

Selecting the Electorate: Disenfranchisement and Selective Voter Registration in Electoral Autocracies

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Abstract

Autocrats utilize (nominally) democratic elections, to claim procedural legitimation. To secure their political survival in these elections, they have an extensive menu of manipulation at their disposal. These manipulations are not only addressed at contestation but also inclusiveness of the elections. Although autocrats formally claim universal suffrage, informal restrictions and practices are implemented. Analyzing elections held between 1970 and 2020 in electoral autocracies, I find empiric evidence for strategic adjustments of suffrage rights as a response to electoral contexts.

Keywords

Electoral autocracy; Inclusiveness; Legitimation; Political freedoms; Disenfranchisement

Introduction

Only a few countries hold no elections at all, and multi-party elections have become common practice even among non-democratic regimes. Skepticism towards these elections is based on the assumption that their purpose mainly serves the regime (Hermet 1978; Morgenbesser 2014). In fact, ballot-box stuffing, intimidation and coercion of voters and oppositional candidates, or blatantly fabricated electoral results create an image of an absence of democratic standards and integrity held in non-democratic regimes. At the same time, it is fair to ask why autocrats go through all that extra effort for mimicry of democratic procedures (Przeworski 2018, 8).

Claiming popular support through elections enables autocrats to legitimize their claims to power to their people and the international community. This legitimation is crucial for their political survival and the stability of the regime and cannot be permanently replaced by other means of power preservation, such as repression or redistribution (Albertus and Menaldo 2012; Gerschewski 2013; Wintrobe 2007). However, these anticipated regime-supporting functions can easily turn into regime subversion (Schedler 2013). For example, the so-called colored revolutions for example in Georgia and Ukraine have demonstrated how electoral fraud damages the desired legitimation and may result in post-electoral unrest

and liberalization. To circumvent these risks, a diverse "menu of manipulation" has been established, including for instance strategic ballot removal of oppositional candidates, extra-legal mobilization, coercion, and phony electoral monitoring (Merloe 2015; Schedler 2002).

Emphasizing the instrumental relevancy of multi-party elections in non-democratic regimes, previous research has emphasized contestation (Hyde and Marinov 2012; Lindberg 2009; Donno 2012; Bunce and Wolchik 2010). However, to claim legitimacy, elections are required to be both contested and inclusive (Dahl 1971; Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008). Electoral inclusiveness, which refers to the extent to which all eligible citizens are allowed to participate freely and without discrimination in the electoral process, is one of the "basic nuts-and-bolts conditions required to achieve minimal standards of electoral integrity" (Norris 2013, 567). The relationship between electoral inclusiveness and electoral integrity is symbiotic, ensuring inclusiveness bolsters integrity by promoting fairness and representation while upholding electoral integrity reinforces inclusiveness by preventing voter suppression and discriminatory practices. Together, electoral inclusiveness and integrity cultivate public trust and confidence in the legitimacy of the electoral outcomes, thereby solidifying the foundation for a genuinely democratic system. Non-democratic regimes may adapt to these standards to claim legitimacy, but they often resort to manipulative tactics to restrict the full exercise of voting rights and skew the electoral outcomes in their favor.

Although most regimes claim universal suffrage, there is much anecdotal evidence referencing formal and informal disenfranchisement, as the following examples illustrate. In Myanmar, the Rohingya people have been disenfranchised by invalidating their ID cards (Horsey 2015). In 2000, the authorities in the Philippines conducted voter registration exclusively during working hours, which discouraged first-time voters from enlisting. In contrast to previous years when a holiday was granted for registration, allowing young people the opportunity to travel to their home provinces and register, the lack of this provision in 2000 hindered their participation (Bagas 2004). In Senegal, the electoral administration failed to deliver voting cards on time which observers viewed as "an intentional move to disenfranchise certain groups, such as teachers or people living in particular areas" (Evrensel 2010, 289). In the 1999 Malaysian elections, almost 700,000 people were not able to cast a ballot, as their registration was not approved before the elections (Levitsky and Way 2010, 326). In the 2013 Zimbabwean elections, opposition supporters were systematically disenfranchised through denial of registration or being denied to vote on election day (Merloe 2015, 89). Similar to fraud, impeded electoral inclusiveness and the practice of controlling the electorate have been linked to civic unrest. In both Guatemala and Kenya,

flawed registries led to informal disenfranchisement and caused post-electoral violence (Snyder 2013).

Moving beyond this anecdotal evidence, there is no systematic comparative research on electoral inclusiveness in autocracies. The main challenge in the analysis of these autocratic practices is authoritarian secrecy: to maintain the legitimizing *façade*, autocrats hide any activities damaging democratic standards while intending to secure political survival (Pepinsky 2014). This research note addresses this gap in the literature by systematically analyzing the inclusiveness of nominally-democratic elections held under autocratic rule.

By highlighting the dimension of inclusiveness, this article provides an important opportunity to advance our understanding of contemporary autocracies. The combination of democratic procedures with authoritarian governance has caused terminological confusion about the character of these regimes: elections were technically free and fair but the regime was obviously neither transitional nor democratic (Armony and Schamis 2005). By including breaches of the principle of inclusiveness on the research agenda, the (democratic) quality of an election can be re-assessed. Thus, uncertainty about the character of hybrid regimes and electoral autocracies as well as conceptual stretching concerning (nominally) democratic institutions in these regimes is avoided.

This article is divided into four sections. In the following section, I differentiate formal and informal disenfranchisement and link them to autocrats' desire for procedural legitimation. In section 3, I discuss available operationalizations and data which will be analyzed in section 4. Section 5 discusses these findings and directs attention to further research questions.

Inclusiveness and Procedural Legitimation

To ensure political survival, autocrats strategically craft a solid foundation for their claim to power (Gehlbach, Sonin, and Svobik 2016; Wintrobe 2007). Legitimation and legitimacy beliefs are crucial components of this foundation (Gerschewski 2013). Although there are different sources of internal legitimation, such as ideology or economic performance, procedural legitimation crafted through multi-party elections signals popular support and legitimacy also externally (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017).

Despite the fact that multiparty elections are introduced with the aim of securing political survival, they "still contain the *possibility* of eroding authoritarian stability" (Schedler 2009, 337, emphasis in the original). To minimize this risk and to avoid electoral defeat while enjoying the desired benefits of elections, autocrats tilt the electoral playing field in their

favor (Bunce and Wolchik 2010; Levitsky and Way 2010). To achieve this goal, autocrats may restrict contestation and inclusiveness of elections. Previous research has mainly identified restrictions on contestation, for example through fraud, control over media, or selective candidate registration (Lehoucq 2003; Szakonyi 2022). However, it is essential to note that nominally-democratic elections in autocratic regimes must maintain a facade of inclusiveness.

To highlight legitimacy and build loyalty among citizens, autocratic regimes use the illusion of inclusive elections to full capacity: "Legal apartheid is not a viable model anymore" (Schedler 2002, 44). Therefore, autocrats are incentivized to formally provide universal suffrage to their citizens, which is understood as the cornerstone of inclusiveness (Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008, 637). At the same time, a compliant electorate may be pivotal for electoral outcomes (Schedler 2013, 95). As a result, autocrats are interested in claiming inclusiveness while controlling who casts a ballot and who does not. To strike a delicate balance between these two objectives, autocrats find themselves walking a tightrope. Blatant restrictions on suffrage rights may turn the desired regime-supporting effects into regime subversion based on popular perceptions of exclusive elections (Snyder 2013; Norris 2012).

The intersection between inclusiveness and disenfranchisement is complex, and understanding their dynamics is vital for safeguarding the integrity and legitimacy of electoral processes. Disenfranchisement can take place even in seemingly inclusive systems, through various means like voter suppression, gerrymandering, or biased electoral regulations. On the other hand, in certain cases, a degree of inclusiveness may coexist with instances of disenfranchisement. Nonetheless, autocrats seeking to restrict electoral inclusiveness may employ both formal and informal disenfranchisement tactics (Schedler 2002).

Formal disenfranchisement is implemented through legal restrictions on suffrage rights. Despite universal suffrage, some restrictions remain in place in democracies and autocracies alike. These restrictions are a question of political boundaries and refer to age, citizenship, criminal records and mental status (Bauböck 2018b; 2018a). Most countries set the legal voting age at 18 (Beckman 2009). Similarly, there is little variance concerning citizenship requirements: In most cases, suffrage is granted to citizens only. However, in times of globalization and transnational migration, this question is linked to residency requirements and the possibility of external voting, which are important in terms of accessibility of the ballot (Lafleur 2015; Bauböck 2015; Caramani and Grotz 2015). Lastly, disenfranchisement based on criminal records or cognitive impairments is common practice

(Beckman 2009; Uggen, Behrens, and Manza 2005), but it remains a controversial issue . (Easton 2006; López-Guerra 2014). Both may vary in terms of scope and severity of the restrictions (Beckman 2009; Schmid, Piccoli, and Arrighi 2019). Taken together, formal disenfranchisement can be implemented as a legalization of selective suffrage rights. However, it openly challenges the inclusiveness of elections and may thwart the desired legitimation function. Therefore, autocrats are expected to at least legally provide universal suffrage. In contrast, informal disenfranchisement may undermine the alleged formal inclusiveness while providing the autocrat control over the composition of the electorate.

Informal disenfranchisement refers to practical restrictions on the right to cast a ballot and may occur at different times of the electoral cycle. In the phase leading up to an election, it may be implemented during voter registration. This is especially the case if voter registration requires action taken by the potential voter (Franko, Kelly, and Witko 2016). The need to actively register for elections increases not only the cost of casting a ballot but also is socially biased against minority groups (Hershey 2009; Hill 2003; Sobel and Smith 2009). Furthermore, inaccurate voter registries may prevent voters from casting a ballot. On election day, the verification of identity and provision of access to the ballot are particularly prone to informal exclusion. For example, biased precinct offices in heterogenous societies may cause favoritism for the own group leading to "disenfranchisement of qualified potential voters, or enfranchisement of unqualified voters"(Neggers 2018, 1295). Furthermore the accessibility of the polling place is crucial (Schmid, Piccoli, and Arrighi 2019; Alvarez and Hall 2006). Absentee precinct officers or changes of polling places on short notice "can easily leave voters without a place to vote and disenfranchised, even if only temporarily"(Alvarez and Hall 2006, 499). Although registration and identity verification processes are organized by electoral administration bodies, informal disenfranchisement should not be classified as mere electoral maladministration. This term rather addresses "more routine flaws and unintended mishaps by election officials" (Norris 2013, 568) and hence would imply a transfer of all responsibility to the individual election officials, whereas it is obvious that the regime is interested in controlling the outcome, potentially creating a principal-agent relationship (Alvarez and Hall 2006, 495).

Considering the aforementioned risks of openly fraudulent and non-inclusive elections, autocrats are incentivized to interfere only in certain contexts. As described above, they possess a diverse range of manipulations and balance these manipulations with ensuring some freedoms. If, for example, elections are free from manipulation and conducted fairly, the autocrat needs to remain in control of who casts a ballot to secure political survival.

Similarly, interferences with suffrage rights are more likely to occur in the context of contested elections. Previous research has shown, that autocrats adapt their strategies of rigging the elections to the degree of competitiveness (Lehoucq 2003; Harvey 2016). In competitive elections, the value of each individual vote increases as it may become detrimental to the outcome of the election (Dawson 2022). Therefore, higher degrees of contestation are expected to lead to higher degrees of disenfranchisement.

Operationalization and Data

To analyze electoral inclusiveness, I use data from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem) (Coppedge *et al.* 2021). The analysis focuses on parliamentary and presidential elections held in electoral autocracies between 1970 and 2020. These regimes hold nominally democratic elections but do not provide a level electoral playing field. Democracies and closed regimes have been excluded from the sample. Formal disenfranchisement is assessed using data on the percentage of the population which legally has the right to vote, the legal voting age, and restrictions on female suffrage. Informal disenfranchisement is captured using data on the *de facto* enfranchised adults and the accuracy of the voter registry.

To analyze under which conditions inclusiveness varies, I consider the broader electoral playing field. Firstly, the variable *Free and Fair* assesses electoral integrity irrespective of the extent of suffrage. The *Margin of Victory* is used to capture whether an autocrat may have feared electoral defeat. Although autocrats can assess the outcome of the election beforehand, I do not use the outcome of the election under analysis due to concerns of endogeneity: if autocrats fear contestation in the upcoming election, they might restrict inclusiveness effectively. This changes the outcome of the election and thus the margin. Therefore, I use the margin of the previous election as an approximation of the anticipated contestation. Whether margins are a suitable measure for contestation depends heavily on the electoral system. In majoritarian electoral systems, margins are more directly linked to the distribution of power (Eichhorn and Linhart 2021). Hence, I interact margins in parliamentary elections with a dummy variable for majoritarian electoral systems. This interaction term is not used in presidential elections due to the lack of variation in the electoral system.

Lastly, I control for two aspects outside of the electoral arena: *Legitimation* and *Transparent Laws*. Legitimation measures the extent to which the regime supports its claim to power using a specific ideology. Transparent laws refer to the rule of law and the predictability of law enforcement.

Results

The sample consists of 390 parliamentary and 344 presidential elections. These elections were held between 1970 and 2020 in 105 and 89 countries respectively.

Regarding formal disenfranchisement, there is virtually no variance across these elections. Legally, electoral autocracies provide universal suffrage. Exceptions in the sample are South Africa (until the mid-1990s) and Brazil (1986). These restrictions are attributed to limited female suffrage. Further restrictions apply in Thailand, where the members of the clergy are legally disenfranchised. Restrictions in Nigeria (1979), the Philippines (1977), and Myanmar (2012) could not be attributed to a specific group retrospectively. Similarly, the legal voting age, with a few exceptions, is 18.

However, this legal situation is not reflected in reality. Although universal suffrage is the norm, on average only 95 percent of legally enfranchised voters are *de facto* enfranchised. Furthermore, voter registries are flawed and informally disenfranchise eligible voters. To assess whether these restrictions occur in certain electoral contexts, Table 1 summarizes the results of regression analyses and presents the standardized coefficients of linear regression models. Cross-sectional correlation and autocorrelation are accounted for by using panel heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors and panel-specific autocorrelation (Kashin 2014).

Table 1: Determinants of informal disenfranchisement

	Parliamentary Elections		Presidential Elections	
	Suffrage	Registry	Suffrage	Registry
Free and Fair	-0.18*** (0.07)	0.44*** (0.04)	-0.28*** (0.09)	0.45*** (0.03)
Margin	0.08** (0.04)	-0.07** (0.03)	0.19*** (0.07)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Majoritarian Electoral System	-0.07 (0.06)	-0.09** (0.03)		
Ideology	-0.07 (0.05)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.03)
Transparent Laws	0.26*** (0.06)	0.20*** (0.03)	0.42*** (0.10)	0.16*** (0.01)
Free and Fair*Margin	0.07 (0.04)	0.02 (0.03)	(0.06)	-0.08*** 0.02
Contestation*Majoritarian	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)		
Constant	-0.07 (0.06)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.23** (0.11)	-0.01 (0.03)
N	390	390	343	343
Countries	105	105	83	83
R ²	0.15	0.57	0.17	0.90

Note

Linear regression model. Panel heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors (Huber-White) and panel-specific autocorrelation (AR1). Standard Errors are in parentheses.

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; ***p<0.01

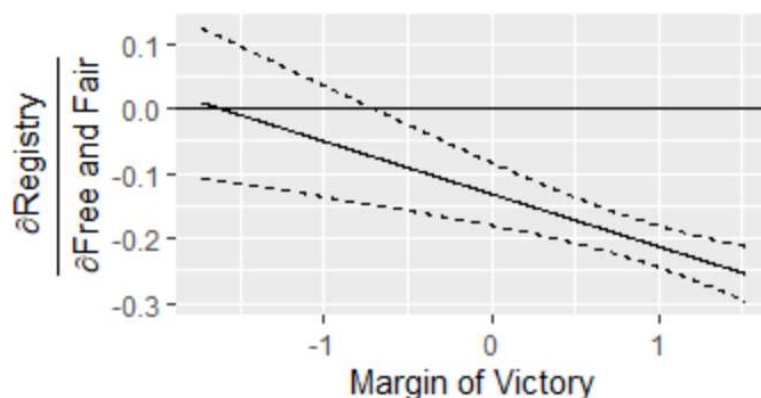
Source: Compiled by the author

Concerning the electoral context, free and fair elections as well as electoral margins are statistically significant but change the direction of effects depending on the dependent variable. Free and fair elections are associated with lower degrees of suffrage but higher accuracy in electoral registries. Conversely, larger electoral margins in the previous election are associated with a higher degree of suffrage but less accurate voter registries. These reversed effects illustrate the autocratic strategic decision-making within different electoral contexts and provide careful evidence for the systematic character of informal disenfranchisement.

As discussed above, the decision to introduce nominally-democratic elections entails the risk of potential electoral defeat for the autocrat. To secure political survival while simultaneously claiming democratic norms, the autocrat can manipulate different parameters of the electoral playing field. In this regard, suffrage is broad if the autocrat is not substantially contested – as indicated by larger electoral margins. The positive effect of margins on electoral registries is interpreted as an indication of over-registration. Over-registration indicates that suffrage rights are possibly extended to individuals who are legally ineligible to vote. This operational definition of over-registration can be viewed as a strategy to deepen procedural legitimation by claiming widespread support through inclusive elections and large electoral margins. It is essential to analyze the accuracy of voter registries while considering that discrepancies may signify both disenfranchisement and instances of over-registration.

At the same time, autocrats, to a greater degree, control who casts a ballot and who doesn't, if the elections are otherwise freer and fairer from manipulations. However, this is necessary only, if elections are contested. This relationship is emphasized by the statistically significant interaction effect of the margin of victory and free and fair elections in Model 4. Accordingly, Figure 1 illustrates the marginal effect of the degree of freedom and fairness of elections on the accuracy of registries as the margins of victory vary. With increasing margins, the negative effect of free and fair elections in registry accuracy decreases indicating that regimes are willing to grant political freedoms if they do not fear electoral defeat. This effect, however, is not statistically significant for very small electoral margins.

Figure 1: Marginal effect (Model 4)



Turning to the control variables, the presence of alternative ideological foundations for the regime does not affect the degree to which informal disenfranchisement occurs. Therefore, the desire for procedural legitimation seems independent of ideological legitimation. The strong positive effect of transparent laws in all four models implies that when law enforcement is transparent and predictable, it positively impacts the protection and exercise of voting rights and contributes to more accurate voter registries. This connection to electoral inclusiveness is significant as it suggests that when law enforcement operates transparently and predictably, there are fewer barriers or attempts to suppress voting rights, ensuring a more inclusive electoral process. By promoting fairness and accessibility, transparent and predictable law enforcement fosters an environment where all eligible citizens can participate in the electoral process, ultimately enhancing the integrity and legitimacy of elections.

The robustness of these findings was assessed using jackknife resampling (Ang 1998). Successively omitting one election from the original sample, I replicated the previous analysis with the reduced sample. The resulting coefficients are summarized in Table A5 of the appendix. The size of the replicated coefficients is very robust as indicated by calculated t -values in comparison to thresholds set by critical t -values. Similar to this replication of the coefficients, levels of statistical significance for the five main effects were replicated. While the levels of significance for free and fair elections and transparency of laws remain stable against the omission of every single election, there is some case sensitivity concerning margins, majoritarian electoral systems and ideology. All influential cases are listed in Table A6 in the appendix.

Concerning parliamentary elections, the frequency of Georgian elections is particularly striking. In total, four elections in Georgia are in the sample, all of which are

influential concerning the level of statistical significance of margins, majoritarian electoral systems, or ideology. Additionally, individual elections in Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Uruguay, and Pakistan are influential.

Firstly, the case of Georgia stands out as it provided universal suffrage but exhibited less accurate electoral registries compared to the remaining sample of parliamentary elections. Notably, the elections in Georgia in 1999 and 2003, observed by the OSCE, revealed significant flaws and inaccuracies in the voter lists. These issues, including wide variations in registration numbers and delays in publishing voter lists, were particularly evident for internally displaced persons, raising concerns about inclusiveness. The systematic nature of these flaws, disproportionately affecting areas expected to support oppositional parties, adds to the complexity of the electoral dynamics (OSCE-ODIHR 2000; 2004). These problems were assessed by the observers as "the most contentious electoral issue"(OSCE-ODIHR 2004, 10). The systematics of the flaws was highlighted by oppositional parties, "as districts in which they expected to receive strong electoral support were the worst affected areas" (OSCE-ODIHR 2004, 10).

Secondly, the remaining cases form a group characterized by comparably low suffrage, which can be attributed to the suspension of elections before the ones under analysis. In these elections, the time spans between the elections are increased, resulting in less informative lagged margins for the regime. Consequently, an autocrat may be incentivized to restrict suffrage to certain regions or societal groups, aiming to maintain control and avoid potential risks associated with higher contestation in the upcoming election.

Concerning presidential elections, the only influential cases are the 2006 and 2011 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Both elections had according to the data *de facto* universal suffrage. However, similar to Georgia, these elections experienced higher average flaws in the electoral registries compared to the remaining sample, indicating potential challenges to electoral inclusiveness. While a full qualitative analysis of these influential cases is not within the scope of this article, the identification of specific cases provides a starting point for further studies. Specifically, further research is needed to delve into the underlying factors and nuances influencing the relationship between electoral inclusiveness and registry accuracy especially in both cases.

Conclusion

Electoral inclusiveness is a cornerstone of democratic elections. As electoral autocracies utilize nominally-democratic elections to craft procedural legitimation, they are

incentivized to grant also universal suffrage to their citizens. This study set out to determine the electoral contexts in which suffrage rights are restricted and autocrats select their electorate systematically. Analyzing parliamentary and presidential elections held between 1970 and 2020 in electoral autocracies, three main findings are notable. First, there is empirical evidence that electoral autocracies legally provide inclusive elections through universal suffrage. Restrictions on suffrage rights are an exception. Second, suffrage rights are restricted informally as a response to electoral contexts. Political freedoms such as the right to vote are granted when the outcome of the election is certain. Third, the utilization of inclusiveness for autocratic purposes is not a one-way street. Aside from disenfranchisement, autocrats may use over-registration to establish a foundation for claims of mass support.

The implications of the findings for the trajectory and prospects of electoral autocracies are significant. The study's evidence that electoral autocracies tend to legally provide inclusive elections through universal suffrage, with restrictions being the exception, suggests that these regimes recognize the value of projecting an image of democratic legitimacy. Whether this image is used to impress the international community or rather addressed the domestic citizens for internal legitimation remains open for further investigation. However, the informal restrictions of suffrage rights in response to electoral contexts indicate that autocrats strategically manipulate inclusiveness to maintain control and ensure favorable election outcomes. This adaptability highlights the resilience of electoral autocracies in navigating projecting legitimacy and consolidating power. Moreover, the indications of over-registration as a tactic to establish a facade of mass support further underscores the complex interplay between electoral inclusiveness and manipulation in autocratic systems. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending the evolution and durability of electoral autocracies and may inform strategies aimed at promoting genuine democratic progress in these contexts. Further research is essential to uncover the nuances of how autocratic regimes leverage electoral inclusiveness for their political purposes and to assess its long-term effects on the prospects of democratization in these settings.

These results are a first attempt to provide a systematic inventory of inclusiveness in nominally-democratic elections held in electoral autocracies. Although the findings are robust, some limitations require acknowledgement. Although the accuracy of registries was believed to enhance inclusiveness, this analysis provides some evidence that registry inaccuracy may also occur as a response to over-registration. The used indicator does not

differentiate these inaccuracies. Further research on this matter should determine different types of inaccuracies and the context under which they occur.

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Appendix

Table A1: Countries and Election Years

Country Name	Parliamentary Elections (N=390)	Presidential Elections (N=343)
Afghanistan		2009, 2014, 2019
Albania	1992, 1996, 1997, 2001	
Algeria	1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017	1995, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019
Angola	2012, 2017	
Argentina	1973, 1983	1973, 1983
Armenia	1999, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2018	1996, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013
Azerbaijan	2000, 2005, 2015, 2020	1992, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018
Bangladesh	1979, 1986, 1988, 1991, 2008, 2014, 2018	1981, 1986
Belarus	2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2019	2001, 2006, 2010, 2015, 2020
Benin	2019	1991
Bolivia	1978, 1979, 1980, 1985, 2019, 2020	1978, 1979, 1980, 1985, 2019, 2020
Brazil	1986	
Bulgaria	1990	
Burkina Faso	1978, 1992, 1997, 2015	1991, 2015
Burma/Myanmar	2012, 2020	
Burundi	1993, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020	1993, 2010, 2015, 2020
Cambodia	2003, 2008, 2013, 2018	
Cameroon	1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1997, 2002	1975, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1997, 2004, 2011, 2018
Cape Verde	1985	
Central African Republic	1998	1992, 1999, 2005, 2011, 2015, 2020
Chad	2002	2001, 2006, 2011, 2016
Chile	1973, 1989	1989
Colombia	1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990	1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990
Comoros	1992, 1993, 2015, 2020	1990, 1996, 2002, 2016, 2019
Croatia	1995	1997
Democratic Republic of the Congo		2006, 2011, 2018
Djibouti	1977, 1997, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018	1987, 1993, 1999, 2005, 2016
Dominican Republic	1974, 1978, 1990, 1994	1974, 1978, 1990, 1994
Egypt	1976, 1979, 1984, 1987, 1990, 2015	1976, 1981, 1987, 1993, 1999, 2005, 2012, 2014, 2018
El Salvador	1972, 1974, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997	1972, 1977, 1984, 1989, 1994
Equatorial Guinea	1999, 2004, 2008	1996, 2002, 2009, 2016
Ethiopia	2000, 2010	
Fiji	1992, 2006, 2014, 2018	
Gabon		1993, 1998, 2005, 2009, 2016
Georgia	1992, 1995, 1999, 2003	1992, 1995, 2000
Ghana	1979, 1992	1979, 1992

Greece	1974	
Guatemala	1974, 1990, 1994, 1995	1974, 1978, 1982, 1985, 1990, 1995
Guinea	2002, 2013, 2020	1998, 2003, 2010, 2015, 2020
Guinea-Bissau	1999, 2004, 2008, 2014	1999, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014
Guyana	1973, 1980, 1985, 1992, 19	
Haiti	2010	1990, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2015, 2016
Honduras	1971, 1981, 1985, 1989, 2013, 2017	1971, 1981, 1985, 1989, 2009, 2013, 2017
Hungary	2018	
India	2019	
Indonesia	1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997	
Iran	2000, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020	1981, 1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017
Iraq	2010, 2014, 2018	
Ivory Coast	1995, 2000	1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2010, 2015, 2020
Jamaica	1980, 1983	
Kazakhstan	2004, 2007, 2012, 2016	1999, 2005, 2011, 2015, 2019
Kenya	1997, 2007, 2013, 2017	1997, 2002, 2007, 2013, 2017
Kosovo	2007	
Kyrgyzstan	2010, 2015, 2020	1995, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2017
Lesotho	1993, 1998	
Liberia	1997, 2005	1985, 1997, 2005
Madagascar	1977, 1983, 1989, 1993, 2002, 2007, 2019	1975, 1989, 1992, 2001, 2006, 2013, 2018
Malawi	1976, 1983, 1987, 1992, 2004, 2009, 2019	2004, 2009, 2019
Malaysia	1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1995, 1999, 2004, 2008, 2013, 2018	
Mali	1992, 2020	2013
Mauritania	1996, 2001, 2018	1971, 1992, 1997, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2019
Mexico	1973, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994	1976, 1982, 1988, 1994
Moldova	2005, 2009	
Montenegro	2001, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2016, 2020	2008, 2013, 2018
Mozambique	1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	
Namibia	1994	
Nepal	1994, 1999, 2008	
Nicaragua	1972, 1984, 2011, 2016	1974, 1984, 2011, 2016
Niger	1996, 1999, 2009	1996, 1999
Nigeria	1979, 1983, 2003, 2007	1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011
North Macedonia	1998, 2014, 2016	
Pakistan	1977, 1985, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008, 2013, 2018	2014
Panama	1989	1984, 1989
Papua New Guinea	1997	
Paraguay	1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1989	1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1989

Peru	2000	1980, 1995, 2000
Philippines	1978, 2004, 2007, 2019	1977, 1986, 2004
Republic of the Congo	1992	1992, 2002, 2009, 2016
Republic of Vietnam		1971
Russia	1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2016	1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2018
Rwanda	2003 2008 2013 2018	2003 2010 2017
Senegal	1983	1983
Serbia	1996 2000 2014 2016 2020	2017
Seychelles	1979 1983 1993 1998 2002 2007 2011	1984 1993 1998 2001 2006 2011 2015
Sierra Leone	1973 1982 2002	1996 2002
Singapore	1972 1976 1980 1984 1988 1991 1997 2001 2006 2011 2015 2020	2011 2017
Somaliland		2010 2017
South Africa	1974 1977 1981 1994	
South Korea	1971 1973 1978 1981 1985	1971 1987
Sri Lanka	1989 1994 2010	1988 1994 2005 2010
Sudan	1996	2000 2010 2015
Suriname	1991	
Syria		1978 1985 1991 1999 2000 2007
Tajikistan	2005 2010 2015 2020	1994 1999 2006 2013 2020
Tanzania	2005 2015 2020	2005 2015 2020
Thailand	1976 1983 1986 1988 1992 1995 1996 2011	
The Gambia	1972 1977 1982 1987 1992 1997 2002 2007 2012 2017	1987 1992
Togo	2013 2018	1979 1986 1993 1998 2003 2005 2010 2015 2020
Tunisia	1986 1994 1999 2009 2011	1974 1989 1994 1999 2004 2009
Turkey	1983 1987 2015 2018	2018
Turkmenistan	1980 2016	2012 2017
Uganda	1980 2016	2001 2006 2011 2016
Ukraine	1998 2002 2012 2014 2019	1999 2004 2014 2019
Uruguay	1984	1984
Uzbekistan	2009	2000 2007
Vanuatu	1977	
Venezuela	2005 2010 2015 2020	2006 2012 2013 2018
Yemen	1997 2003	2006 2012
Zambia	1973 1996 2016	1973 1996 2015 2016
Zanzibar	2000 2005 2010 2015	2000 2005 2010 2015 2016 2020
Zimbabwe	1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2008 2013 2018	1996 2002 2008 2013 2018

Source: Compiled by the author

Table A2: Description of Variables

Name	Source	Description	Mean	Median	SD
Suffrage [DV]	VDEM: v2asuffrage	Approximate percentage of <i>de facto</i> enfranchised adults above minimal voting age. Expert assessment.	95.64	100.00	20.12
Registry [DV]	VDEM: v2elrgstry	Accuracy of voter registry. Expert assessment.	-0.31	-0.34	0.95
Free and Fair	VDEM: v2elfrfair	The degree to which elections are assessed free and fair. Expert assessment.	-0.80	-0.84	1.02
Margin (lagged)	VDEM: v2elvtlrg v2elvtotml v2ellovtlg v2ellovtsm	The gap between vote shares of the winner in runner-up. Lagged to the previous election. Own calculations.	39.08	29.80	32.02
Ideology	VDEM: v2exl_legitideol	The degree to which the regime promotes a certain ideology. Expert assessment.	0.16	0.10	1.10
Transparent Laws	VDEM: v2cltrnslw	The degree to which laws are assessed is transparent and their enforcement is predictable. Expert assessment.	-0.10	-0.11	1.01
Majoritarian	VDEM: v2elparlel	Dummy Variable for Majoritarian Electoral Systems.			

Source: Compiled by the author

Table A3: Correlation-Matrix [Parliamentary Elections]

	Suffrage [DV]	Registry [DV]	Free and Fair	Margin of Victory	Legitimation
Registry [DV]	-0.04				
Free and Fair	-0.12*	0.64***			
Margin of Victory	0.09	-0.15**	-0.18***		
Legitimation	-0.06	-0.13*	-0.21***	0.00	
Transparency	0.14**	0.44***	0.41***	0.01	-0.22***

Computed correlation used the Pearson method with listwise deletion.

Source: Compiled by the author

Table A4: Correlation-Matrix [Presidential Elections]

	Suffrage [DV]	Registry [DV]	Free and Fair	Margin of Victory	Legitimation
Registry [DV]	-0.08				
Free and Fair	-0.09	0.63 ^{***}			
Margin of Victory	0.10	-0.38 ^{***}	-0.38 ^{***}		
Legitimation	0.01	-0.18 ^{***}	-0.19 ^{***}	0.10	
Transparency	0.15 ^{**}	0.38 ^{***}	0.43 ^{***}	-0.17 ^{**}	-0.21 ^{***}

Computed correlation used the Pearson method with listwise deletion.

Source: Compiled by the author

Table A5: Robustness of Coefficients against the Omission of Single Elections (Jackknife-Resampling)

	Model 1				Model 2			
	B _{min}	B _{mean}	B _{max}	t _{calc}	B _{min}	B _{mean}	B _{max}	t _{calc}
Free and Fair	-0.24	-0.23	-0.19	221.11*	0.51	0.53	0.54	-5135.55*
Margin (lagged)	0.05	0.07	0.09	153.18*	-0.06	-0.05	-0.03	1232.60*
Majoritarian	-0.11	-0.10	-0.08	229.63*	-0.11	-0.10	-0.09	324.85*
Ideology	-0.07	-0.06	-0.04	-138.93*	0.03	0.04	0.06	-940.92*
Transparent Laws	0.17	0.21	0.22	1209.66*	0.21	0.23	0.24	1766.10*
Free and Fair*Margin	0.05	0.07	0.09	-14.61*	0.05	0.06	0.07	132.63*
Margin*Majoritarian	0.00	0.02	0.04	-7.99*	0.04	0.05	0.06	-243.18*
Constant	0.01	0.01	0.03	-660.93*	0.00	0.01	0.01	-791.92*

Note:

Jackknife resampling of Models 1 to 4 omitting elections successively.

* stability of indicator based on t_{calc} > t_{critical} at 0.05% (DF=389)

	Model 3				Model 4			
	B _{min}	B _{mean}	B _{max}	t _{calc}	B _{min}	B _{mean}	B _{max}	t _{calc}
Free and Fair	-0.19	-0.16	-0.12	-102.71	0.47	0.49	0.51	-4105.69
Margin (lagged)	0.06	0.08	0.1	26.51	-0.19	-0.18	-0.16	1870.19
Ideology	0.01	0.03	0.05	-600.05	-0.06	-0.05	-0.03	-125.6
Transparent Laws	0.21	0.24	0.25	1053.38	0.11	0.14	0.15	900.95
Free and Fair*Margin	-0.05	-0.01	0.02	403.3	-0.1	-0.09	-0.08	1187.18
Constant	-0.01	-0.01	0.02	-363.15	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03	-246.97

Note:

Jackknife resampling of Models 1 to 4 omitting elections successively.

* stability of indicator based on t_{calc} > t_{critical} at 0.05% (DF=342)

Table A6: Influential Observations

	Model 1	Model2	Model 3	Model 4
Free and Fair	none	none	none	none
Margin (lagged)	Bangladesh (2008) Uruguay (1984) Georgia (1992)	Bangladesh 2008) Uruguay (1984) Georgia (1992)	DR Congo (2006)	none
Majoritarian	Bolivia (1980) Georgia (1995, 1999, 2003)	Bolivia (1980) Georgia (1995, 1999, 2003) Guinea-Bissau (1999)		
Ideology	Guinea-Bissau (1999) Bolivia (1980) Pakistan (1977) Georgia (1992, 1995, 1999, 2003) Guinea-Bissau (1999) Comoros (2015)	Bolivia (1980) Pakistan (1977) Georgia (1992, 1995, 1999, 2003) Guinea-Bissau (1999) Comoros (2015)	DR Congo (2011)	none
Transparent Laws	none	none	None	none

Note:

Omitted cases causing $p \geq 0.1$ for variables significant in the original model

-OR-

Omitted cases causing $p < 0.1$ for variables statistically insignificant in the original model