

Introduction: Studying Election Fraud

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In 2006 alone, significant allegations of election fraud surrounded presidential elections in Italy, Mexico, and several former Soviet republics. In the United States, concerns have been raised regarding all aspects of elections, from voter registration fraud to voting machine security, especially since the 2000 presidential election, when accusations of electoral manipulation in Florida were heard around the world. The potential for election fraud overshadows elections in all election-holding countries, even long-established democracies.

Investigations by journalists, academics, lawyers, political parties, official nonpartisan observers, and interested citizens have drawn attention to cases of clear-cut voting fraud in many countries around the world, including the United States. These cases are troubling because fair and competitive elections are widely understood to be a necessary element of representative democracy. Electoral manipulation diminishes many of the assumed benefits of democratic governance, including public accountability, transparency, and representation. However, the concept of election fraud and electoral manipulation more generally remains remarkably understudied.

Policymakers and academics share an interest in election fraud, but several factors have made it difficult to formulate a coherent understanding of what election fraud is, much less how to detect and prevent it. There is still no widely accepted definition of election fraud because the applied understanding of fraud depends on the context: what is perceived as fraudulent manipulation of

the electoral process differs over time and from country to country. Even within academia, the theoretical definitions of fraud have yet to be united across the fields of international and domestic law, comparative and American political science, and election administration in developed and developing countries.

As commitments to democratic governance have spread throughout the world, international organizations have tried to define democratic elections. They have established criteria for democratic elections, but there remain many points of contention between countries, regions, international organizations, NGOs, academics, and policymakers. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 states that the will of the people “shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.” Beyond this relatively benign and widely cited commitment, there is limited agreement on the necessary elements of democratic elections.

Even well-established international election observers who are invited to countries in order to offer assessments on election quality maintain that their evaluations should be made within the historical and political context of the country in question. Further, since the early 1990s they have shied away from the efforts of journalists to classify elections as “free and fair.” As Eric Bjornlund eloquently notes:

Most people assume that the [election] observers’ job is to determine whether an election is free and fair. Yet observation practice has not clearly established what this means. Measuring elections against a free and fair standard suggests a dichotomy—the elections either pass or fail a test of legitimacy—when elections are actually political processes more realistically judged along a continuum and placed in context. This focus on the free and fair determination has encouraged international election assessments to make categorical, “bottom-line” judgments that fail to take nuances and context into account. Such judgments imply, inaccurately, that elections in democratic countries are beyond reproach.¹

In short, many allegations of election fraud may not be clear-cut, but will be context-dependent, falling along the continuum that Bjornlund outlines. Suspicious behavior may be the only “evidence” of election fraud, and it can be difficult to prove; the supposed fraud may instead be the result of administrative incompetence or simple misunderstandings. Finally, claims of fraud are typically made by the losing candidate or party, thus casting doubt on whether alleged cases of fraud are real or are the cries of a “sore loser.”

Beyond identifying fraud, how to use the knowledge that it has occurred presents other challenges. For example, election observers must determine whether documented irregularities would have changed the outcome of an election. Neither academics nor policymakers have clearly defined how much fraud must take place in order to constitute a fraudulent election. As one noted scholar of comparative politics states:

Democratic norms are not *perfectly* realized anywhere, even in advanced democracies. Access to the electoral arena always has a cost and is never perfectly equal; the scopes and jurisdictions of elective offices are everywhere limited; electoral institutions invariably discriminate against somebody inside or outside the party system; and democratic politics is never quite sovereign but always subject to societal as well as constitutional constraints. . . . There is much room for nuance and ambivalence . . . [and] bending and circumventing the rules may sometimes be considered “part of the game.”²

Clearly, an election in which every vote is stolen should be considered fraudulent, but where should the line be drawn? Does a single manipulated vote constitute a fraudulent election? What about forms of election manipulation that do not pertain directly to the act of voting, such as intimidating potential political candidates or changing the electoral system to benefit one party over another? Is election fraud in a very close election more damaging than election fraud in an election with an overwhelming winner?

Given the substantive importance and widespread occurrence of election fraud around the world, and the central role that elections play in democratic governance, one might assume that sophisticated studies of election fraud would have proliferated. However, work to date includes little systematic research on how election fraud can be detected and deterred despite the frequent claims and anecdotes about election fraud found in the media and popular press. This comment is only partially a critique; detailed case studies or even anecdotes can provide important signals about where to look for election fraud, as well as information about the types of fraud that can be perpetrated.

Existing research includes well-documented cases of blatant election fraud and overt manipulation of the electoral process, including early twentieth-century Kentucky, New York from 1870 to 1916, and Costa Rica.³ So called “electoral authoritarian” regimes often have used elections to legitimate their rule and, to the surprise of many observers, sometimes fail to win these elections. In these cases, regimes have to decide whether to cheat—to steal the election—or to submit to the will of the people and transfer power to the winner.⁴

When authoritarian regimes lose elections, power is not automatically transferred. These regimes commit a form of manipulation after election day if they fail to accept the results and retain power through other means. Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos engaged in well-documented fraud in the 1986 presidential elections that involved both retail fraud (bribery and intimidation) and postelection wholesale fraud (manipulating the vote tallies). Similarly, Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe has systematically engaged in violence and intimidation to ensure that the opposition is weakened, and he continues to win elections. Of course, not all authoritarian governments resort to fraud in order to hold on to power; the party of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua handed over power to the opposition when they lost elections in 1990. Likewise, many nations with long histories of democratic government have held elections where irregularities and administrative problems raised questions about the integrity of elections where existing governments have tried to retain power, such as in the 2006 parliamentary elections in Italy.

Social scientists have an important opportunity (and, some would argue, a responsibility) to contribute to the detection and deterrence of election fraud. In the context of elections in the United States, the most outspoken commentators on the subject of election fraud are divided into two camps. On the one hand there are individuals who argue that election fraud is rampant and that U.S. elections are completely corrupt. On the other hand there are individuals who dismiss all claims of election fraud as partisan and instead argue that election fraud is nonexistent in U.S. elections.

In our view, these competing claims can be examined scientifically, relying primarily on tools from the social sciences. Without a doubt, election fraud has occurred in the United States, as shown in studies by Tracy Campbell, Gary Cox, and J. Morgan Kousser.⁵ However, it is also true that many claims of election fraud may be initiated for purely political reasons and that some irregularities really are just administrative errors or oversights. By articulating legal definitions of fraud and by providing a menu of new techniques for fraud detection, we hope to find a middle ground in which election fraud is taken seriously but not all claims are assumed to be true, either in or outside the United States. By studying methods of fraud prevention and by examining the consequences of election fraud and efforts to prevent it, we also hope that this volume provides valuable information to election officials who are interested in increasing public confidence in elections. Even in jurisdictions where elections are run perfectly, unfounded accusations of fraud can undermine public confidence in the electoral process and complicate an already

difficult job. It is in this spirit that we offer recommendations to election officials that can increase transparency and thus public confidence in the electoral process.

This volume brings together a collection of scholars who attempt to address several critical questions. First, what is election fraud and how does context matter in the conceptualization of what constitutes election fraud and what does not? Second, what is the empirical record regarding fraud, and how can voters and interested observers identify election fraud in the United States? Third, what lessons can we learn from elections outside the United States about the incidence and detection of election fraud? Finally, what are the most effective new statistical methodologies for detecting election anomalies, which then can be used as the basis for subsequent analysis to ferret out election fraud? We conclude the volume with a discussion of directions for future research and policy changes that are necessary so that we can better study and prevent election fraud.

The one limitation that all scholars face is a lack of transparency in the electoral process, and we discuss this important issue at length in our conclusion. Critical to this transparency is access to election data that, we argue, should be reported efficiently and in a consistent format over time and across jurisdictions. In addition, we advocate greater access by scholars and researchers to the voting process and to vote-counting procedures as a means to enhance the empirical study of election fraud.

What Is Election Fraud and How Can It Be Quantified?

In studying election fraud, it becomes immediately clear that understandings of the concept are rooted in each country's cultural and political milieu. Consider, for example, the allegations of fraud in Mexico's 2006 presidential election. Some charges centered on the use of door-to-door canvassing by one of the political parties and whether such campaigning constituted undue partisan pressure on voters. Similarly, the decision by President Vicente Fox to endorse one of the candidates running to replace him was perceived within Mexico as illegitimate pressuring of voters and an unfair use of state funds to promote one candidate. In the United States, both of these activities have long been commonplace; parties and candidates are expected to go door-to-door attempting to persuade and mobilize voters, and endorsements by officeholders are a non-controversial part of the electoral process. By contrast, the U.S. campaign finance system—where groups and individuals with an interest in particular

policies can make direct contributions to the campaigns of decisionmakers—is legal in the United States, but in other countries similar contributions by groups and individuals would constitute campaign and election fraud. As these examples show, differences in countries' electoral laws and differences in political culture contribute to whether a given activity is perceived as election fraud.

Even in the United States, views of election fraud have varied over time and across states. We often forget that it was only in the 1960s that the United States ended the practice of systematically disenfranchising entire classes of voters. This was the ultimate form of election fraud; the use of state power to keep eligible voters from casting a ballot. In the 1800s, low-level violence and intimidation at the polls were commonplace in many regions of the country and were seen as part of electoral competition. Vote buying, a concern today, was conducted out in the open in the mid-1800s, with voters often able to receive “bids” for their votes from competing political parties. In the late 1890s, U.S. voters in some parts of the country were paid to stay home on election day.⁶ Various reforms have addressed such election fraud, including the adoption of the secret ballot and the use of voting machines for casting and counting ballots.

Culture also affects how different countries view the same election reforms. Estonia conducts elections using the Internet, something that critics of electronic voting in the United States have argued is a recipe for election fraud. Likewise, India adopted electronic voting because it helped to mitigate the rampant practice of armed gunmen's stuffing ballot boxes in certain regions of the country. In the United States, electronic voting equipment, similar to that used successfully in India, is viewed as a potential source of fraud by a subset of voters and activists. In each of these cases, history, politics, and culture together shape how a given reform is viewed in the context of election fraud.

Perhaps due to a lack of consistent data and definitions about election fraud, there has been relatively little empirical analysis of election fraud in the research literature. Most election fraud studies in the United States are historical, focusing on historical epochs or case studies. One epoch of great interest is the “Gilded Age,” during the late 1800s; many of these studies try to estimate the extent of election fraud. Geographic, case-based historical studies of American election fraud include studies of the early twentieth century in Pittsburgh and studies of nineteenth-century New York, Texas, South Carolina, and Mississippi.⁷ George Miller is one scholar who focused on fraud in specific election modes by examining fraud allegations in absentee voting;

others have studied historic allegations of fraudulent voter registration.⁸ Contemporary considerations of election fraud can be found in a book by Larry Sabato and Glenn Simpson, as well as in studies by John Fund, Tracy Campbell, and Andrew Gumbel.⁹

Outside the United States there have been studies of election fraud, especially in what Fabrice Lehoucq refers to as “pre-reform political systems.”¹⁰ These are nations that do not meet minimal requirements for a functioning democracy, and whose electoral administration systems appear to allow for much more rampant election fraud. Important examples include Costa Rica, Imperial Germany, Argentina, and Brazil.¹¹ The general conclusions from this literature are that there are many different ways in which political agents attempt to illegally manipulate election outcomes; however the evidence is weak that many of these manipulations are in fact decisive in determining electoral winners or losers.

Lehoucq and Ivan Molina have also conducted an in-depth longitudinal study of electoral fraud in Costa Rica for an almost fifty-year period in the development of the country.¹² They found that changes in social structure dramatically changed the nature of election fraud. Population movements, changes in economic conditions and labor markets, and educational attainment all can lead to changes in the types and level of fraud. Fraud is also a function of the legal framework in which elections occur. Party competition, how legislative seats are allocated, and the forms of representation that exist can all affect whether the political environment is likely to be a problem.

Last, there is an extensive and growing literature on political corruption. This literature focuses on historical political machines and corruption in American cities, including Tammany Hall in New York. Political corruption is also explored in comparative perspective. As this literature tends to cover more general issues of political corruption, some works examine types of corruption that take place in the electoral arena.¹³

Political factors, especially political competition, have been shown to explain some of the observed variation in election fraud, with a positive correlation between competitiveness and various measures of election fraud, with some important exceptions.¹⁴ Institutional factors, in particular the specific mechanisms used for legislative elections (for example, majoritarian versus proportional systems), appear to explain much of the variance in election fraud in Costa Rica, with more fraud occurring under majoritarian rules. Economic interests, partisanship and incumbency, and urbanization also appear to correlate with the extent of election fraud.¹⁵

Plan of the Book: Defining, Measuring, and Detecting Fraud

It will become clear to the reader that there are a number of competing definitions of election fraud. Even scholars who are at the forefront of research on election fraud do not agree on a general conceptual definition. We return to this issue in the final chapter of this volume, where we delineate the steps that we view as essential in working toward a stronger body of research on election fraud and for improving public policies for the detection and prevention of election fraud.

Although the volume includes research informed by elections in dozens of countries, it was motivated primarily by a desire to systematically evaluate the heightened attention to claims of election fraud in the United States since the controversial 2000 presidential election. These claims and much of the literature on election fraud in both domestic and international contexts is atheoretical and anecdotal, designed to make a specific case about election fraud or give examples about the continuity of fraud cases over time. Such works are helpful to the overall understanding of election fraud, but have been most useful in documenting the historical occurrences of fraud.

We are interested in developing a more comprehensive framework for examining election fraud. In many ways, the election fraud problem is similar to many “black box” problems. Elections have inputs (voters, parties, candidates, the media) and outputs (the vote share for each competitor). In the middle there is a process that is not inherently transparent. The secret ballot minimizes voter coercion by ensuring that a given vote cannot be attributed to a given voter. However, it also means that the election process is not auditable in the same way that a banking system is auditable. The procedures that govern the election can also make the process more or less transparent and more or less open to public scrutiny.

Given that we can never truly measure whether each voter’s intention was successfully transmitted through the electoral process, this book examines the array of potentially illegal or unfair inputs and outputs of the electoral process. This requires defining the electoral process and the bounds for legal and illegal election activities. Next, given that the electoral process can be viewed as a black box problem, we are also interested in examining techniques that can be employed to determine whether the activities that occurred “inside” the black box are outside the bounds of what we would expect in a democratic election. Finally, we consider how to make an election free and fair through procedural and legal measures.

Defining Election Fraud

Research on election fraud, both in the United States and internationally, is difficult. Even in a purely legal sense, definitions of election fraud differ widely in different jurisdictions. Comparatively, activities viewed as normal behavior during elections in the United States would be considered fraud in other countries. Even in the United States, acceptable actions in one state may be explicitly banned in others. The relative nature of election fraud and the widely variant historical, cultural, and institutional contexts in which election fraud has occurred make the development of a clear and consistent definition a complicated, if not impossible, undertaking. In this part of the book, we examine understandings of election fraud in the United States, focusing primarily on legal definitions of fraud. Even within the rather narrow U.S. legal context, federal and state laws differ, and case law continues to contribute new information. New voting technologies have generated new legal challenges, and some questionable practices remain untested within the judicial system. The chapter by Craig Donsanto provides a helpful legal framework for understanding U.S. federal election laws and the activities that are considered election fraud. Donsanto cuts through the legalese to explain what is actually outlawed in U.S. elections. Tellingly, we again see here that definitions of election fraud, as established by the courts, have evolved over time, and Congress has worked to tune the laws related to election fraud for more than 100 years.

One of the more vital consequences of election fraud may be the negative effect it has on public confidence in the electoral process. This consequence may occur even when no election fraud actually takes place. Simple allegations of fraud can be enough to depress citizen participation and harm the reputation of the institutions charged with administering elections. Such allegations also give politicians the ability to offer reforms, which may serve either to improve elections or to entrench some bias in the electoral system. With this in mind, Thad Hall and Tova Wang examine what might be learned from the international democracy promotion community about normative principles for the prevention of election fraud. Although not law, these documents may provide guidance to those interested in applying lessons from abroad in the U.S. context.

A looming unknown question is whether efforts to reduce election fraud through prevention, deterrence, or detection are analogous to plugging a small hole in a leaky dam or throwing a boulder in the middle of a river. In

other words, do efforts to prevent or deter election fraud actually eliminate it or do they merely displace it? In some contexts, particularly in the more undemocratic settings, persons planning to engage in election fraud will simply circumvent any barriers put in their way. In other cases, it is possible that only minor reforms could eliminate fraudulent practices altogether.

The final contribution in this section only begins to answer this question, and does so by raising important questions about election fraud in a broader theoretical context. Through case studies of Iraqi and Palestinian elections, Gamze Çavdar shows how procedurally acceptable elections may be affected by the broader context, specifically when elections take place under foreign occupation. Given the lively current debate about the importance of transitioning to democratic elections in the Middle East, Çavdar's chapter provides important theoretical analysis of the issues that must be considered as countries move to democratic elections.

Measuring Election Fraud

Debates about election reform and proposed changes to election procedures are generally infused with questions about election fraud. For example, following the 2000 U.S. presidential election, when debate began over the legislation that became the "Help America Vote Act," significant attention was paid to the question of whether the voter registration process in some states invited certain forms of election fraud. In recent years, as many states have moved toward stricter voter identification procedures, the rationale for stricter identification requirements has been that they will prevent voter fraud. Some experts have criticized these debates, arguing that there is little empirical evidence documenting widespread election fraud, at least of the sort that stricter voter identification requirements would prevent.¹⁶

This empirical debate is quite important because, if fraud is a problem, we should be able to see evidence of it in legal proceedings and in data from elections. The debate over fraud requires having some baseline data on the types of fraud that occur, the frequency of these various types of fraud, the types of individuals who perpetrate fraud, and the rationale for committing fraud. Given the mostly anecdotal nature of the debate over fraud, any effort to systematically collect and analyze data on election fraud—at the federal, state, or local level—moves the study of election fraud forward. To use an analogy, are fraud accusations like airplane crashes—infrequent but focusing events that we remember; or are accusations of fraud more like car accidents, events that occur frequently but where only the most dramatic make the news?

The contributions in the second part of the book consider a seemingly simple yet vexing question: how much election fraud is there? This part focuses on measuring election fraud in the United States; we would encourage readers to examine chapter 11, by Mikhail Myagkov, Peter Ordeshook, and Dimitry Shaikin, to appreciate the issues associated with fraud in the post-Soviet context. We start this part with attitudinal data regarding election fraud; Michael Alvarez and Thad Hall take readers on a tour of these perceptions, discussing how both the elite and the general population view fraud. Unlike many discussions of election fraud, they ground this discussion in a theoretical framework of risk assessment and how risk is communicated and amplified through society. The survey data presented by the authors allow us to see how Americans perceive fraud and what types of fraud are most worrisome to the general public.

The next four chapters are specific empirical analyses of fraud. Delia Bailey looks at the record of federal election fraud litigation to examine how many cases have been brought into the national court system, what types of fraud have been alleged, and how extensive the election fraud might have been. Given the political debate in Washington in 2007 regarding the role of U.S. attorneys in prioritizing voting fraud prosecutions, the findings in this chapter shed important light on the prosecution of federal election fraud. Michael Alvarez and Frederick Boehmke examine records of fraud allegation from California and Georgia in order to document the rates of different forms of election fraud. As in the chapter by Delia Bailey, the systematic examination of election fraud at the state level provides a baseline for understanding the frequency with which fraud is actually prosecuted as well as evidence of the types of fraud that occur.

Roderick Kiewiet, Thad Hall, Michael Alvarez, and Jonathan Katz consider a simple but potentially powerful methodology for finding problems in a given jurisdiction's elections: asking the local elections administrators to fill out "incident reports." Using these incident reports from a recent election in Ohio, Kiewiet and his colleagues are able to document a number of potential points of failure and some important procedural vulnerabilities. These data provide insights both into the types of administrative problems that occur in elections as well as the types of fraud that can occur if simple procedures for election security are not followed. Finally, Todd Donovan and Daniel Smith present and analyze new data on signature fraud in ballot measure petitions. Given the growing number of ballot initiatives in many U.S. states and the role that they can play in setting the policy agenda, understanding how fraud is perpetrated

in the signature collection process, its frequency, and the effectiveness of efforts to ameliorate this problem are critical in evaluating direct democracy.

Detecting Election Fraud

Detecting election fraud can be a difficult task. Except in cases of blatant fraud—such as the case examined by Mikhail Myagkov, Peter Ordeshook, and Dimitry Shaikin in their chapter on Russia—it can be difficult to distinguish between blatant attempts to manipulate the election and isolated anomalies, incidents, or irregularities that may be completely unintentional. Many methods of detecting election fraud require a transparent electoral process and high-quality data reported in a timely manner. Detection also requires knowing where to look for election manipulation. For example, fraud is a more cost-effective activity in an election where only a small number of stolen votes are needed to change the outcome of a race. Local races and very close elections are often the places to look for fraud within relatively democratic contexts.¹⁷

The 2000 U.S. presidential election and the subsequent attention paid to observed electoral irregularities in that election (especially in Florida) generated renewed interest in the United States in studying electoral irregularities and fraud. The problem with such research is that it is often predicated on suppositions or assumptions that may have little to do with fraud. The 2004 election was rife with allegations not necessarily founded on evidence; the *New York Times* even printed a story about conspiracy theories on the Internet, including allegations that optical scan balloting was the source of fraud in Florida, and that long lines in Ohio were a sure sign of fraud there.¹⁸ These studies often failed to consider basic, well-established, information about party identification, bipartisan election administration, and statistics. For example, the *New York Times* article quotes Clay Shirky of the interactive telecommunications program at New York University, who suggests “that the online fact-finding machine has come unmoored, and that some bloggers simply ‘can’t imagine any universe in which a fair count of the votes would result in George Bush being re-elected president.’”

Addressing the question of election fairness requires models of elections that allow researchers to determine if election outcomes look like what we would expect in a fair election. There is growing interest in using sophisticated statistical or econometric techniques to model election regularities—and to then identify election irregularities, or “outliers.”¹⁹ Detected outliers, say in precinct-by-precinct or county-by-county analyses, can then be examined in further detail to determine if their outlier status is due to fraud or to other benign or idiosyncratic factors.

This is a promising avenue for future studies of election fraud and one that is explored in five of the chapters presented here. Each chapter uses a different method to answer the same question: were the data that were produced by the election—the vote totals, turnout, and the like—what we would expect in a democratic election? Represented in this final part of the book are several different statistical methodologies that can be used to look for anomalies and problems in elections and election administration—results that might provide the a priori evidence for further investigation of potential election fraud.

This section begins with an analysis by Michael Alvarez and Jonathan Katz, who examine the 2002 gubernatorial and senatorial elections in Georgia in which problems were alleged. Alvarez and Katz show that the combination of political science knowledge of elections and simple but powerful statistical tools can be used to look for anomalies in county-level data. Using historical data and regression analysis, they show how it is possible to determine whether a given election outcome is within the bounds of what would be predicted by previous events.

Walter Mebane modifies the use of Benford's Law—a statistical technique that was originally developed to detect financial fraud—to examine election fraud. This little-known but potentially powerful test can be used to study the distribution of election returns across geographic units and test whether they differ from expected patterns. He has applied this technique to both domestic and international election data and shows how Benford's Law not only identifies traditional localities with a history of fraud but also identifies localities that have been the center of election controversies.

Mikhail Myagkov, Peter Ordeshook, and Dimitry Shaikin use data from recent elections in Russia and a “flow of votes” analysis to look for evidence of anomalies and potential manipulation. Susan Hyde considers how international election observation can detect and deter election fraud and advocates random assignment of observers as an improvement to existing methodology. Raising a number of thought-provoking questions in the final chapter in this section, Alberto Simpser considers the potential unintended consequences of high-quality election observation.

Recommendations for Reform

In the final chapter we propose a series of simple reforms that could be put into place to detect and prevent election fraud. Even where the probability of election fraud is low, doubts surrounding the legitimacy and fairness of an

electoral process should still compel strong public policy action. Low voter confidence in an electoral process, even if unfounded, can have a depressing effect on turnout and other civic action. Therefore, we argue that policy-makers in the United States should enact reforms that are likely to increase voter trust and confidence in the electoral process. Given persistent suspicions about the integrity of U.S. elections, steps should be taken to ensure that the public—not just the insular world of election officials and political parties—is confident that elections are free and fair, and that their outcomes are accurate.

Our first recommendation is that elections, especially U.S. elections—should be made more transparent to observation by impartial and nonpartisan observers. In most American states, the role of election observation has been delegated to political parties. Although this is helpful, parties are not neutral observers; they want to ensure that *their own voters* get to vote but are likely to be indifferent, or even hostile, to voters from other parties. States should adopt laws that allow for neutral organizations to observe voting in order to signal that the elections are being conducted in a free and fair manner. An additional benefit of such observation is that scholars and interested students of elections will gain access to information about the mechanics of voting operations at polling places and thus study the efficacy of election administration practices that relate to election fraud prevention. Presently, lack of access by nonpartisan observers to a diverse sample of polling stations is one of the barriers to scholarly evaluation of election administration.

Second, election officials should report more data in real time. The basic data on elections—how many voters were eligible to vote in each precinct, how many voters voted, and the vote totals for each race—are needed for a transparent electoral process and for some methods of fraud detection. We understand that this recommendation may require significant upgrading of the technical infrastructure in many U.S. counties. Many of the most powerful techniques for fraud detection, identified in this volume, require access to precinct-level election results. Many other countries, including developing democracies, already compile and release precinct-level election results. Proper analysis of those results may be one of the best ways to deter fraud, and greater transparency is likely to increase voter confidence in the electoral process. It would be ideal if these data could be reported electronically, in a common format. Even without this reform, better reporting of existing data would improve our ability to analyze them.

Finally, we also strongly urge our colleagues—and the public and private organizations that fund their research—to expand the research literature on election fraud. As scholars, we need to develop new ways to study election fraud, we need new publication outlets for academic research on a question that is inherently multidisciplinary and methodologically complex, and we need to develop theoretical approaches for defining and understanding what we mean by election fraud, when it might occur, and how it might be perpetrated. These are tall orders, but we are hopeful that the collection of ideas in this volume will spark interest in what we see as a potentially exciting new field for new social science research.

Notes

1. Eric C. Bjornlund, *Beyond Free and Fair: Monitoring Elections and Building Democracy* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 97–98.

2. Andreas Schedler, “The Menu of Manipulation,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 36–50; emphasis in original.

3. Tracy Campbell, “Machine Politics, Police Corruption, and the Persistence of Vote Fraud: The Case of the Louisville, Kentucky, Election of 1905,” *Journal of Policy History* 15, no. 3 (2003): 269–300; Gary W. Cox and J. Morgan Kousser, “Turnout and Rural Corruption: New York as a Test Case,” *American Journal of Political Science* 25, no. 4 (1981): 646–63; Fabrice E. Lehoucq and I. Molina, *Stuffing the Ballot Box: Fraud, Electoral Reform, and Democratization in Costa Rica* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

4. For a comprehensive examination of this issue, see Mark R. Thompson and Philipp Kuntz, “After Defeat: When Do Rulers Steal Elections?” in *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*, edited by Andreas Schedler (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2006).

5. Tracy Campbell, *Deliver the Vote* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2005); Cox and Kousser, “Turnout and Rural Corruption.”

6. Cox and Kousser, “Turnout and Rural Corruption.”

7. Peter H. Argersinger, “New Perspectives on Election Fraud in the Gilded Age,” *Political Science Quarterly* 100 (1985–86): 699–87; Dale Baum, “Pinpointing Apparent Fraud in the 1861 Texas Succession Referendum,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22 (1991): 201–21; Cox and Kousser, “Turnout and Rural Corruption”; R. F. King, “Counting the Votes: South Carolina’s Stolen Election of 1876,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32 (2001): 169–91; Loomis Mayfield, “Voting Fraud in Early Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24 (1993): 59–94.

8. George F. Miller, *Absentee Voters and Suffrage Laws* (Washington: Daylton, 1948).

9. Campbell, *Deliver the Vote*; John Fund, *Stealing Elections* (New York: Encounter Books, 2004); Andrew Gumbel, *Steal This Vote* (New York: Nation Books, 2004);

Joseph P. Harris, *Registration of Voters in the United States* (Washington: Brookings, 1929); Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Larry J. Sabato and Glenn R. Simpson, *Dirty Little Secrets: The Persistence of Corruption in American Politics* (New York: Random House, 1996).

10. Fabrice Lehoucq, "Electoral Fraud: Causes, Types, and Consequences," *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003): 233–56.

11. M. L. Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton University Press, 2000); R. Graham, *Politics and Patronage in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Stanford University Press, 1990); Lehoucq and Molina, *Stuffing the Ballot Box*; and Hilda Sabato, *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires* (Stanford University Press, 2001). For a more extensive literature review, covering sources in French and Spanish in addition to English, see Lehoucq, "Electoral Fraud."

12. Lehoucq and Molina, *Stuffing the Ballot Box*.

13. Richard L. Hasen, "Vote Buying," *California Law Review* 88 (2000): 1323–71; Roger Myerson, "Effectiveness of Electoral Systems for Reducing Government Corruption: A Game-Theoretic Analysis," *Games and Economic Behavior* 5 (1993): 118–32; Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, *Political Economics: Explaining Economic Policy* (MIT Press, 2000); William L. Riordan, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994); Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

14. Alberto Simpser, "Making Votes Not Count" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2005). Simpser shows that election fraud occurs in many noncompetitive elections, arguing that it can be a means by which autocrats demonstrate their dominance of the system.

15. See Anderson, *Practicing Democracy*; J. I. Dominguez and J. A. McCann, *Democratizing Mexico: Public Opinion and Electoral Choices* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

16. Spencer Overton, *Stealing Democracy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

17. Although fraud is more likely to change the outcome of an election that is close, Alberto Simpser has demonstrated that in some countries candidates may have an incentive to engage in widespread electoral fraud even in elections that are not likely to be close. See Simpser, "Making Votes Not Count."

18. Tom Zeller, "Vote Fraud Theories, Spread by Blogs, Are Quickly Buried," *New York Times*, November 12, 2004, p. A-1.

19. See Walter R. Mebane and Jasjeet S. Sekhon, "Robust Estimation and Outlier Detection for Overdispersed Multinomial Models of Count Data," Harvard University, manuscript; Jonathan N. A. Wand, Jasjeet S. Sekhon, and Walter R. Mebane, "A Comparative Analysis of Multinomial Voting Irregularities: Canada 2000," paper presented at the 2001 Joint Statistical Meetings, American Statistical Association, Social

Statistics Section, Atlanta, Georgia. While this new interest is developing among methodologically sophisticated social scientists, the basic idea of using outlier detection to identify potential electoral fraud has appeared earlier in some historical studies of fraud, including Baum, "Pinpointing Apparent Fraud"; Robert C. Oberst and Amy Weilage, "Quantitative Tests of Electoral Fraud: The 1982 Sri Lankan Referendum," *Corruption and Reform* 5 (1990): 49–62; and L. N. Powell, "Correcting for Fraud: A Quantitative Reassessment of the Mississippi Ratification Election of 1868," *Journal of Southern History* 5 (1989): 633–58.

