 2006: 80). However, gold wealth did not necessarily contribute to improving Akaev's mobilization power for two main reasons. First, the mineral income per capita in the country was too small to contribute to enhancing the dictator's discretionary financial resources to garner political support. Gold income per capita accounts for only 1 percent of GDP per capita, far less than the average of 15 percent of GDP per capita occupied by Kazakhstan's natural resource wealth between 1995 and 2005.[15]

Second, particularly from the early 2000s, gold wealth was put into high

14. According to Ross (2012), oil-gas value per capita only accounted for US$3.9 on average between 1992 and 2005.

15. I made this comparison of people's dependence on natural resource wealth by using Haber and Menaldo (2011).

officials' pockets for their personal use without being used as a source of goods or provisions for the citizenry. The exploitation of the Kumtor gold mine began as a joint venture of the Kyrgyz government and Canadian mining and energy giant Cameco in 1992, with operations ensuing in 1997 after a period of preparation. In 2004, a financial restructuring of the joint venture created a new company called Centerra, which was listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange. However, the company was politically controversial because high-ranking government officials were accused of enjoying a vast amount of rents from its proceeds (Pomfret 2006: 80). Based on an audit report submitted to the Kyrgyz government in 2013, Doolot and Heathershaw (2015: 98) documented how the financial restructuring brought about political corruption within the inner circle of the Akaev regime:

> The report alleges that a US$4 million bribe was paid to Kyrgyz officials in 2002, one year prior to the restructuring. The report also identifies the offshore vehicle that received the payment as Eckerd Ltd, registered in the British Virgin Islands, "whose real owners were presumably linked to former President Akayev. . . . Eckerd Ltd was later used to divert some US$11 million from the state-owned holding company Kyrgyzaltyn. The restructuring led to a reduction in the share of the Kyrgyz state in the Kumtor venture from 67% to 28.8%. While the first government report is a judgment by the new regime on the old regimes, the fact that the restructuring of the Kumtor project disadvantaged the public purse while enriching certain individuals is indisputable."

Due to Kyrgyzstan's scarce natural resources, Akaev attempted to fill the gap by turning to foreign aid and stabilization loans from international organizations and Western countries. One of his motivations behind the rapid political and economic reforms implemented after national independence was to appeal to the international community to receive financial assistance (Tordoff 1995: 96). Akaev "took the view that only by adopting such a pro-reform position in advance of many neighboring states could his country hope to attract investment and economic support from the outside world" (Anderson 1999: 75–76). Responding to the radical political and economic reforms, international organizations agreed to provide extensive financial support to Akaev; the IMF provided over US$60 million to back up the introduction of the Kyrgyz som in May 1993; the World Bank offered a number of substantial credits to support the reform

programs; and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Asian Development Bank also provided large amounts of financial assistance to smooth privatization processes (Anderson 1999: 76). In sum, foreign aid from Western countries had increased dramatically from less than US$25 million in 1992 to more than US$275 million in 1995 (McGlinchey 2011: 89).

However, foreign aid serves much less as discretionary financial resources for dictators compared with natural resource wealth. First, the amount of foreign aid flowing into Kyrgyzstan became stagnated in response to the country's growing autocratization. Specifically, as Akaev turned into an authoritarian leader and thereby strengthened his rule, financial assistance from the international community stagnated, thus resulting in shrinking discretionary financial resources from the early 2000s. Foreign aid, which had been maintained at US$230–300 million between 1995 and 1999, decreased to less than US$200 million between 2000 and 2003. For instance, the World Bank had rated the implementation of the country's loans offered by the bank as "highly satisfactory" when it offered US$60 million as "rehabilitation credit" (RC) and "privatization and enterprise sector adjustment credit" (PESAC) in 1994; however, these ratings were downgraded to "marginally satisfactory" by 2002. McGlinchey (2011: 92) attributed this downgrading to Akaev appointees engaging in intermediary exploitation as brokers between international donors and the central government:

> RC's rating was lowered because its funds were used to finance inefficient state owned enterprises (SOEs) and the technical assistance (TA) component had little government management and was undermanaged by IDA [the World Bank's International Development Association]. The outcome of PESAC was considered only marginally satisfactory because the objective of attracting strategic investors was not realized, serious corporate governance issues were not addressed, negligible enterprise restructuring followed privatization, and many of the loss-making enterprises intended to be liquidated or restructured continue to drag on the economy. In short, the money was distributed according to the logic of the Kyrgyz political market, not the economic free market.

Second, financial resources stemming from foreign assistance are more difficult to use directly for a dictator's political purposes than natural resource wealth because international actors pay close attention to how the

central government uses such aid. As stated by a legislator in Kyrzygstan's parliament who had been working in the agency of state budget during the Akaev regime: "Akaev and his government were unable to use foreign assistance for electoral purposes through fiscal policies due to international organizations' monitoring budget of the country" (author's interview with a deputy [#33]). The case of the Akaev regime strongly indicates that foreign aid does not function as discretionary financial resources.

In the wake of the Afghanistan War in 2001, the Kyrgyz government decided to supply the air base at Manas to the United States, which resulted in generating unexpected windfalls for the Akaev regime. It is estimated that the air base provided the Akaev government with average revenues of US$40 million for fuel subcontracts and US$2 million in rental fees, as well as US$7,000 each time a U.S. military plane took off from Manas from 2003 to 2005. However, none of these payments ever passed through official Kyrgyz accounts. Rather, the Akaev family was alleged to have put the money into their pockets without using it to buy off political support, as family members controlled companies operating the Manas International Airport (McGlinchey 2011: 98). Therefore, fiscal revenues from the U.S. air base did not contribute to the president's ability to distribute economic favors to the masses.

### *Weak Disciplinary Organizations*

In stark contrast with President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan, who gradually succeeded in centralizing and institutionalizing a state apparatus and a dominant party, President Akaev was unable to build centralized political organizations to streamline the distribution of economic resources. On the contrary, economic reform and privatization promoted de facto financial decentralization in the country. Decentralized economic structures served as a significant factor greatly promoting de facto political decentralization, which enabled local elites to retain power in their strongholds and also made it difficult for Akaev to construct a strong ruling party organization. Overall, these mechanisms ultimately contributed to weakening the disciplinary organizations necessary to streamline economic distribution to the citizenry.

Unlike Nazarbaev, who always carefully dealt with the risk of fiscal decentralization and controlled the processes of privatization for fear of opposition forces, Akaev allowed high levels of financial decentralization. As discussed, Akaev had no choice but to implement radical economic and political reforms to attract foreign capital and international aid in order for the resource-poor country to take off. According to Jones Luong (2002:

115), Akaev was "convinced that a significant degree of influence over the economy must be decentralized in order for the transition to the market to succeed. He was hesitant to design an economic reform agenda from the center without careful consideration of local conditions, which he believed regional leaders were in the best position to determine." His decision to delegate economic decision-making to local governments resulted in generating independent businessmen and strong local elites who held discretionary economic resources independent of the central government. Thus, land privatization did not empower ordinary farmers but rather benefited collective farm directors, most of whom were local strongmen, because they could exert control over privatized land by utilizing personal connections with regional governments (Bloch and Rasmussen 1998, 125; Radnitz 2010: 62–63). Local businessmen who had launched their companies amid privatization often ran for legislative elections using their strongholds as a base and employing their own local networks and independent resources to gain parliamentary seats (Radnitz 2010). For example, according to Sjöberg's (2011: 72) analysis, forty-six out of the top one hundred wealthiest people in the country ran for the 2005 legislative elections, making up 12 percent of the candidates.

In stark contrast with Kazakhstan, where the central government rapidly strengthened financial centralization via fiscal transfers and thereby tightened control over local elites, in Kyrgyzstan seven oblast (regional) and two major city (Bishkek and Osh) governments remained less financially dependent on the central government throughout the Akaev regime, and their regional elites wielded great power. Akims, or regional governors, were entitled to decide their own budgets particularly in autonomous oblasts. Immediately after independence (1993), only 17.67 percent of local governments' revenues derived from fiscal transfers from the central government (Tordoff 1995: 502). In particular, southern regions such as Osh and Jalal-Abad, the opposition's strongholds critical of Akaev, tended not to receive government transfers (0 percent and 16 percent, respectively). The high autonomy of regional governments was never reduced by the president, and their strong power was maintained until the collapse of the Akaev regime in 2005 (Radnitz 2010). In the early to mid-2000s, government transfers stayed at similar levels (2002: 26.8 percent; 2003: 19.5 percent; 2004: 12.8 percent; Taranchieva 2007: 29). Given that government transfers to regional governments reached 40 percent of local budgets in Kazakhstan by the mid-2000s, the Kyrgyzstan figures suggest that local governments continued to hold independent sources of revenues in the last couple of years of the Akaev rule.

Political decentralization went hand in hand with fiscal decentralization. "At this time [November 1990], and especially after his popular elections as the first president of independent Kyrgyzstan the following October, Akaev had the opportunity to decrease or at least impose greater limits on regional akims' growing authority. Yet, he did little to halt the 'spontaneous' devolution of power, and instead, supported policies that directly contributed to this process" (Jones Luong 2002: 108). In March 1992, he supported amendments to the Law on Local Self-Governance and Local Administration in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, which strengthened the role of akims in decision-making and the implementation of policies at the local level (108–9). Akims were empowered to decide public policies such as those related to housing, communal and health services, local education, and social insurance, and they were also given strong formal and informal disciplinary power in their regions. Formally, they supervised departments in their oblast governments, serving as the personal and political representatives of the head of governments. Informally, taking advantage of their local authority, they also had extensive local networks that "held together bonds of friendship and loyalty, [while exercising] extensive patronage" (Tordoff 1995: 500).

Substantively, regional elites took advantage of akims' discretion, which contributed to magnifying decentralized structures of political power. Between 1992 and 1995, seven out of eight akims came from the same oblasts (Jones Luong 2002: 290), thus indicating that the centrifugal tendency of political power had been much more advanced than that of Kazakhstan during the same period. It was very difficult for Akaev to parachute his own favorites to such positions, as a newly appointed akim would not be able to garner support from local elites and their followers in regions where he lacked local networks of clientelism. In fact, Siegel (2014) documented that only twelve out of seventy-eight akims between 1991 and 2014 had "slid" from an akim of one region to that of another, thus suggesting that the center needed to consider autonomous regional power in the cadre rotation of akims.

It is not hard to imagine that in a country where regional elites were very strong vis-à-vis the president, its party system was also not well institutionalized. The underdevelopment of national party systems made the president's organizational base extremely weak because he could not use the party organization to discipline ruling elites. The under-institutionalization of national party systems was manifested by the following two factors: (1) frequent realignments and fragmentation of political parties and (2)

proliferation of independent politicians who held political and financial resources independent of political parties (Hale 2006).

Numerous political parties emerged in Kyrgyzstan immediately after independence; however, most of them were initiated by powerful regional leaders and/or strongmen in localities and thus attempted to represent only local interests in parliament (Jones Luong 2002: 112–14; Collins 2006: 231–40): "Parties did not serve the function that they do in Western democracies, aggregating the interests of society and translating those preferences into public policy. Instead, parties were vehicles for ambitious elites to gain or retain a seat in the parliament. They were regionally concentrated and weakly rooted in society, and had little organizational capacity" (Radnitz 2010: 71). Eleven political parties competed and obtained at least one seat in the parliament in the 1995 elections (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001: 447), thus demonstrating the extremely fragmented nature of the party system. In fact, surveys taken in 1999 show that 33 percent of respondents could not name even one party in the country, and 45 percent answered that none of the political parties represented their interests (Alymkulov and Kulatov 2002: 530). Moreover, their support bases were concentrated in certain regions. For example, Erkin Kyrgyzstan, an opposition party led by Topchuibek Turgunaliev, had its main supporters in Osh Oblast, whereas Ata Meken, which was formed when it split from Erkin Kyrgyzstan, had Jalal-Abad Oblast as its main support base. In the 2000 legislative elections, in which a party list with a nationwide district was introduced for fifteen seats out of sixty to make the party system more nationalized, nine political parties gained at least one seat, and their regional concentrations of supporters were still salient (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001; Abazov 2003: 548; Collins 2006: 240). Overall, the Kyrgyz party system failed to achieve nationalization and remained highly fractionalized during the Akaev regime, which is strikingly different from the case of Kazakhstan, where pro-presidential parties turned less fractionalized over time during the same period.

Independent politicians also proliferated in elections, and the proportion of independents remained stable during the Akaev regime. Because the country was highly decentralized both politically and financially, independent politicians, many of whom were businessmen, had large amounts of discretionary financial resources for their own election campaigns in their districts and maintained close relationships with autonomous akims and other local "notables" (Collins 2006: 237–38). For example, in the 1995 legislative elections, 63.8 percent of elected legislators were inde-

pendents. In the 2000 legislative elections, the proportion of independents in the parliament increased slightly to 69.5 percent (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001: 447), thus suggesting that election campaigns were not party centered and were largely driven by the resources and reputation of self-nominated politicians. This also marks a clear contrast with the case of Kazakhstan. Although Kazakhstan had a large number of independents during the 1990s, Nazarbaev succeeded in gradually incorporating these independents into ruling parties.

Importantly, Akaev was unable to successfully construct a dominant party amid the fractionalized party system and regionally dispersed networks of local elites. In the 1995 legislative elections, the pro-presidential party SDPK marked only 13.3 percent of total seats. Also in the 2000 legislative elections, the two pro-presidential parties, the SDS and My Country, obtained 15.2 percent of total seats, which was far from a majority (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 1999: 447; Abazov 2003: 551). These pro-presidential parties scored only 25.1 percent in the party list PR portion of the 2000 elections (Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 1999: 445), which indicates a very weak mobilization capability of the regime given that this was achieved only after Akaev resorted to extensive electoral manipulation. Two years before the 2005 parliamentary elections, Akaev created Alga Kyrgyzstan by merging the existing pro-presidential parties, seemingly mimicking dominant parties like Russia's United Russia and Kazakhstan's Otan. However, given that Alga Kyrgyzstan failed to merge with the other pro-presidential party and incorporate numerous pro-presidential independent candidates prior to the 2005 elections, it is safe to conclude that the party did not play the role of integrating ruling elites very well (Uyama 2006: 49).[16]

The evidence thus far strongly suggests that Akaev failed to build strong disciplinary organizations with which he could have mobilized his supporters. If this is the case, one may wonder why Akaev was able to win the presidential and parliamentary elections in relatively free and fair ways (albeit limited) in the middle of the 1990s. As discussed in the subsection of section 8.4 on discretionary financial resources, one plausible factor is the relative existence of financial resources shared among ruling elites and their supporters: the shared material resources derived from gold and foreign aid allowed Akaev to maintain a certain level of political support

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16. The V-Party dataset indicates that although Alga Kyrgyzstan had stronger local organizational strength (measured by v2paactcom) and the prevalence of local party office (measured by v2palocoff) compared to the preceding pro-presidential SDS, the scores are much lower than Kazakhstan's Nur-Otan.

from local elites. Another relevant answer to this puzzle is that by sharing patronage resources with other ruling elites, he was able to successfully mobilize local elites' networks by making cooperative relationships with akims and other local bosses. A couple of years after independence, he managed to maintain stable ruling coalitions to keep a grip on power. As McGlinchey (2011: 94) succinctly pointed out, "Paradoxically, the diffuse nature of economic and political reform aid—the fact that reform aid is distributed not directly to the president but to ministers, regional and local governments, members of parliament, even NGO activists—forces leaders like Akaev to pursue the very wealth redistribution policies that are most likely to sustain autocratic rule." In exchange for financial resources drawn from the president, members of the ruling coalition then mobilized supporters in their own electoral districts by utilizing their local patronage networks and resources, which was very effective in bringing electoral victories to Akaev in the 1995 elections (Huskey 1997: 258–59; Collins 2006: 231–40). Indeed, there were many practices of distribution during election campaigns in rural areas: as Huskey (1997: 261) reported, "In some districts campaign vodka flowed like a river." However, this informal alliance between Akaev and ruling elites was not stable in the long run because Akaev monopolized shrinking financial resources in later periods. That said, Akaev could manage to derive support from local elites at least during the earlier phase by sharing sources of patronage extensively among the ruling elites, even amid the serious economic decline in the 1990s.

### Growing Opposition

Coinciding with the processes in which Akaev became unable or unwilling to maintain financial resources to share with other actors and cement political compliance via disciplinary organizations, opposition leaders began to challenge him. After the 1995 elections, political elites who had local networks in the southern regions began to dissent against the president. Two lawmakers, Omurbek Tekebaev and Dooronbek Sadyrbaev, played important roles in forming the opposition in the south, followed by Usen Sydykov, a deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers (Radnitz 2010: 74). As popular support for Akaev declined, the opposition became far stronger, and several prominent politicians began organizing anti-government protests as well as opposition election campaigns prior to the 2000 elections, while also involving elites in Akaev's northern support base. In particular, powerful ruling elites who had obtained their important positions in the government due to prior support for Akaev defected from the regime and

launched opposition parties while taking advantage of their dense patronage networks with local populations. For instance, Felix Kulov, who came from the north and had served in various important posts in the government, including the mayor of Bishkek in 1998–1999, formed the opposition party Ar-Namys in 1999 and declared his intention to participate in the 2000 legislative elections. Daniyar Usenov, another famous politician from the north, also turned into opposition and proclaimed his run for the 2000 presidential elections as an opposition candidate.

Although the 2000 elections were more extensively rigged than the 1995 elections, they did not lead to nationwide opposition protests like those of the 2005 elections. As discussed, the 2000 elections were followed by occasional protests in support of defeated opposition candidates, but they did not develop into larger ones (Kulov 2008: 117). Why did the 2000 elections not provoke large-scale post-electoral protests? First, the opposition forces were not unified at that time, and some prominent opposition candidates were able to gain some seats. Both the deep division within the opposition camp and co-optation of opposition figures in the parliament may have led opposition parties to speculate that electoral manipulation, even if it was implemented, would not be too extensive to completely crowd out the opposition parties (Kulov 2008: 120). In fact, the divide-and-conquer tactics worked: although the most powerful opposition leaders, such as Kulov and Usenov, were repressed by the government and exposed to blatant electoral fraud, other figures, such as Adakhan Madumarov, Azimbek Beknazarov, Ismail Isakov, and Omurbek Tekebaev, could secure seats in the 2000 elections by mobilizing their local networks to gather votes. Different understandings of the extensiveness of electoral manipulation among opposition leaders may have made it difficult for them to unite after the elections. Second, although Akaev's financial resources had been decreasing, he still did not monopolize state resources to squander them for his family as he did after the 2000 elections (McGlinchey 2011: 86–88).

Up through the 2000 elections, the opposition forces had been seriously divided without investing much effort into coordination (Lewis 2008: 125–26). The turning point was a riot in 2002 in the southern village of Aksy. This event became "a focal point that cemented alliances between new and old oppositionists and pushed fence-sitters into the opposition camp" (Radnitz 2010: 74). Azimbek Beknazarov, a nationalist parliamentary deputy born in and elected from Aksy, was arrested on dubious charges relating to an affray that had occurred several years earlier. However, Akaev actually ordered his arrest because Beknazarov planned to impeach Akaev in parliament on the grounds that Akaev had agreed with

the Chinese government to transfer a remote territory in eastern Kyrgyzstan to China (see, e.g., Lewis 2008: 127). To contest the president's abuse of power, Beknazarov mobilized his local supporters, and they began to throw stones at the police, who then opened fire onto them and killed five unarmed demonstrators. Subsequent anti-government protests cemented a network of opposition politicians by encouraging a wide range of participation regardless of regions. Kurmanbek Bakiev, who was serving as the prime minister at that time and later became the president of Kyrgyzstan following the collapse of the Akaev regime, resigned to take responsibility for this Aksy incident and then defected from the regime and joined the opposition camp. In sum, the opposition forces had become much stronger leading up to the 2005 parliamentary elections, marking a clear contrast with the case of Kazakhstan, where the opposition camp became weaker by the middle of the 2000s.

To remain in power, the emerging opposition urged Akaev to resort to extensive electoral manipulation through blatant electoral fraud and the adoption of the pure SMD system. However, the excessive use of electoral manipulation was accompanied by significant side effects, which then involved him in the spiral of post-electoral protests that resulted in autocratic breakdown. Specifically, Akaev's activities encouraged the opposition to unite for electoral purposes as well as damaged regime legitimacy. First, on the eve of the 2005 elections, the opposition succeeded in building pre-electoral opposition coalitions. The most visible and extensive opposition coalition was the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (HDK), which was led by Kurmanbek Bakiev and represented nine opposition parties across the ideological spectrum (Kulov 2008: 342). The HDK then "formed an alliance with three other opposition coalitions with the potential to project significant strength . . . from the union of individual opposition figures from both the north and south of the country" (Radnitz 2010: 135).

Second, blatant electoral fraud and the switch to the pure SMD system also significantly suppressed voter turnout, thereby further undermining citizens' trust toward democratic practices of the regime. The second round of the 2005 elections had only 51 percent turnout (Marat 2006), the country's lowest since the first elections in 1995. Moreover, after the election, only 22 percent of citizens answered that they believed the election was fair in a post-election survey (Sjöberg 2011: 70); most considered the election to have been biased in favor of ruling parties and pro-presidential candidates.

Given that the united opposition actively campaigned amid serious electoral manipulation by the government, their devastating loss in the 2005

elections was highly surprising for many opposition supporters. In addition, people generally perceived that the Akaev regime was highly unpopular due to growing nepotism and corruption within the government, as the previous sections illustrated. Motivated by this large gap between the unpopularity of the Akaev regime and the overwhelming electoral victories of pro-presidential candidates, opposition leaders, most of whom were losing their races, found it easier to mobilize their supporters to denounce the electoral manipulation by the government. As Henry Hale (2015: 196) pointed out, "When the first round of voting indicated that Akaev's supporters were winning far more seats than the regime's popularity level made credible, when major opposition figures like Roza Otunbaeva were disqualified, and when Akaev's relatives . . . appeared to be headed to parliamentary seats . . . , losers of the formal counts rallied their forces and quickly joined efforts, with southern network leading the way." After their defeats, opposition candidates began mobilizing their supporters to protest against the president's electoral manipulation. Once large protests occurred in some electoral districts, they rapidly spread to other districts and regions, which reduced the costs for people to join the public dissents and thus escalated into national-level mobilization.[17] In the second round of the elections, opposition parties gained only four seats, while the ruling parties secured the majority of the seats. This outcome further fueled public dissent. In what is known as the Tulip Revolution, local opposition elites mobilized protesters from various regions and protested in Bishkek, leading to the collapse of the Akaev regime.

## 8.5. Economic Maneuvering in Kyrgyzstan

This section examines political business cycles (PBCs) in Kyrgyzstan under the Akaev regime. I have shown that Akaev increasingly became dependent upon electoral manipulation as he lacked mobilization capabilities via financial resources and disciplinary organizations. An additional observable implication of the theory of autocratic elections is that Akaev should in turn rely less on the techniques of economic maneuvering such as the distribution of pork and patronage over time. In fact, the narratives in the previous sections suggest that the Akaev regime shared financial resources with a wide range of ruling elites during the 1990s; however, shrinking

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17. The dynamics of protests in the Tulip Revolution are well depicted by Marat (2006), Cummings (2010), and Radnitz (2010).
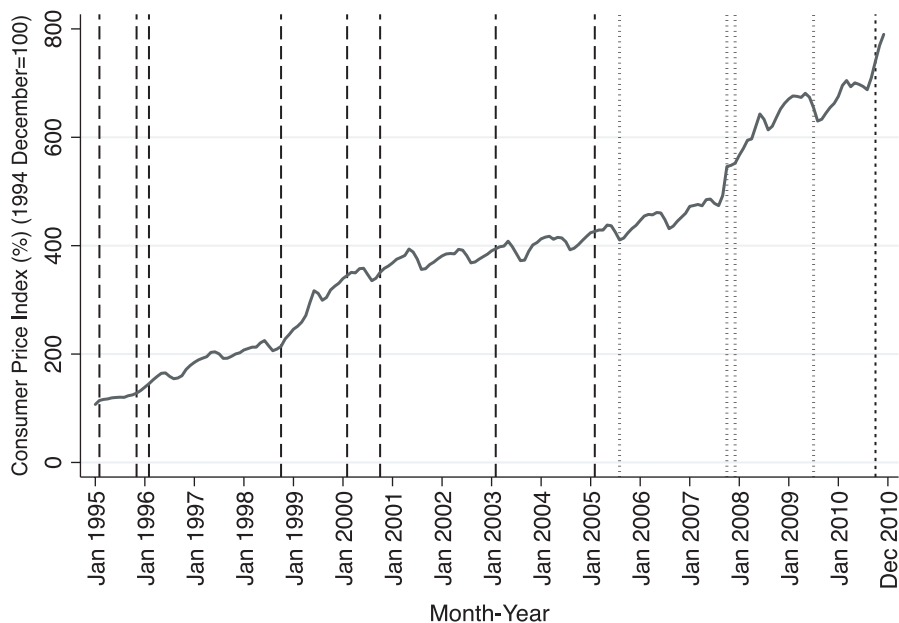
Fig. 8.4. Time-Series Change in Consumer Price Index in Kyrgyzstan (1995–2010)
*Note:* The long-dashed lines stand for elections under the Akaev regime, the dotted lines stand for elections under the Bakiev regime, and the short-dashed lines stand for elections under the interim government.

financial resources and the regime's increasing nepotistic tendencies made it difficult to distribute patronage outside the president's inner circle in later years. Throughout the Akaev regime, the distribution of economic goodies did not take the form of large scales of expansionary fiscal policies such as salary and pension increases (such as those observed in the case of Kazakhstan), but rather it was limited to the exchange of small goods between politicians and voters during election days (Radnitz 2010: 133–34). To quantitatively test this theoretical expectation, I conduct a time-series analysis of the PBCs.

For the purpose of comparison, my analysis includes two regimes that were established after Akaev—the Bakiev regime (2005–10) and the interim government led by Roza Otunbaeva (2010–11). To remain consistent with the analysis of the PBCs in Kazakhstan, I use the monthly specified consumer price index (CPI) as the dependent variable. The data come from the *Bulletin of the National Bank of Kyrgyz Republic*. Setting the CPI at December 1994 as 100, I calculate the CPI between January 1995 and December 2010. As many studies of the PBCs have argued, inflation after

TABLE 8.3. Political Business Cycles in Kyrgyzstan (1995–2010)

| Dependent variable | Model 1 CPI | Model 2 CPI | Model 3 CPI | Model 4 CPI | Model 5 CPI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Election type | All elections | All elections | Parliamentary | Presidential | Referendum |
| Post-election periods (6 months) | 4.742*** (1.32) | | | | |
| Post-election periods (Akaev, 6 months) | | 1.991 (1.552) | | | |
| Post-election periods (Bakiev) | | 6.555*** (2.048) | | | |
| Post-election periods (interim) | | 15.44*** (4.932) | | | |
| Post-parliamentary 1995 (Akaev) | | | 3.509 (3.496) | | |
| Post-parliamentary 2000 (Akaev) | | | –0.0232 (3.468) | | |
| Post-parliamentary 2005 (Akaev) | | | –1.301 (3.468) | | |
| Post-parliamentary (Bakiev) | | | 12.06*** (3.424) | | |
| Post-parliamentary (interim) | | | 15.38*** (4.779) | | |
| Post-presidential 1995 (Akaev) | | | | 2.504 (4.070) | |
| Post-presidential 2000 (Akaev) | | | | 1.896 (4.066) | |
| Post-presidential (Bakiev) | | | | –0.473 (2.960) | |
| Post-referendum 1996 (Akaev) | | | | | 4.399 (3.537) |
| Post-referendum 1998 (Akaev) | | | | | 3.56 (3.499) |
| Post-referendum 2003 (Akaev) | | | | | –0.515 (3.537) |
| Post-referendum (Bakiev) | | | | | 9.998*** (3.499) |
| Post-referendum (interim) | | | | | 15.15*** (4.805) |
| Seasonal dummies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

TABLE 8.3.—*Continued*

| Dependent variable | Model 1 CPI | Model 2 CPI | Model 3 CPI | Model 4 CPI | Model 5 CPI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 192 | 192 | 192 | 192 | 192 |
| Adjusted R-squared | 0.56 | 0.53 | 0.54 | 0.48 | 0.56 |
| Durbin-Watson test | 1.93 | 1.91 | 1.87 | 1.94 | 1.87 |
| F-value | 17.55*** | 13.90*** | 11.68*** | 11.48*** | 12.69*** |

*Note:* ***$p < 0.01$. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. The Durbin-Watson test is performed after correcting serial autocorrelation through the AR(1) process. The results of pre-electoral periods dummies are not reported in the table due to space constraints.

elections is interpreted as good evidence that governments adopt expansionary fiscal policy before elections.

Figure 8.4 plots time-series changes in CPI. The vertical lines represent the months when elections were held (long-dashed lines, Akaev regime; dotted lines, Bakiev regime; the short-dashed, the interim government). Examining post-electoral changes in inflation rates under the Akaev regime, it seems elections do not induce big spikes in inflation rates.

Table 8.3 shows the estimation results using the identical time-series ordinary least squares regression models (i.e., the first difference Prais-Winsten regressions) with the equivalent set of control variables used for the analysis of the PBCs in Kazakhstan.[18] Model 1 confirms that Kyrgyzstan also tended to experience a post-electoral surge in inflation rates by 4.7 percent, thus indicating that in general the Kyrgyz government loosened fiscal policies during election periods in 1995–2010.

Interestingly, differentiating elections into the ones held under the three different regimes (the Akaev, Bakiev, and Otunbaeva administrations), Model 2 shows that while elections under the Bakiev and the interim government had strong and statistically significant impacts on post-election surges in inflation rates, those under the Akaev regime were not exposed to pre-electoral economic maneuvering; its coefficient is much smaller than those in the subsequent regimes, and the results are not statistically signifi-

18. Because visual inspection and the Dickey-Fuller test revealed that the CPI data are nonstationary, I take the first difference to transform the dependent variable into stationary data. In addition, because the Durbin-Watson test suggests that the CPI involves autocorrelation, I adopt the AR (1) process through the Prais-Winsten method. Monthly dummies are included for the dependent variable to control for seasonal effects. I set six months before/after elections as electoral periods; otherwise, the months were coded as non-electoral periods.

cant. This result suggests that the Akaev regime did not adopt the strategy of economic maneuvering prior to elections.

Closely looking at three different types of elections under the Akaev regime (parliamentary elections in February 1995, February 2000, and February 2005; presidential elections in December 1995 and October 2000; and referendums in February 1996, October 1998, and February 2003), Models 3–5 suggest declining patterns over time on the post-electoral increases in inflation rates, although all the estimation results fail to reject the null hypothesis even at the 10 percent significance level. For instance, in the 1995 parliamentary elections, inflation rates after the election were 3.5 percent. But they became almost 0 percent in the 2000 elections and turned negative in the 2005 parliamentary elections, which triggered the post-electoral protests and the subsequent breakdown of Akaev regime. The similar patterns can be observed from presidential elections and referendums. Overall, the quantitative analysis of the PBCs is consistent with the qualitative case illustration offered in the previous sections.

## 8.6. Conclusion

This chapter explored the case of Kyrgyzstan as a negative case for my theory of autocratic elections. In the 1990s, the Akaev regime shared financial resources derived from international assistance and mineral resources with members of ruling coalitions, which enabled the president to outpace opposition leaders and mobilize a relatively large number of supporters without relying heavily on extensive electoral manipulation. However, as financial resources became reduced and Akaev primarily used his highly limited resources to maintain loyalty from his family and cronies in sustaining his regime, he became more inclined to use extensive electoral manipulation such as blatant fraud and the pure SMD system, which helped the dictator bias election results. In the 2000 elections, a high degree of blatant electoral fraud under the SMD-dominant system continued to effectively sustain the regime without provoking large-scale post-electoral popular protests because the opposition was still weak and divided. However, as the opposition united on the eve of the 2005 parliamentary elections, Akaev resorted to far more extensive electoral manipulation (blatant electoral fraud and a switch back to the pure SMD system), thereby generating a large gap between the regime's perceived popularity and pro-presidential candidates' electoral performance in the first and second rounds of voting. The gap sparked massive opposition protests immediately after the first

round of voting, and the results of the second round of voting further escalated the anti-regime collective action. My analysis also suggests that the more heavily elections are tampered with through blatant fraud and institutional manipulation, the less governments employ economic maneuvering techniques prior to elections. The case of the Akaev regime also provides compelling evidence supporting my argument that excessive electoral manipulation encourages people to take to the streets, thereby threatening the stability of authoritarian regimes. The case of Kyrgyzstan resonates with the argument made by Levitsky and Way (2010), who argued that the combination of low organizational power and high international leverage (i.e., foreign aid) leads to unstable authoritarianism. While in line with their argument about the sources of authoritarian instability, this chapter more closely traced the links between mobilization capabilities, electoral manipulation, economic maneuvering, and post-electoral protests to investigate the causes and consequences of autocratic elections.

# Conclusion

This book has explored the causes and consequences of authoritarian elections. Autocrats have to deal with a dilemma at the ballot box: to maintain their rule, they need to win big in elections, yet the manipulation of election results sacrifices the useful benefits of authoritarian elections, such as demonstrating regime strength, gathering information, and driving a wedge within the opposition camp. Under the constraint of the electoral dilemma, authoritarian leaders decide ways of designing authoritarian elections through three methods—blatant electoral fraud, institutional manipulation, and economic maneuvering. Designed elections then have important implications for post-electoral political order in autocracies.

In the concluding chapter, I first summarize the main findings of this book. Then I derive policy implications of transitions from authoritarian rule in general and elections in authoritarian countries in particular. Last, I propose future research avenues.

## 9.1. The Main Findings

In this book, I have argued that under the constraints of the electoral dilemma, the degree to which autocrats are able to mobilize mass support through noncoercive means influences the design of authoritarian elections. Dictators with high mobilization capabilities, who can mobilize regime supporters by distributing pork and patronage effectively, have an incentive to avoid electoral manipulation that involves blatant electoral

fraud and adoption of majoritarian electoral systems. By refraining from manipulating election results through fraudulent and institutional measures, authoritarian leaders can take advantage of authoritarian elections to mitigate the fundamental problems of autocratic rule, such as information shortages and the radicalization of the opposition. Conversely, dictators with low mobilization capabilities are likely to rely more on electoral manipulation, because revealing their de facto weakness at the ballot box activates threats from inner elites, the most imminent threat in authoritarian rule.

To test the empirical implications of the theory of autocratic elections, chapters 3 and 4 explored electoral manipulation in dictatorships. Chapter 3 examined the determinants of a major form of electoral manipulation—blatant electoral fraud—by conducting a cross-national data analysis. Employing cross-national data covering eighty-eight authoritarian countries, I found that dictators with rich natural resource wealth and a weak opposition are less likely to manipulate elections: Autocrats become less dependent on election violence, election cheating, and undemocratic restrictions on electoral law under these conditions. Furthermore, the data analysis also found that natural resource wealth further reduces blatant electoral fraud if autocrats are armed with strong disciplinary organizations, such as dominant parties and large and coherent dominant ethnic groups.

Chapter 4 turned to the logic of institutional manipulation—electoral system changes in electoral authoritarian regimes. Choosing single-member district (SMD) systems, dictators can enjoy a larger seat bias with fewer votes, which enables dictators to win big with low mobilization capabilities. Yet, SMD systems turn an election result into a mixed signal, conveying both regime strength and an opportunity to form a unified opposition. In contrast, proportional representation (PR) systems require dictators to obtain a larger number of votes to win elections overwhelmingly. In so doing, they can send a costly signal of their regime strength and also can divide and rule the opposition by disincentivizing opposition parties to unify due to the electoral system's high proportionality. Using original cross-national data of electoral system changes in ninety-one electoral authoritarian countries, I found that dictators with abundant natural resource wealth and a weak opposition tend to choose PR systems. Furthermore, similar to that of blatant electoral fraud, the effect of natural resources on adopting PR systems is galvanized if authoritarian countries are party-based regimes.

Chapter 5 examined the conditions under which autocrats gear toward

the other type of electioneering strategy—economic maneuvering. In committing to hold relatively free and fair elections, authoritarian leaders have to win elections with large margins without relying much on electoral manipulation, such as blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation. To do so, autocrats need to gather political support from the masses. The manipulation of economic policy enables dictators to win overwhelmingly without electoral manipulation, such that economic maneuvering makes it possible for them to win big with credible election results. Using an original dataset of fiscal revenues and expenditures, my cross-national statistical analysis demonstrated that the magnitude of economic maneuvering becomes larger in relatively free and fair elections. Specifically, I found that authoritarian governments tend to worsen election-year fiscal deficits when elections (1) allow opposition parties and multiple candidates to participate, (2) are free from blatant electoral fraud, and (3) involve PR systems in parliamentary elections.

Chapter 6 investigated the determinants of post-electoral political conflicts in dictatorships—coups, stunning opposition victories, and popular protests. The theory provides implications for political order after authoritarian elections. If the dictator is unable to strategically manipulate elections in dealing with the electoral dilemma, then authoritarian elections backfire on him. More specifically, there are two causal pathways through which elections threaten authoritarian stability. If the dictator employs excessive electoral manipulation, then he is more likely to face popular protests because electoral manipulation provides a focal point for collective action and also political elites find difficulty in making sense of the de facto strength of the regime. On the contrary, if the autocrat is overconfident about his election victory and fails to optimize electoral manipulation, then election results reveal the weakness of the regime, leading to leadership turnover via a post-electoral coup or the opposition's landslide election victory. Using a two-stage statistical estimations, my cross-national analysis rendered supporting evidence on these theoretical expectations.

Chapter 7 then provided an in-depth case study of Kazakhstan, where President Nazarbaev consolidated his rule despite the fact that he gradually became less dependent on blatant electoral fraud and the seat premiums under SMD systems. My case study demonstrated that during the 1990s, when Nazarbaev was still too weak to mobilize a wide range of political support from citizens, he was apt to manipulate election results by committing blatant election fraud and maintaining SMD systems. As he became armed with rich natural resources and centralized political organizations, however, he became more inclined to use pre-electoral economic

maneuvering rather than blatant electoral fraud and also decided to change the country's electoral system to a pure PR system with a single nationwide electoral district. As a result of tactfully designing elections according to his mobilization capabilities, Nazarbaev was able to use elections as a relevant tool to consolidate autocratic rule.

Chapter 8 investigated the case of Kyrgyzstan, where President Akaev faced massive protests after the 2005 elections, the so-called Tulip Revolution. During the 1990s, he managed to maintain his regime and held relatively free and fair elections by using financial resources and maintaining regional alliances with local elites. From the early 2000s, however, he became more inclined to use blatant electoral fraud and shifted the country's electoral system to a pure SMD system, as he increasingly suffered from a lack of monetary resources and faced a strong opposition. Furthermore, he failed to centralize both state and party organizations, and local elites maintained autonomous power in their strongholds, which made it difficult for Akaev to engage in economic maneuvering in an effective way. Despite people's suspicions and concerns over the regime's weakness and unpopularity, the 2005 SMD parliamentary elections exhibited an even higher level of blatant electoral fraud and led to an overwhelming electoral victory of the president and his ruling parties. The oversupply of electoral manipulation sparked popular protests by opposition leaders, resulting in the collapse of the Akaev regime.

## 9.2. Policy Implications

The theory and the empirical findings in this book lead to important policy implications for election monitoring entities and international assistance for transitions from authoritarian rule. First, this book's findings suggest that policy makers may need to provide international assistance for elections under careful consideration over the conditions of domestic politics in authoritarian regimes, particularly the dictator's mobilization capabilities. If the dictator possesses rich discretionary financial resources and strong disciplinary organizations to stand up with relatively free and fair elections, then international election monitoring and subsequently liberalized elections might help the dictator legitimate his rule by winning big and consolidate his regime by exploiting the benefits of elections. Conversely, if strong opposition exists and the dictator suffers from a shortage of resources to distribute, international pressures to hold free and fair elections may pave the way for destabilizing the country's political order by

revealing the dictator's weakness. In other words, which distinct outcomes international assistance facilitates depends on the dictator's mobilization capabilities (which are often difficult to be influenced by international election observers). Strong international pressures without taking into account the distribution of mobilization capabilities in authoritarian countries may bring "unintended consequences" to policy makers, such as the consolidation of autocracy through relatively free and fair elections or the demise of political order in the wake of an excessively free election.

Second, the inadequacy of international election monitoring may be complemented with other channels of international support that are not directly related to electoral institutions. For example, this book analyzed natural resource wealth as a major source of a dictator's discretionary financial resources, because natural resource wealth is mostly state owned and its budget is highly opaque (as in the case of Kazakhstan). By increasing the budgetary transparency of natural resources in oil-rich countries through international channels, the international society may be able to constrain authoritarian governments from engaging in economic maneuvering, on the one hand, and then to prevent dictators from committing electoral manipulation through election monitoring, on the other. In so doing, autocratic elections may be able to promote transitions from authoritarian rule. That being said, we also need to be cautious about such a "democratization by election" scenario through multiple international pathways, because the dictator's failure to win big in an election may simply facilitate coups, civil conflict, and ultimately continued autocratic governance rather than a peaceful democratic transition.

Third, this book also provides evidence that the mere existence of relatively free and fair elections and PR systems does not necessarily contribute to further democratization in authoritarian countries. The main findings of the current research suggest that dictators strategically optimize elections according to their mobilization capabilities. It implies that dictators who monopolize rich financial resources and successfully centralize political organizations can afford to hold relatively free and fair elections while disguising their regimes as democratic to appeal to the international community and the domestic audience. For elections to be democratic, however, they need to have a real potential of achieving a peaceful government alternation through free and fair elections. To do so, international organizations may need to also strengthen their support for non-electoral aspects of democratization, such as cultivating the rule of law, preventing the government from monopolizing financial resources, undermining the dictator's centralized mobilization structures, and helping opposition forces

unite. When effectively combining these measures with international election monitoring, elections are more likely to provide citizens with a real choice of selecting their political leaders. By ensuring circumstances where elections lead to peaceful leadership change, international assistance may become more effective in democratizing authoritarian countries.

## 9.3. Future Research Avenues

Although the current research sheds new light on the logic behind the causes and consequences of autocratic elections, it also clarifies several avenues for future research that may further advance our knowledge. First, future research should make clear under what conditions authoritarian rulers might make "mistakes" on the use of electoral manipulation. Although there are numerous examples in which authoritarian elections turn out to be stunning ones, systematic theoretical explorations on why some authoritarian leaders face such elections were not adequately undertaken in this book. This book elucidated the existence of the electoral dilemma and thus derived empirical implications that should be observed if the dictator fails to strategically manipulate elections. Yet, theorizing about the determinants of the dictators' mistakes should be highly relevant when it comes to making a better prediction on a country's odds of post-electoral political conflicts.

Second, although this book treats blatant electoral fraud and institutional manipulation as an electioneering strategy belonging in the family of electoral manipulation, some autocrats may prefer to use blatant electoral fraud to institutional manipulation, while others may be more capable of resorting to institutional manipulation rather than blatant electoral fraud. For instance, Malaysia's Barisan Nasional significantly increased their seat shares by adopting SMD systems but without relying much on blatant electoral fraud. In Russia, the dominant party, United Russia, had been adopting a PR system until recently, yet in Russian elections the extent of blatant electoral fraud is far more extensive than in some other autocracies such as Malaysia. Although several previous studies suggest that both SMD and blatant electoral fraud tend to go hand in hand, more research should be done to illuminate the conditions under which autocrats prefer blatant electoral fraud to institutional manipulation and vice versa. Theorizing about the pros and cons of electoral manipulation and economic maneuvering, this book spent much effort in identifying a trade-off between these two electioneering strategies rather than finding differences within each strategy.

Third, while this book uses discretionary financial resources, disciplinary organizations, and the opposition's collective action capabilities as proxies to measure the distribution of mobilization capabilities between the dictator and other political elites, it is worth noting that the distribution of mobilization capabilities in dictatorships could stem from various other sources. To be sure, my analytical focus echoes the notion of incumbent capacity advanced by Levitsky and Way (2010). At a broader level, my conceptualization of dictators with high mobilization capabilities also parallels with what Svolik (2012) refers to as the "established autocrats" who "have acquired so much power that they can no longer be credibly threatened by their allies." On the other hand, weak dictators are similar to what Svolik refers to as the "contested autocracy," where "politics is one of balancing between the dictator and the allies" (2012: 6). Therefore, it would be useful, both theoretically and empirically, to move beyond the parsimonious focus on these proxies and paint a fuller picture of different types of dictators.

Fourth, the framework of this book can be extended to international dimensions of autocratic politics, while identifying donor networks and international democracy promotion efforts as explanatory variables influencing the acuteness of the electoral dilemma as well as the methods of electoral manipulation. In fact, scholars have studied international influences on electoral manipulation in developing countries, finding that the presence of international election monitoring observers and dependence on foreign aid are positively associated with free and fair elections (Hyde 2008; Kelley 2012; Dietrich and Wright 2014). In particular, Morse (2019) analyzed cases from sub-Saharan Africa and found that international engagement with electoral authoritarian regimes (e.g., democracy assistance, conditionality, and diplomatic pressure from democratic countries) encourages autocrats to hold relatively free and fair elections. Also the recent literature on democratic backsliding and autocratization suggests that the increasing pressures of democracy promotion efforts since the end of the Cold War have forced the dictators to rely less on blatant measures and more on ambiguous forms of manipulation (Bermeo 2016; Frantz 2018). With regard to electoral system types, researchers emphasize the importance of diffusion mechanisms, arguing that political leaders often emulate the electoral rules of their neighbors (Bader 2014; Bol et al. 2015). How these factors relate to the dictator's dilemma and subsequent repertories of the dictator's electioneering strategies would be a highly promising research avenue in future research.

Finally, it may be possible for future research to add other election-

eering strategies to the menu of manipulation and to theorize on the dynamics of electioneering tools. For instance, autocrats may strategically determine election timing to produce election results in favor of themselves (Higashijima and Yanai 2019). Similarly, the recent development of social networking seems to have added fake news to the dictator's toolbox for manipulating election results (Cheeseman and Klaas 2018). Despite investigating diversifying techniques of electoral manipulation in modern autocracies, scholarship has yet to investigate much about the roles these new methods play in consolidating autocratic rule and their relationships with old-fashioned electoral manipulation techniques.[1] Furthermore, the existing theories of electoral manipulation are mostly based upon a "one-shot game" assumption of electoral manipulation where both autocrats and the opposition will not learn the manners of electoral manipulation from their past experiences. Yet, if it seems likely that dictators learn to manipulate elections based on lessons of the past, theories of autocratic elections should also reflect the dynamic nature of electoral manipulation. Relatedly, some research also suggests that electoral manipulation and electoral competition shape the leader's organizational strengths, which then influence the battlefield in the next elections (Slater 2008; Gehlbach and Simpser 2015). By theorizing such dynamics, it becomes possible to refine our understanding of autocratic elections and develop effective ways of truly liberalizing elections in authoritarian regimes in addition to the more lofty goal of democratizing them.

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1. One important recent attempt is carried out by Morgenbesser (2019), who investigates the evolving nature of the dictator's governing strategies in Southeast Asian autocracies.

# Appendix

This appendix contains descriptive statistics and additional analyses used for chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. Following these data tables is a list of interviews conducted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan that form the information presented in chapters 7 and 8.

## Chapter 3

### Appendix A3: Descriptive Statistics

|  | Number of observations | Mean | Standard deviation | Maximum | Minimum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blatant electoral fraud | 354 | 0.38 | 0.64 | –0.95 | 2.37 |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | 354 | 2.93 | 20.29 | 0 | 357.97 |
| Anti-government collective action | 354 | 0.98 | 1.87 | 0 | 15.66 |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | 354 | 0.45 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | 354 | 0.4 | 0.31 | 0 | 0.98 |
| Military regimes | 354 | 0.17 | 0.38 | 0 | 1 |
| Monarchy regimes | 354 | 0.05 | 0.23 | 0 | 1 |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | 325 | 6.18 | 2.25 | 2 | 12.33 |
| Election administrative incapacity | 325 | 0.21 | 0.72 | –0.31 | 2.24 |
| Main elections | 325 | 0.48 | 0.5 | 0 | 1 |
| Logged GDP per capita | 325 | 7.56 | 0.79 | 6.07 | 9.49 |
| Economic growth | 325 | 2.6 | 6.41 | –24.04 | 19.87 |
| Civil conflict | 325 | 0.06 | 0.24 | 0 | 1 |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | 325 | 7.29 | 8.55 | 0.007 | 62.36 |
| Leadership turnover | 315 | 0.16 | 0.368 | 0 | 1 |
| Popular protests | 312 | 0.19 | 0.396 | 0 | 1 |

### Appendix B3: Additional Analyses

#### *B3.1. Different Techniques of Electoral Fraud*

I. Election Violence Models

|  | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Estimation method | Ordered logit | Ordered logit | Ordered logit |
| Dependent variable | Violence | Violence | Violence |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | –0.108** | –0.0424 | –0.0893 |
|  | (0.0470) | (0.0516) | (0.0858) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.210*** | 0.204*** | 0.211*** |
|  | (0.0533) | (0.0526) | (0.0530) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | 0.150 | 0.328 | 0.148 |
|  | (0.338) | (0.360) | (0.338) |

| Estimation method | Model 1 Ordered logit | Model 2 Ordered logit | Model 3 Ordered logit |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | 0.669 | 0.646 | 0.713 |
| | (0.665) | (0.687) | (0.670) |
| Oil*PBR | | −0.154 | |
| | | (0.0967) | |
| Oil*EOP | | | −0.0421 |
| | | | (0.173) |
| Military regimes | 0.833* | 0.820 | 0.836* |
| | (0.499) | (0.501) | (0.496) |
| Monarchy regimes | −0.717 | −0.690 | −0.715 |
| | (0.689) | (0.698) | (0.688) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | −0.126 | −0.137 | −0.126 |
| | (0.114) | (0.116) | (0.112) |
| Election administrative incapacity | −0.0441 | −0.0354 | −0.0529 |
| | (0.219) | (0.221) | (0.228) |
| Main elections | 0.127 | 0.108 | 0.127 |
| | (0.146) | (0.146) | (0.146) |
| Logged GDP per capita | −0.481 | −0.458 | −0.484 |
| | (0.371) | (0.375) | (0.364) |
| Economic growth | 0.00110 | 0.00140 | 0.00163 |
| | (0.0224) | (0.0224) | (0.0223) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | −0.0512** | −0.0518** | −0.0513** |
| | (0.0220) | (0.0222) | (0.0219) |
| Civil conflict | 1.910*** | 1.807** | 1.925*** |
| | (0.721) | (0.717) | (0.732) |
| Electoral cheating | 0.136 | 0.142 | 0.136 |
| | (0.110) | (0.112) | (0.110) |
| Legal problems | −0.467*** | −0.493*** | −0.466*** |
| | (0.146) | (0.147) | (0.146) |
| Cut point 1 | −3.215 | −3.058 | −3.212 |
| | (2.262) | (2.281) | (2.256) |
| Cut point 2 | −2.775 | −2.613 | −2.771 |
| | (2.249) | (2.267) | (2.243) |
| Cut point 3 | −1.951 | −1.785 | −1.947 |
| | (2.237) | (2.255) | (2.230) |
| Cut point 4 | −0.182 | −0.0210 | −0.176 |
| | (2.261) | (2.280) | (2.257) |
| Cut point 5 | 0.399 | 0.556 | 0.406 |
| | (2.214) | (2.235) | (2.210) |
| Cut point 6 | 0.849 | 1.004 | 0.857 |
| | (2.209) | (2.228) | (2.205) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 113.86*** | 109.03*** | 114.32*** |
| Log pseudolikelihood | −419.34 | −417.88 | −419.31 |
| Observations | 325 | 325 | 325 |
| Number of countries | 79 | 79 | 79 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## II. Election Cheating Models

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Estimation method | Ordered logit | Ordered logit | Ordered logit |
| Dependent variable | Cheating | Cheating | Cheating |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | –0.019 | –0.012*** | –0.0104 |
| | (0.016) | (0.002) | (0.0269) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.01 | 0.00582 | 0.00999 |
| | (0.0582) | (0.0607) | (0.0583) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | –0.329 | –0.191 | –0.326 |
| | (0.289) | (0.296) | (0.289) |
| Ethnic organizational Power (EOP) | 1.392*** | 1.370*** | 1.437*** |
| | (0.473) | (0.451) | (0.505) |
| Oil*PBR | | –0.0748*** | |
| | | (0.0148) | |
| Oil*EOP | | | –0.0353 |
| | | | (0.0934) |
| Military regimes | –2.529*** | –2.552*** | –2.528*** |
| | (0.373) | (0.371) | (0.375) |
| Monarchy regimes | –0.610 | –0.725** | –0.623 |
| | (0.405) | (0.367) | (0.399) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | –0.184** | –0.208*** | –0.186** |
| | (0.0723) | (0.0729) | (0.0728) |
| Election administrative incapacity | 0.998*** | 1.037*** | 0.992*** |
| | (0.201) | (0.200) | (0.204) |
| Main elections | 0.0495 | 0.0639 | 0.0532 |
| | (0.167) | (0.166) | (0.168) |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.277 | –0.215 | –0.274 |
| | (0.233) | (0.236) | (0.233) |
| Economic growth | –0.0359 | –0.0403* | –0.0354 |
| | (0.0235) | (0.0223) | (0.0237) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | –0.00733 | –0.00907 | –0.00781 |
| | (0.0146) | (0.0152) | (0.0148) |
| Civil conflict | –0.438 | –0.464 | –0.423 |
| | (0.356) | (0.359) | (0.351) |
| Electoral violence | 0.162 | 0.146 | 0.160 |
| | (0.0994) | (0.103) | (0.0999) |
| Legal problems | 0.439*** | 0.421*** | 0.439*** |
| | (0.153) | (0.159) | (0.154) |
| Cut point 1 | –3.859** | –3.671** | –3.829** |
| | (1.597) | (1.629) | (1.598) |
| Cut point 2 | –2.629 | –2.428 | –2.600 |
| | (1.618) | (1.651) | (1.620) |
| Cut point 3 | –1.107 | –0.897 | –1.079 |
| | (1.597) | (1.630) | (1.601) |
| Cut point 4 | –0.146 | 0.0737 | –0.117 |
| | (1.617) | (1.651) | (1.619) |
| Cut point 5 | 0.557 | 0.785 | 0.587 |
| | (1.613) | (1.654) | (1.616) |
| Cut point 6 | 2.284 | 2.524 | 2.315 |
| | (1.643) | (1.686) | (1.646) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 221.73*** | 309.23*** | 228.45*** |
| Log pseudolikelihood | –493.96 | –491.34 | –493.89 |
| Observations | 325 | 325 | 325 |
| Number of countries | 79 | 79 | 79 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

### III. Models of Electoral Law Restriction

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Estimation method | Ordered logit | Ordered logit | Ordered logit |
| Dependent variable | Legal problem | Legal problem | Legal problem |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | −0.00719* | −0.00717* | −0.00722 |
| | (0.00381) | (0.00378) | (0.0242) |
| Anti-government collective action | −0.0922 | −0.0924 | −0.0922 |
| | (0.0789) | (0.0794) | (0.0789) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | −0.130 | −0.126 | −0.130 |
| | (0.339) | (0.345) | (0.338) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | −0.0831 | −0.0853 | −0.0833 |
| | (0.576) | (0.584) | (0.577) |
| Oil*PBR | | −0.00220 | |
| | | (0.0197) | |
| Oil*EOP | | | 0.000177 |
| | | | (0.112) |
| Military regimes | −1.276** | −1.278** | −1.276** |
| | (0.637) | (0.636) | (0.638) |
| Monarchy regimes | 1.807** | 1.803** | 1.807** |
| | (0.704) | (0.712) | (0.712) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | −0.639*** | −0.640*** | −0.639*** |
| | (0.0930) | (0.0936) | (0.0939) |
| Election administrative incapacity | −0.103 | −0.100 | −0.103 |
| | (0.254) | (0.266) | (0.254) |
| Main elections | 0.0728 | 0.0729 | 0.0727 |
| | (0.197) | (0.197) | (0.202) |
| Logged GDP per capita | 0.232 | 0.234 | 0.232 |
| | (0.274) | (0.280) | (0.275) |
| Economic growth | −0.0200 | −0.0202 | −0.0200 |
| | (0.0243) | (0.0250) | (0.0246) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | −0.0281 | −0.0281 | −0.0281 |
| | (0.0193) | (0.0192) | (0.0193) |
| Civil conflict | −0.681 | −0.681 | −0.681 |
| | (0.700) | (0.700) | (0.693) |
| Electoral violence | −0.358*** | −0.359*** | −0.358*** |
| | (0.0987) | (0.0989) | (0.0976) |
| Electoral cheating | 0.263** | 0.262** | 0.263** |
| | (0.116) | (0.120) | (0.116) |
| Cut point 1 | −2.865 | −2.856 | −2.865 |
| | (2.347) | (2.354) | (2.352) |
| Cut point 2 | −1.919 | −1.910 | −1.919 |
| | (2.380) | (2.385) | (2.384) |
| Cut point 3 | −0.0193 | −0.0108 | −0.0196 |
| | (2.338) | (2.345) | (2.340) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 176.62*** | 211.88*** | 203.87*** |
| Log pseudolikelihood | −322.06 | −322.06 | −322.06 |
| Observations | 325 | 325 | 325 |
| Number of countries | 79 | 79 | 79 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## B3.2. Timing of Electoral Fraud

I. Pre-Electoral Fraud

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Estimation method | RE-OLS | RE-OLS | RE-OLS |
| Dependent variable | Pre-electoral fraud | Pre-electoral fraud | Pre-electoral fraud |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | –0.00247*** | –0.00228*** | –0.00512 |
| | (0.000632) | (0.000565) | (0.00420) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.0179 | 0.0158 | 0.0180 |
| | (0.0123) | (0.0122) | (0.0123) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | 0.0123 | 0.0540 | 0.0111 |
| | (0.0796) | (0.0798) | (0.0798) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | 0.151 | 0.124 | 0.138 |
| | (0.147) | (0.140) | (0.154) |
| Oil*PBR | | –0.0181*** | |
| | | (0.00472) | |
| Oil*EOP | | | 0.0126 |
| | | | (0.0198) |
| Military regimes | –0.290*** | –0.293*** | –0.290*** |
| | (0.0935) | (0.0939) | (0.0930) |
| Monarchy regimes | 0.0637 | 0.0402 | 0.0674 |
| | (0.105) | (0.102) | (0.105) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | –0.136*** | 0.124 | 0.138 |
| | (0.0153) | (0.140) | (0.154) |
| Election administrative incapacity | 0.00514 | –0.141*** | –0.135*** |
| | (0.0538) | (0.0157) | (0.0157) |
| Main elections | 0.0124 | 0.0159 | 0.00603 |
| | (0.0408) | (0.0508) | (0.0537) |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.0101 | 0.0151 | 0.0117 |
| | (0.0561) | (0.0411) | (0.0408) |
| Economic growth | –0.00967** | 0.0141 | –0.0131 |
| | (0.00407) | (0.0544) | (0.0562) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | –0.00714** | –0.0111** | –0.00985** |
| | (0.00364) | (0.00470) | (0.00408) |
| Civil conflict | –0.112 | –0.00757** | –0.00703* |
| | (0.103) | (0.00371) | (0.00364) |
| Constant | 0.880** | 0.761* | 0.901** |
| | (0.444) | (0.428) | (0.443) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$2 | 268.18*** | 346.08*** | 275.78*** |
| *R*-squared | 0.44 | 0.46 | 0.44 |
| Observations | 325 | 325 | 325 |
| Number of countries | 79 | 79 | 79 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## II. Election-Day Fraud

| Estimation method | Model 1 RE-OLS | Model 2 RE-OLS | Model 3 RE-OLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | Election-day fraud | Election-day fraud | Election-day fraud |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | –0.00142** | –0.00142** | 0.00982* |
| | (0.000655) | (0.000638) | (0.00504) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.00416 | 0.00403 | 0.00332 |
| | (0.0203) | (0.0205) | (0.0203) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | –0.125 | –0.123 | –0.121 |
| | (0.111) | (0.115) | (0.108) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | 0.319** | 0.317** | 0.376*** |
| | (0.127) | (0.127) | (0.134) |
| Oil*PBR | | –0.000901 | |
| | | (0.00543) | |
| Oil*EOP | | | –0.0534** |
| | | | (0.0238) |
| Military regimes | –0.504*** | –0.504*** | –0.506*** |
| | (0.136) | (0.136) | (0.135) |
| Monarchy regimes | 0.298* | 0.297* | 0.282* |
| | (0.154) | (0.154) | (0.152) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | –0.0809*** | 0.317** | –0.0844*** |
| | (0.0192) | (0.127) | (0.0194) |
| Election administrative Incapacity | 0.225*** | –0.0812*** | 0.222*** |
| | (0.0432) | (0.0196) | (0.0435) |
| Main elections | 0.0218 | 0.226*** | 0.0243 |
| | (0.0338) | (0.0441) | (0.0338) |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.124* | 0.0219 | –0.112* |
| | (0.0638) | (0.0338) | (0.0631) |
| Economic growth | –0.00646 | –0.122* | –0.00577 |
| | (0.00568) | (0.0649) | (0.00576) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | –0.00397 | –0.00653 | –0.00440 |
| | (0.00351) | (0.00579) | (0.00351) |
| Civil conflict | 0.124 | –0.00399 | 0.130 |
| | (0.155) | (0.00354) | (0.151) |
| Constant | 1.472*** | 1.466*** | 1.389*** |
| | (0.489) | (0.492) | (0.479) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 222.05*** | 252.02*** | 237.71*** |
| $R$-squared | 0.42 | 0.42 | 0.43 |
| Observations | 325 | 325 | 325 |
| Number of countries | 79 | 79 | 79 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

*Appendix*

## B3.3. Heckman's Selection Model

I. First-Stage Model

|  | Model 1 |
| --- | --- |
| Estimation method | Probit |
| Dependent variable | Autocratic elections |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.193 |
|  | (0.147) |
| Economic growth | 0.00896* |
|  | (0.00489) |
| International organizations | –4.034*** |
|  | (0.999) |
| Trade openness | 0.00317 |
|  | (0.00221) |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | –2.54e-03 |
|  | (2.61e-05) |
| Constant | 3.681*** |
|  | (1.272) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes |
| Region fixed effects | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 176.97*** |
| Log pseudolikelihood | –2493.39 |
| Observations | 4,922 |
| Number of countries | 141 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## II. Second-Stage Model

| | Model 1<br>RE-OLS | Model 2<br>RE-OLS | Model 3<br>RE-OLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Estimation method | | | |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | –0.00203*** | –0.00182*** | 0.00475 |
| | (0.000680) | (0.000560) | (0.00333) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.0409*** | 0.0389*** | 0.0407*** |
| | (0.0141) | (0.0139) | (0.0141) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | –0.0716 | –0.0339 | –0.0691 |
| | (0.0884) | (0.0896) | (0.0871) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | 0.361** | 0.331** | 0.397*** |
| | (0.145) | (0.140) | (0.152) |
| Oil*PBR | | –0.0166*** | |
| | | (0.00441) | |
| Oil*EOP | | | –0.0322** |
| | | | (0.0155) |
| Military regimes | –0.400*** | –0.405*** | –0.401*** |
| | (0.0912) | (0.0907) | (0.0912) |
| Monarchy regimes | 0.0538 | 0.0271 | 0.0457 |
| | (0.123) | (0.115) | (0.121) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | –0.106*** | –0.112*** | –0.109*** |
| | (0.0170) | (0.0167) | (0.0168) |
| Election administrative incapacity | 0.147*** | 0.163*** | 0.145*** |
| | (0.0476) | (0.0449) | (0.0481) |
| Main elections | 0.0302 | 0.0307 | 0.0315 |
| | (0.0373) | (0.0375) | (0.0373) |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.121** | –0.0990* | –0.114** |
| | (0.0585) | (0.0557) | (0.0578) |
| Economic growth | –0.00879* | –0.0101** | –0.00835* |
| | (0.00469) | (0.00510) | (0.00474) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | –0.00707** | –0.00784** | –0.00744** |
| | (0.00325) | (0.00324) | (0.00331) |
| Civil conflict | 0.103 | 0.129 | 0.119 |
| | (0.135) | (0.136) | (0.134) |
| Inverse Mill's ratio | –0.00844 | –0.00284 | –0.00627 |
| | (0.179) | (0.173) | (0.181) |
| Constant | 1.434*** | 1.346*** | 1.390*** |
| | (0.437) | (0.422) | (0.432) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 323.4*** | 550.78*** | 337.1*** |
| $R$-squared | 0.47 | 0.48 | 0.47 |
| Observations | 315 | 315 | 315 |
| Number of countries | 76 | 76 | 76 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

### *B3.4. Additional Controls*

| Estimation method | Model 1<br>RE-OLS | Model 2<br>RE-OLS | Model 3<br>RE-OLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | −0.00284*** | −0.00261*** | 0.00274 |
| | (0.000636) | (0.000449) | (0.00324) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.0282* | 0.0264* | 0.0279* |
| | (0.0151) | (0.0149) | (0.0151) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | −0.0649 | −0.00385 | −0.0601 |
| | (0.0920) | (0.0888) | (0.0916) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | 0.337** | 0.298** | 0.369*** |
| | (0.131) | (0.120) | (0.135) |
| Oil*PBR | | −0.0235*** | |
| | | (0.00458) | |
| Oil*EOP | | | −0.0265* |
| | | | (0.0147) |
| Military regimes | −0.415*** | −0.407*** | −0.412*** |
| | (0.0937) | (0.0939) | (0.0938) |
| Monarchy regimes | 0.143 | 0.119 | 0.136 |
| | (0.125) | (0.116) | (0.123) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | −0.108*** | −0.113*** | −0.109*** |
| | (0.0162) | (0.0159) | (0.0163) |
| Election administrative incapacity | 0.143** | 0.166*** | 0.142** |
| | (0.0566) | (0.0525) | (0.0569) |
| Main elections | 0.0173 | 0.0194 | 0.0189 |
| | (0.0355) | (0.0359) | (0.0356) |
| Logged GDP per capita | −0.149*** | −0.125*** | −0.143*** |
| | (0.0515) | (0.0481) | (0.0512) |
| Economic growth | −0.0146*** | −0.0174*** | −0.0143*** |
| | (0.00486) | (0.00512) | (0.00489) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | −0.00861** | −0.00981*** | −0.00887** |
| | (0.00374) | (0.00372) | (0.00381) |
| Civil conflict | 0.0325 | 0.0430 | 0.0400 |
| | (0.141) | (0.139) | (0.140) |
| Domestic election monitoring | 0.00213 | −0.0249 | −0.00183 |
| | (0.107) | (0.106) | (0.107) |
| International election monitoring | 0.0339 | 0.0176 | 0.0359 |
| | (0.107) | (0.105) | (0.108) |
| Effective electoral threshold | −0.00668** | −0.00748*** | −0.00657** |
| | (0.00275) | (0.00251) | (0.00271) |
| Constant | 1.955*** | 1.888*** | 1.910*** |
| | (0.457) | (0.434) | (0.452) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 329.29*** | 712.99*** | 344.68*** |
| *R*-squared | 0.46 | 0.48 | 0.46 |
| Observations | 297 | 297 | 297 |
| Number of countries | 72 | 72 | 72 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## B3.5. Instrumental Variables Estimation (IV-GMM)

| Dependent variable | Model 1 (first model) Oil-gas value per capita | Model 2 Electoral fraud |
|---|---|---|
| Oil-gas reserves (billion USD) | 0.124 | |
| | (0.068) | |
| Oil-gas reserves/country size | –187804*** | |
| | (10893.4) | |
| Oil-gas reserves in region | 0.005 | |
| | (0.005) | |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | | –0.00259*** |
| | | (0.000692) |
| Anti-government collective action | –0.47 | 0.0258 |
| | (0.281) | (0.0252) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | –0.744 | –0.237 |
| | (1.08) | (0.185) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | –7.53 | –0.151 |
| | (5.82) | (0.453) |
| Military regimes | –0.096 | –0.272* |
| | (1.04) | (0.149) |
| Monarchy regimes | –0.049 | –0.971** |
| | (2.71) | (0.391) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | 0.273 | –0.0647*** |
| | (0.354) | (0.0235) |
| Election administrative incapacity | 0.511 | 0.118*** |
| | (0.507) | (0.0403) |
| Main elections | 0.199 | 0.0526 |
| | (0.213) | (0.0473) |
| Logged GDP per capita | 5.77 | –0.0630 |
| | (3.15) | (0.169) |
| Economic growth | –0.226 | –0.00868* |
| | (0.128) | (0.00500) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | 0.074 | 0.00233 |
| | (0.04) | (0.00524) |
| Civil conflict | –1.26 | –0.280** |
| | (0.979) | (0.119) |
| Time fixed effect | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 316 | 316 |
| Number of countries | 76 | 76 |
| F-test on the instruments in first stage | 115.5** | |
| Hansen J statistics of over-identifying restrictions | 0.511 | |

*Note:* The Model 1 column shows the results of the first-stage estimation, where the dependent variable is oil-gas value per capita. Instrumental variables are (1) proven oil reserve in billion dollars, (2) proven oil reserve divided by country size, and (3) proven oil reserve in regions (Haber and Menaldo 2011). The Model 2 column is the second-stage estimation where instrumented oil-gas value per capita is used to predict blatant electoral fraud. Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

# Chapter 4

## Appendix A4: Descriptive Statistics

### I. Pro-Regime Seat Premium under SMD

| | Number of observations | Mean | Standard deviation | Maximum | Minimum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disproportionality | 309 | 15.39 | 12.3 | 0 | 52.75 |
| Ruling party's seat premium (seat shares – vote shares) | 311 | 9.68 | 11.83 | –31.7 | 46.64 |
| Effective electoral threshold (EET) | 311 | 20.58 | 15.01 | 0.271 | 37.5 |
| Share of ruling party votes | 311 | 58.96 | 19.82 | 0.12 | 100 |
| Share of independents votes | 311 | 7.58 | 13.06 | 0 | 98.98 |
| Logged total seats | 311 | 4.88 | 0.746 | 3.17 | 6.4 |

*Note:* Unit of analysis is country-election year.

### II. Pre-Electoral Opposition Coalitions

| | Number of observations | Mean | Standard deviation | Maximum | Minimum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-electoral opposition coalition | 226 | 0.172 | 0.37 | 0 | 1 |
| Effective electoral threshold (EET) | 226 | 22.09 | 14.21 | 1.02 | 37.5 |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | 226 | 1.56 | 5.6 | 0 | 58.33 |
| Age of largest opposition | 226 | 2.24 | 3.27 | 0 | 18 |
| Number of opposition parties | 226 | 4.86 | 4.06 | 0 | 23 |
| Ruling party seat shares (lagged) | 226 | 71.1 | 20.86 | 0 | 100 |
| Parliamentarism | 226 | 0.376 | 0.48 | 0 | 1 |
| ELF | 226 | 0.523 | 0.27 | 0.003 | 0.922 |
| Economic growth (lagged) | 226 | 2.2 | 5.6 | –29.67 | 18.08 |
| Logged GDP per capita (lagged) | 226 | 15.9 | 1.56 | 12.89 | 19.12 |
| Election violence (NELDA) | 226 | 0.238 | 0.42 | 0 | 1 |

*Note:* Unit of analysis is country-election year.

## III. Voter Turnout

| | Number of observations | Mean | Standard deviation | Maximum | Minimum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Voter turnout | 314 | 69.03 | 16.63 | 23.84 | 98.7 |
| Effective electoral threshold (EET) | 314 | 21.08 | 14.41 | 0.925 | 37.5 |
| Parliamentarism | 314 | 0.369 | 0.483 | 0 | 1 |
| Election violence | 314 | 0.27 | 0.445 | 0 | 1 |
| ELF | 314 | 0.52 | 0.269 | 0.003 | 0.922 |
| Opposition's election boycott | 314 | 0.232 | 0.423 | 0 | 1 |
| Election fraud (NELDA11) | 314 | 0.519 | 0.5 | 0 | 1 |
| Logged GDP per capita (lagged) | 314 | 7.965 | 1.009 | 5.178 | 10.84 |

*Note:* Unit of analysis is country-election year.

## IV. The Choice of Electoral Systems

| | Number of observations | Mean | Standard deviation | Maximum | Minimum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Effective electoral threshold (EET) | 1,576 | 22.45 | 14.33 | 0.74 | 37.5 |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | 1,576 | 4.99 | 22.94 | 0 | 411.09 |
| Change in anti-government collective action | 1,576 | 0.02 | 1.11 | −14.66 | 15.33 |
| Trade openness | 1,479 | 80.75 | 59.48 | 5.51 | 440.43 |
| Logged total population | 1,479 | 15.84 | 1.5 | 12.3 | 19.13 |
| Duration of electoral autocracy (EA) regimes | 1,479 | 16.63 | 15.32 | 1 | 85 |
| Regional democracy | 1,479 | −0.71 | 3.37 | −6.09 | 7.3 |
| Civil conflict | 1,479 | 0.052 | 0.223 | 0 | 1 |
| Party-based regimes | 1,000 | 0.537 | 0.498 | 0 | 1 |
| Military regimes | 1,000 | 0.072 | 0.26 | 0 | 1 |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | 1,000 | 0.464 | 1.17 | 0 | 0.905 |

*Note:* Unit of analysis is country-year.

## Appendix B4: Additional Analyses

### *B4.1. Heckman's Selection Model*

I. First-Stage Model

| | Model 1 |
|---|---|
| Estimation method | Logit |
| Dependent variable | Electoral autocracy |
| Oil-gas value per capita ($100) | −0.00672 |
| | (0.00748) |
| Regional electoral autocracy (EA) | 0.978 |
| | (0.821) |
| Regional democracy | 0.125** |
| | (0.0525) |
| Logged GDP per capita | 0.0190 |
| | (0.243) |
| Economic growth | −0.00782 |
| | (0.0173) |
| Recent coup | 0.797* |
| | (0.472) |
| Recent irregular turnover from below | 0.239 |
| | (0.256) |
| Recent regular turnover | −0.141 |
| | (0.375) |
| Urbanization | 0.00794 |
| | (0.00812) |
| ELF | −0.0804 |
| | (0.555) |
| Logged population | −0.0859 |
| | (0.0848) |
| Prior EA spells | 0.820*** |
| | (0.163) |
| Prior democratic spells | −0.0474 |
| | (0.112) |
| Year | 0.0197 |
| | (0.0123) |
| Constant | −42.39* |
| | (24.90) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes |
| Wald $\chi^2$ | 18.59*** |
| Log pseudolikelihood | −322.84 |
| Observations | 2,102 |
| Number of countries | 102 |

*Note:* Model specification in the first stage is based on Miller (2017). Country cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

## II. Second-Stage Model

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Estimation method | FE-OLS | FE-OLS | FE-OLS |
| Dependent variable | EET | EET | EET |
| lagged EET | 0.888*** | 0.873*** | 0.760*** |
| | (0.0264) | (0.0246) | (0.0754) |
| Oil-gas value per capita | −0.0151*** | −0.0972** | 0.00499 |
| | (0.00462) | (0.0431) | (0.0408) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.199* | 0.208* | 0.244* |
| | (0.115) | (0.111) | (0.128) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | | | −1.364* |
| | | | (0.751) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | | | −0.799 |
| | | | (2.772) |
| Oil*PBR | | | −0.143** |
| | | | (0.0546) |
| Oil*EOP | | | 0.0954 |
| | | | (0.122) |
| Military regimes | | | −0.914 |
| | | | (1.265) |
| Trade openness | | 0.00131 | 0.0111 |
| | | (0.00604) | (0.00958) |
| Logged population | | 1.662 | 1.897 |
| | | (2.142) | (2.651) |
| Duration of electoral autocracy (EA) regime | | −0.00246 | −0.00370 |
| | | (0.0231) | (0.0320) |
| Regional democracy | | 1.420* | 0.0967 |
| | | (0.851) | (0.862) |
| Civil war | | 0.925* | 1.892** |
| | | (0.548) | (0.940) |
| Inverse Mill's ratio | 0.0758 | 11.90* | 0.530 |
| | (0.645) | (7.053) | (6.959) |
| Regional EA regime | | 11.04* | 2.714 |
| | | (6.326) | (6.186) |
| Logged GDP per capita | | 0.366 | 1.099 |
| | | (0.597) | (0.899) |
| Economic growth | | −0.0895 | −0.00737 |
| | | (0.0538) | (0.0614) |
| Recent coup | | 7.522 | 0.345 |
| | | (4.865) | (4.854) |
| Recent irregular turnover from below | | 2.257 | −0.553 |
| | | (1.602) | (1.728) |
| Recent regular turnover | | −1.773 | −0.520 |
| | | (1.066) | (1.223) |
| Urbanization | | 0.140** | 0.0263 |
| | | (0.0689) | (0.0713) |
| Constant | | −75.47** | −34.47 |
| | | (40.43) | (53.74) |
| Country FE | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Time FE | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,376 | 1,345 | 993 |
| Number of countries | 82 | 83 | 70 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## B4.2. Instrumental Variables Estimation (IV-GMM)

| Dependent variable | Model 1 (first model) Oil-gas value per capita | Model 2 EET |
|---|---|---|
| Oil-gas reserves (billion USD) | –0.127 | |
| | (0.097) | |
| Oil-gas reserves/country size | 373744.5*** | |
| | (16721.8) | |
| Oil-gas reserves in region | –0.001 | |
| | (0.0069) | |
| Oil-gas value per capita | | –0.0294*** |
| | | (0.00586) |
| Lagged EET | –0.066 | 0.871*** |
| | (0.138) | (0.0300) |
| Collective action | –0.057 | 0.255** |
| | (0.083) | (0.114) |
| Trade openness | –0.001 | –0.000538 |
| | (0.012) | (0.00592) |
| Logged population | 12.75 | 0.776 |
| | (12.58) | (1.144) |
| Duration of electoral autocracy (EA) regimes | –0.021 | –0.0101 |
| | (0.042) | (0.0221) |
| Regional democracy | 0.703 | 0.150 |
| | (0.931) | (0.151) |
| Civil conflict | –0.54 | 1.057* |
| | (0.91) | (0.558) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,316 | 1,316 |
| Number of countries | 86 | 86 |
| F-test on the instruments in first stage | 207.32*** | |
| Hansen J statistics of overidentifying restrictions | 0.309 | |

*Note:* The Model 1 column shows the results of the first-stage estimation, where the dependent variable is oil-gas value per capita. Instrumental variables are (1) proven oil reserve in billion dollars, (2) proven oil reserve divided by country size, and (3) proven oil reserve in regions (Haber and Menaldo 2011). The Model 2 column is the second-stage estimation where instrumented oil-gas value per capita is used to predict EET. Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

## B4.3. *Additional Control Variables*

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Estimation method | FE-OLS | FE-OLS |
| Dependent variable | EET | EET |
| Lagged EET | 0.870*** | 0.765*** |
| | (0.0150) | (0.0711) |
| Oil-gas value per capita | –0.0163* | 0.00774 |
| | (0.00941) | (0.00875) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.210*** | 0.258* |
| | (0.0768) | (0.140) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | | –1.101 |
| | | (0.700) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | | –0.760 |
| | | (2.066) |
| Oil*PBR | | –0.125*** |
| | | (0.0332) |
| Oil*EOP | | 0.147 |
| | | (0.103) |
| Military regimes | | –0.710 |
| | | (1.180) |
| Trade openness | 0.00605 | 0.0123 |
| | (0.00441) | (0.00873) |
| Logged population | 1.330 | 2.291 |
| | (1.116) | (2.454) |
| Duration of electoral autocracy (EA) regime | –0.0232 | 0.0109 |
| | (0.0170) | (0.0267) |
| Regional democracy | 0.146 | 0.0734 |
| | (0.104) | (0.183) |
| Civil war | 0.973** | 1.640* |
| | (0.492) | (0.895) |
| Electoral fraud | 0.171 | 0.473 |
| | (0.274) | (0.625) |
| Regional EET | 0.166*** | 0.0736 |
| | (0.0628) | (0.0877) |
| Constant | –20.06 | –31.44 |
| | (16.96) | (36.38) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,461 | 995 |
| *R*-squared | 0.763 | 0.622 |
| Number of countries | 86 | 70 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## Chapter 5

### Appendix A5: Descriptive Statistics

| | Number of observations | Mean | Standard deviation | Maximum | Minimum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fiscal balance | 2,079 | –1.99 | 7.8 | –201.41 | 68.67 |
| Competitive elections | 2,079 | 0.18 | 0.38 | 0 | 1 |
| Noncompetitive elections | 2,079 | 0.07 | 0.25 | 0 | 1 |
| Non-election years in CA | 2,079 | 0.49 | 0.5 | 0 | 1 |
| Clean elections | 1,567 | 0.086 | 0.28 | 0 | 1 |
| Mediocre elections | 1,567 | 0.12 | 0.33 | 0 | 1 |
| Dirty elections | 1,567 | 0.01 | 0.1 | 0 | 1 |
| Effective electoral threshold (EET) | 1,552 | 25.5 | 13.61 | 0.61 | 37.5 |
| Logged GDP per capita | 1,437 | 7.84 | 1.04 | 5.19 | 10.84 |
| Economic growth | 1,427 | 4.77 | 5.8 | –30.14 | 39.48 |
| Trade openness | 1,437 | 74.55 | 56.24 | 6.32 | 430.35 |
| Capital openness | 1,437 | 0.35 | 0.31 | 0 | 1 |
| Population over 65 | 1,437 | 4.07 | 2.16 | 1.34 | 14.66 |
| Fixed exchange Rate regimes | 1,437 | 0.64 | 0.47 | 0 | 1 |

# Appendix B5: Additional Analyses

## *B5.1. Regular vs. Postponed Elections*

### I. Competitive Elections

|  | Model 1 |
| --- | :---: |
| Estimation method | FE-OLS |
| Independent variable | Opposition participation |
| Dependent variable | Fiscal balance |
| Lagged fiscal balance | 0.499*** |
|  | (0.0679) |
| **Regular competitive elections** | **–0.626**** |
|  | **(0.284)** |
| **Postponed competitive elections** | **–0.727** |
|  | **(0.683)** |
| Noncompetitive elections | –0.542 |
|  | (0.656) |
| Non-electoral year in CA regime | –0.946* |
|  | (0.510) |
| Logged GDP per capita | 0.403 |
|  | (0.962) |
| Economic growth | –0.00410 |
|  | (0.0245) |
| Trade openness | 0.0139 |
|  | (0.0123) |
| Capital openness | 0.262 |
|  | (0.914) |
| Population over 65 | 0.0655 |
|  | (0.337) |
| Fixed exchange rate regimes | 0.0231 |
|  | (0.479) |
| Constant | –3.783 |
|  | (6.663) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes |
| Observations | 1,437 |
| Number of countries | 85 |
| *R*-squared | 0.518 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

II. Blatant Electoral Fraud

| | Model 2 |
|---|---|
| Estimation method | FE-OLS |
| Independent variable | Electoral fraud |
| Dependent variable | Fiscal balance |
| Lagged fiscal balance | 0.492*** |
| | (0.0703) |
| Dirty elections | –1.561 |
| | (1.177) |
| Mediocre elections | –0.617 |
| | (0.441) |
| **Regular clean elections** | **–0.566*** |
| | **(0.338)** |
| **Postponed clean elections** | **–1.592*** |
| | **(0.842)** |
| Non-election years in CA | –0.962* |
| | (0.548) |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.0172 |
| | (1.220) |
| Economic growth | 0.0153 |
| | (0.0292) |
| Trade openness | 0.0149 |
| | (0.0138) |
| Capital openness | 0.332 |
| | (0.429) |
| Population over 65 | –0.213 |
| | (0.909) |
| Fixed exchange rate regimes | 0.0203 |
| | (0.479) |
| Constant | –2.128 |
| | (8.521) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes |
| Observations | 1,241 |
| Number of ccode | 84 |
| *R*-squared | 0.507 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## III. Electoral Systems

| | Model 3 |
|---|---|
| Estimation method | System GMM |
| Independent variable | EET |
| Dependent variable | Fiscal balance |
| Lagged fiscal balance | 0.0177 |
| | (0.133) |
| **Regular competitive parliamentary elections (RCPE)** | **–11.45\*\*** |
| | **(4.906)** |
| **EET** | **–0.0739** |
| | **(0.0717)** |
| **RCPE\*EET** | **0.482\*\*** |
| | **(0.213)** |
| Regular noncompetitive parliamentary elections (RNCPE) | –8.529 |
| | (6.415) |
| RNCPE\*EET | 0.413 |
| | (0.263) |
| Postponed competitive parliamentary elections (PCPE) | 51.40 |
| | (77.04) |
| PCPE\*EET | –1.609 |
| | (2.484) |
| Postponed noncompetitive parliamentary elections (PNCPE) | 147.6 |
| | (206.6) |
| PNCPE\*EET | –4.398 |
| | (6.133) |
| Competitive presidential elections | –1.199 |
| | (1.201) |
| Noncompetitive presidential elections | –0.883 |
| | (1.577) |
| Non-election years in CA | 0.705 |
| | (1.034) |
| Logged GDP per capita | 3.042\*\*\* |
| | (0.878) |
| Economic growth | 0.00640 |
| | (0.0519) |
| Trade openness | 0.0112 |
| | (0.00897) |
| Population over 65 | –0.00748 |
| | (0.214) |
| Fixed exchange rate regimes | 0.528 |
| | (0.833) |
| Capital openness | –1.108 |
| | (1.602) |
| Constant | –28.25\*\*\* |
| | (8.081) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes |
| Observations | 1,158 |
| Number of countries | 79 |

*Note:* Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\*$p < 0.01$, \*\*$p < 0.05$, \*$p < 0.1$. All variables are one year lagged.

## Chapter 6

## Appendix A6: First-Stage Model

### *A6.1. First-Stage Model Predicting Blatant Electoral Fraud*

|  | Model 1<br>Fraud |
|---|---|
| Oil-gas value per capita | 0.00336 |
|  | (0.00332) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | –0.0339 |
|  | (0.0866) |
| Oil*PBR | –0.0160*** |
|  | (0.00393) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | 0.344** |
|  | (0.136) |
| Oil*EOP | –0.0246 |
|  | (0.0155) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.0330*** |
|  | (0.0128) |
| Military regimes | –0.422*** |
|  | (0.0905) |
| Monarchy regimes | 0.0114 |
|  | (0.114) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | –0.115*** |
|  | (0.0157) |
| Election administrative capacity | 0.160*** |
|  | (0.0463) |
| Main elections | 0.0373 |
|  | (0.0370) |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.0950* |
|  | (0.0515) |
| Growth | –0.00911* |
|  | (0.00487) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | –0.00805*** |
|  | (0.00302) |
| Civil conflict | 0.170 |
|  | (0.123) |
| Constant | 1.342*** |
|  | (0.413) |
| Observations | 325 |
| *R*-squared | 0.482 |
| Number of countries | 79 |

*Note:* Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

## A6.2. First-Stage Model Predicting Effective Electoral Threshold (EET)

| | Model 1 Country FE EET |
|---|---|
| Lagged EET | 0.771*** |
| | (0.0717) |
| Oil-gas value per capita | 0.00712 |
| | (0.00862) |
| Party-based regimes (PBR) | –1.127 |
| | (0.702) |
| Oil*PBR | –0.130*** |
| | (0.0321) |
| Ethnic organizational power (EOP) | –0.682 |
| | (2.085) |
| Oil*EOP | 0.140 |
| | (0.113) |
| Anti-government collective action | 0.259* |
| | (0.138) |
| Military regimes | –0.859 |
| | (1.128) |
| Trade openness | 0.0102 |
| | (0.00873) |
| Logged population | 2.619 |
| | (2.580) |
| Duration of electoral autocracy (EA) regimes | 0.0140 |
| | (0.0268) |
| Regional democracy | 0.0366 |
| | (0.182) |
| Civil conflict | 1.736* |
| | (0.910) |
| Observations | 1,000 |
| Number of countries | 71 |
| *R*-squared | 0.843 |

*Note:* Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.
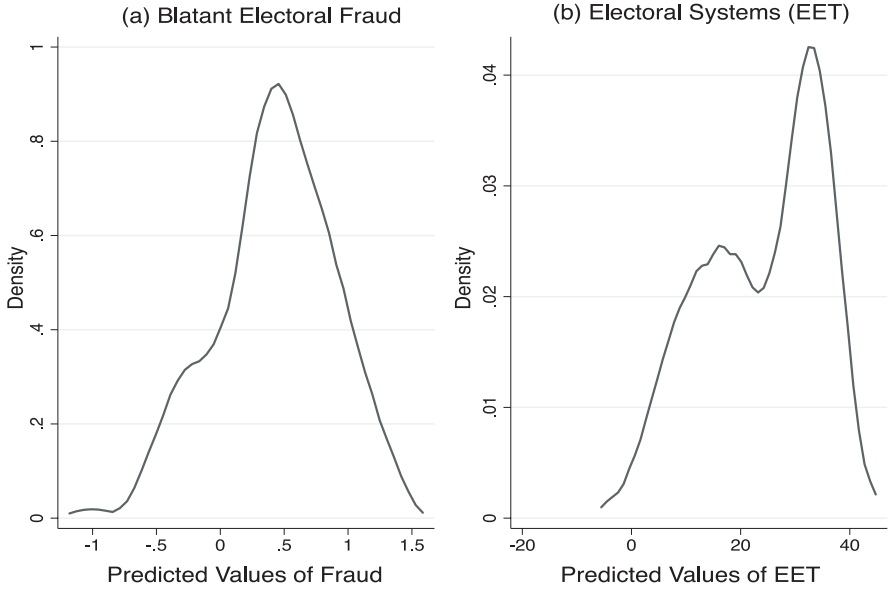
Fig. A6.1. Predicted Values of Electoral Manipulation

## Appendix B6: Additional Analyses

### *B6.1. Effects of Electoral Fraud and Electoral Margin on Protest/Turnover*

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Estimation method | RE probit | RE probit | RE probit | RE probit |
| Dependent variable | Protest | Turnover | Protest | Turnover |
| Electoral fraud | 1.150*** | –1.313 | 1.837*** | –1.207 |
| | (0.276) | (0.919) | (0.560) | (1.030) |
| Electoral margin | 0.000301 | –0.0394** | 0.00966 | –0.0384** |
| | (0.00545) | (0.0177) | (0.00934) | (0.0189) |
| Fraud*margin | | | –0.0153 | –0.00391 |
| | | | (0.0106) | (0.0134) |
| Military regimes | –0.359 | 2.147* | –0.155 | 2.163* |
| | (0.676) | (1.208) | (0.633) | (1.191) |
| Personalist regimes | 0.837* | –0.445 | 0.980* | –0.417 |
| | (0.494) | (0.835) | (0.515) | (0.856) |
| Freedom House Index (avg) | 0.242** | –0.140 | 0.268** | –0.138 |
| | (0.107) | (0.133) | (0.105) | (0.132) |
| Election administrative | 0.830*** | –0.320 | 0.817** | –0.348 |
| incapacity | (0.316) | (0.565) | (0.319) | (0.566) |
| Main election | –0.116 | 1.348** | –0.0970 | 1.373** |
| | (0.233) | (0.642) | (0.228) | (0.636) |
| Logged GDP per capita | –0.163 | –0.773 | –0.112 | –0.767 |
| | (0.349) | (0.633) | (0.347) | (0.635) |
| Economic growth | 0.0572** | –0.0302 | 0.0656** | –0.0272 |
| | (0.0275) | (0.0398) | (0.0279) | (0.0395) |
| Foreign aid (% of GDP) | –0.0258 | –0.0363 | –0.0247 | –0.0366 |
| | (0.0377) | (0.0563) | (0.0365) | (0.0561) |
| Constant | –3.518 | 4.089 | –4.570* | 3.955 |
| | (2.467) | (4.550) | (2.574) | (4.641) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Time lapse and polynomials | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Log pseudolikelihood | –65.68 | –52.82 | –64.09 | –52.79 |
| Observations | 222 | 222 | 222 | 222 |
| Number of countries | 67 | 67 | 67 | 67 |

*Note:* Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Model specifications are based upon the first-stage model. The time lapse since the last turnover/protests and their time polynomials are included.

*Appendix*

### B6.2. Effects of Electoral Systems and Electoral Margin on Protest/Turnover

| | Model 1 RE probit Protest | Model 2 RE probit Turnover | Model 3 RE probit Protest | Model 4 RE probit Turnover |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Estimation method Dependent variable | | | | |
| EET | 0.0232*** | −0.0115 | 0.0306*** | −0.0149 |
| | (0.00773) | (0.00946) | (0.00797) | (0.0100) |
| Electoral margin | 0.00245 | −0.0131*** | 0.00811 | −0.0185** |
| | (0.00361) | (0.00411) | (0.00503) | (0.00887) |
| EET*margin | | | −0.000252 | 0.000270 |
| | | | (0.000201) | (0.000320) |
| Trade openness | −0.00134 | −0.00277 | −0.00163 | −0.00167 |
| | (0.00235) | (0.00263) | (0.00227) | (0.00254) |
| Population (log) | 0.250** | 0.105 | 0.231** | 0.117 |
| | (0.112) | (0.120) | (0.112) | (0.127) |
| Duration of electoral autocracy (EA) | 0.00170 | −0.0376*** | 0.00315 | −0.0385*** |
| | (0.00762) | (0.0102) | (0.00752) | (0.0104) |
| Regional democracy | −0.0231 | 0.0545 | −0.0236 | 0.0493 |
| | (0.0518) | (0.0397) | (0.0521) | (0.0404) |
| Civil war | 0.556 | −0.625 | 0.538 | −0.696 |
| | (0.446) | (0.778) | (0.450) | (0.800) |
| Military regimes | −0.320 | −0.300 | −0.299 | −0.315 |
| | (0.463) | (0.469) | (0.463) | (0.479) |
| Constant | −5.594*** | −1.718 | −5.479*** | −1.914 |
| | (1.885) | (1.908) | (1.896) | (2.061) |
| Time fixed effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Time lapse and polynomials | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Log pseudolikelihood | −88.25 | −37.74 | −87.70 | −37.45 |
| Observations | 248 | 251 | 248 | 251 |
| Number of countries | 65 | 65 | 65 | 65 |

*Note:* Robust standard errors in parentheses. ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Model specifications are based upon the first-stage model. The time lapse since the last turnover/protests and their time polynomials are included.

## Chapters 7–8 Appendix

The comparative case studies in this book draw upon a number of inter-views conducted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan during May–July 2014.

### *List of Interviews in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*

#1 Officer of the Soros Foundation–Kazakhstan, May 5, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#2 Officer of the Soros Foundation–Kazakhstan, May 5, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#3 Political analyst, May 6, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#4 Political analyst, May 7, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#5 Officer of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, May 12, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#6 Officer of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, May 12, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#7 Officer of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, May 12, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#8 Political analyst, May 14, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#9 Political analyst, May 14, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#10 Political scientist, May 15, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#11 Political scientist, May 15, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#12 Political scientist, May 16, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#13 Political activist, May 26, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#14 Political activist, May 27, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#15 Political activist, May 27, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#16 Political activist, May 28, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#17 Political analyst, May 28, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#18 Officer of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, May 29, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#19 Student of KIMEP, May 29, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

#20 Political activist, May 29, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#21 Political scientist, May 30, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#22 Political analyst, June 3, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#23 Journalist, June 6, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#24 Political activist, June 6, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#25 Economist, June 7, 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan

#26 Ak Zhol official, June 9, 2014, Astana, Kazakhstan

#27 Nur-Otan official, June 10, 2014, Astana, Kazakhstan

#28 Ak Zhol official, June 12, 2014, Astana, Kazakhstan
#29 Political activist, June 16, 2014, Astana, Kazakhstan
#30 Political activist, June 18, 2014, Astana, Kazakhstan
#31 Political scientist, July 2, 2014, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
#32 Political activist, July 4, 2014, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
#33 Deputy of Ata Zhurt, July 7, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
#34 Senior government official, July 9, 2014, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

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