

# Electoral Authoritarianism



**The Dynamics of  
Unfree Competition**

edited by

**Andreas Schedler**

# 1

## The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism

---

*Andreas Schedler*

A specter is haunting the developing world—the specter of electoral authoritarianism. The good thing is that scaring off specters is an easy assignment, in particular for those who fail to believe in scary metaphysical creatures. The bad thing is that the specter is a metaphor, while electoral authoritarianism is a reality.<sup>1</sup> A large number of political regimes in the contemporary world, ranging from Azerbaijan to Zimbabwe, from Russia to Singapore, from Belarus to Cameroon, from Egypt to Malaysia, have established the institutional façades of democracy, including regular multiparty elections for the chief executive, in order to conceal (and reproduce) harsh realities of authoritarian governance. Although in historical perspective the authoritarian use of elections is nothing new, contemporary electoral authoritarian regimes take the time-honored practice of electoral manipulation to new heights.

This book contains original comparative research into the conflictive interaction between rulers and opposition parties in the central arena of struggle under electoral authoritarianism—the electoral battlefield. This introductory chapter addresses three analytical core issues with which the emergent comparative study of electoral authoritarian regimes is grappling: the concept of electoral authoritarianism, its observation and measurement, and its endogenous dynamic. The first section, on conceptual issues, explains how students of comparative democratization have responded to the proliferation of political regimes that couple formal democratic institutions (multiparty elections) with authoritarian practices. In addition, it offers and justifies a formal definition of electoral authoritarian regimes that looks at both constitutional properties and democratic qualities of electoral processes. The second section, on issues of measurement, discusses a fundamental methodological problem: in electoral authoritarian regimes, official election results are the combined outcome of two unknown and unobservable variables—popular

preferences and authoritarian manipulation. We can resolve this observational problem either by using the competitiveness of opposition parties as a proxy for authoritarian manipulation, or we may seek to gather extensive knowledge about the case at hand in order to reach a comprehensive judgment about the overall democratic quality of a given electoral process. The third section, on the endogenous dynamic of electoral authoritarianism, analyzes authoritarian elections as “creative” institutions that constitute a certain set of actors (citizens, opposition actors, and ruling parties), endow them with certain sets of strategies, and push them into a conflictive “nested game” in which the competition for votes *within* given rules takes place alongside the competitive struggle *over* the rules of the game.

### The Concept of Electoral Authoritarianism

The early 1990s were a time of democratic optimism. South America had completed its journey to electoral democracy, the Soviet empire had disintegrated in relative peace, and sub-Saharan Africa was passing through an unprecedented series of multiparty elections. We were reading about the end of history, the triumph of democracy, and the liberal world order. Both academic and political observers, however, are trained to be skeptics. Few, if any, ever embraced teleological illusions about the expansion of democracy. If the world was ever to become overwhelmingly liberal, democratic, and peaceful, it would not happen at once, but in bits and pieces, ups and downs, and over the long run. From its very inception, the idea of global “waves” of democratization was accompanied by warnings against “reverse waves” of authoritarian regression. Waves come and go.<sup>2</sup>

Since the Portuguese Revolution of the Carnations in 1974, the political drama that marks the official starting point of the “third wave” of global democratization, the number of democratic regimes worldwide has roughly doubled. Although different counts yield different pictures, the overall trend is quite clear. For instance, the annual Freedom House report on political rights and civil liberties in the world identified forty-two “free” countries in the year 1974. Three decades later, in 2004, it judged eighty-nine countries to be free (out of a total of 118 countries it classified as “electoral democracies”).<sup>3</sup> Without a doubt, these numbers are impressive. The breadth and resilience of the third wave of democratic expansion is without precedent in the history of the international system. However, today the flurry of optimism that accompanied the end of the Cold War has subsided. The resurgence of ethnic violence in former communist countries and sub-Saharan Africa explains part of the new skepticism, as does the terror unleashed inside advanced democracies by the transnational crime syndicate Al-Qaida. Persisting realities of authoritarian rule explain the other part.

On the one hand, a significant number of old autocracies survive in different parts of the world, untouched by the stirs of regime crisis. This is true, for example, for the single-party regimes of Cuba, China, Laos, North Korea, Vietnam, Eritrea, Libya, and Syria; for the military regimes of Pakistan, Burma (Myanmar), and Sudan; and for the traditional monarchies of the Arab world (despite some facile talk about the “Arab spring” after the January 2005 legislative elections in Iraq). On the other hand, numerous transition processes, even if they led to an initial opening crowned by free and fair elections (as in parts of sub-Saharan Africa and the former Soviet Union), ended up in new forms of authoritarianism behind electoral façades. They ended up establishing what today represents the modal type of political regime in the developing world: electoral authoritarianism.

Electoral authoritarian regimes play the game of multiparty elections by holding regular elections for the chief executive and a national legislative assembly. Yet they violate the liberal-democratic principles of freedom and fairness so profoundly and systematically as to render elections instruments of authoritarian rule rather than “instruments of democracy” (Powell 2000). Under electoral authoritarian rule, elections are broadly inclusive (they are held under universal suffrage) as well as minimally pluralistic (opposition parties are allowed to run), minimally competitive (opposition parties, while denied victory, are allowed to win votes and seats), and minimally open (opposition parties are not subject to massive repression, although they may experience repressive treatment in selective and intermittent ways). Overall, however, electoral contests are subject to state manipulation so severe, widespread, and systematic that they do not qualify as democratic. Authoritarian manipulation may come under many guises, all serving the purpose of containing the troubling uncertainty of electoral outcomes. Rulers may devise discriminatory electoral rules, exclude opposition parties and candidates from entering the electoral arena, infringe upon their political rights and civil liberties, restrict their access to mass media and campaign finance, impose formal or informal suffrage restrictions on their supporters, coerce or corrupt them into deserting the opposition camp, or simply redistribute votes and seats through electoral fraud.<sup>4</sup>

An incomplete list of contemporary examples of electoral authoritarian regimes (as of early 2006) includes, in the former Soviet Union, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan; in North Africa and the Middle East, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen; in sub-Saharan Africa, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, Tanzania, Togo, and Zambia; and in South and East Asia, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Given their contradictory mix of democratic procedures and authoritarian practices, these new authoritarian regimes have unsettled the conceptual routines of comparative politics. To make sense of the institutionalized ambiguity that characterizes electoral

authoritarian regimes, scholars have adopted three alternative conceptual strategies. They have conceived those regimes either as defective democracies, hybrid regimes, or new forms of authoritarianism.

1. *Defective democracies.* Since the early days of the third wave of democratization, we have been witnessing the emergence of political regimes that fulfill the minimum conditions of electoral democracy but lack essential attributes of liberal democracy. In order to capture such deviations from best practices, authors have been attaching distinctive adjectives to the multifaceted “diminished subtypes” of democracy they observed (see Collier and Levitsky 1997). The specific labels they have chosen to describe such “democracies with adjectives” (Collier and Levitsky 1997) are meant to draw attention to specific structural deficits and weaknesses. For example, “delegative” democracies lack checks and balances (O’Donnell 1994), “illiberal” democracies fail to uphold the rule of law (Zakaria 2003), and “clientelist” democracies are weak on programmatic party politics (Kitschelt 2000). However, in the face of regimes that fail to comply even with democratic minimum norms, the notion of “diminished subtypes” of democracy loses its validity. When applied to nondemocratic contexts, rather than sharpening our grasp of democratic deficits, it weakens our sense of authoritarian realities (see also Levitsky and Way 2002; Howard and Roessler 2006).<sup>5</sup>

2. *Hybrid regimes.* If we describe nondemocratic regimes as instances of democracy, however deficient, we commit the methodological sin of “conceptual stretching” (Sartori 1984). Conscious of this menacing pitfall, some authors have been treating the substandard electoral regimes that inhabit the contemporary world as genuine midpoints between democracy and authoritarianism. Because these regimes combine democratic and authoritarian features, scholars locate them at the very center of the conceptual spectrum and as a result consider them to be neither democratic nor authoritarian. Concepts such as “hybrid regimes” (Diamond 2002), “semi-democracy” (Smith 2005), “semi-authoritarianism” (Ottaway 2003), “semi-dictatorship” (Brooker 2000: 252), and “the gray zone” (Carothers 2002) express the idea of genuinely mixed regimes situated in the messy middle ground between the poles of democracy and dictatorship.

3. *New authoritarianism.* A third way of dealing with the new forms of authoritarian rule is to recognize them as such, as instances of nondemocratic governance. As scholars have been introducing concepts such as “pseudodemocracy” (Diamond, Linz, and Lipset 1995: 8), “disguised dictatorship” (Brooker 2000: 228), and “competitive authoritarianism” (Levitsky and Way 2002), they have abandoned the assumption that these regimes somehow still keep touch with the liberal-democratic tradition. Quite to the contrary, they have described them as instances of nondemocratic rule that

display “the trappings but not the substance of effective democratic participation” (Marshall and Jagers 2002: 12). They have analyzed them as regimes that practice “democracy as deception” (Joseph 1998b: 59), as they set up, to quote from John Stuart Mill, “representative institutions without representative government” (1991: 89).

Clearly, the notion of “electoral authoritarianism” that provides the guiding concept of this book inscribes itself in the latter perspective. It involves the claim that many of the new electoral regimes are neither democratic nor democratizing but plainly authoritarian, albeit in ways that depart from the forms of authoritarian rule as we know it. The notion of electoral authoritarianism takes seriously both the authoritarian quality these regimes possess and the electoral procedures they put into practice. The emphasis on authoritarianism serves to distinguish them from electoral democracies and the emphasis on elections to set them apart from “closed” autocracies. Electoral democracies lack some attributes of liberal democracy (such as checks and balances, bureaucratic integrity, and an impartial judiciary), but they do conduct free and fair elections, which electoral authoritarian regimes don’t. The residual category of closed autocracies designates all nondemocratic regimes that refrain from staging multiparty elections as the official route of access to executive and legislative power.

As the incipient literature on electoral authoritarian regimes has centered its attention on the controversial borderline that separates them from electoral democracies (see Schedler 2002b), here I wish to examine the frontline that separates them from their authoritarian neighbors, grouped together in the broad category of “closed autocracies.” The key question is: How distinctive are electoral authoritarian regimes within the broader “spectrum of nondemocratic regimes” (see Snyder, Chapter 13 in this volume)? Surely, the use of democratic forms and rhetoric by nondemocratic regimes is nothing new. Even before the current wave of democratization, political elections, the core institution of representative democracy, were almost universally in use. As Guy Hermet, Richard Rose, and Alain Rouquié stated in the preface to *Elections Without Choice*, as of the late 1970s elections were “held in nearly every country in the world” (1978: viii). In addition, almost all regimes, democracies and dictatorships alike, claimed to embody the principle of popular sovereignty. Yet, whereas electoral authoritarian (EA) regimes open up top positions of executive and legislative power to elections that are participatory as well as competitive in form, other types of authoritarian regimes, if they take recourse to electoral processes at all, do so in much more limited ways.

Unlike authoritarian regimes that permit limited forms of pluralism in civil society, EA regimes go a step further and open up political society (the party system) as well to limited forms of pluralism. Unlike Bonapartist

regimes that orchestrate occasional plebiscites to demonstrate popular consent on constitutional matters or policy issues, EA regimes invite citizens to partake in electoral processes serving (officially) as selection devices for highest office. Unlike competitive oligarchies, as in nineteenth-century Latin America or South Africa under apartheid, EA regimes do not control elections by restricting the franchise but operate on the basis of universal franchise. Unlike traditional monarchies (as well as some military regimes like Brazil between 1964 and 1989 and Pakistan since 1999), EA regimes subject the head of government to electoral confirmation, not just the legislative assembly (or local government, as in Taiwan under the Kuomintang [KMT]). Unlike single-party regimes that organize one-party (or national front) elections, either with or without intraparty competition, EA regimes allow for organized dissidence in the form of multiparty competition.

The notion of electoral authoritarianism places its emphasis on the access to power (through popular elections), whereas conventional typologies of authoritarian rule place their emphasis on the exercise of power (except for the category of monarchies, which is defined by hereditary succession).<sup>6</sup> They ask about the identity of rulers and their modes of governance and legitimation. For instance, Juan Linz's seminal distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian rule (Linz 2000) revolved around the structure of power relations (monism versus pluralism), strategies of legitimation (ideologies versus mentalities), and the treatment of subjects (mobilization versus depoliticization). More recent typologies of nondemocratic rule tend to focus on the nature of the governing coalition. For instance, the widely used distinction between military regimes, single-party regimes, and personal dictatorships asks about the organizational bases of authoritarian governance (see, for example, Brooker 2000; Geddes 1999 and 2004; Huntington 1991; and Morlino 2005: Chap. 2).

As the notion of electoral authoritarianism shifts its analytical focus from the nondemocratic exercise of power to the nondemocratic access to power, questions about authoritarian governance (who rules how) do not become irrelevant; rather, they become *contingent* (and may therefore serve to differentiate various subtypes of electoral authoritarian regimes).<sup>7</sup> Besides, issues of access to power and exercise of power interact. On the one side, over the long run, the authoritarian exercise of power is incompatible with democratic procedures of access to power. Authoritarian rule tends to subvert the conditions of freedom democratic elections demand. On the other side, authoritarian elections cannot constrain rulers as effectively as democratic elections are supposed to constrain them. If it is not popular preferences but manipulative skills that determine election outcomes, elections will fail to serve as mechanisms of accountability. The same way authoritarian governance engenders authoritarian elections, authoritarian elections feed authoritarian governance.

## The Observation of Electoral Authoritarianism

How do we recognize an electoral authoritarian regime when we see one? It seems to be easier to define the concept of electoral authoritarianism than to measure it for the purpose of cross-national comparison. As they preach democracy but practice dictatorship, electoral authoritarian regimes tend to provoke intense debates within individual countries about the "true" nature of their political system. As a simple rule, incumbents try to sell their regime as democratic (or at least as democratizing), while opposition actors denounce it as authoritarian. The more repressive, exclusionary, and fraudulent a regime, the more likely it is that disinterested observers of good faith converge in their assessments and extend certificates of authoritarianism in accordance with opposition accusations. In more messy cases, however, drawing the dividing line between electoral democracy and electoral authoritarianism may prove to be complicated and controversial, and nothing close to an "expert consensus" may emerge. Yet, if the dense knowledge of competent observers does not suffice to settle disputes over the classification of "hard cases," how shall we ever be able to classify large numbers of political regimes in valid and reliable ways?

Standard methodological advice tells us to base our measurement decisions on "observations, rather than judgments" (Przeworski et al. 2000: 55). I understand that to mean that we are to partition the complex enterprise of conceptualization and measurement into two phases. In the first stage, we are to make all the judgments necessary to select and define the empirical phenomena we admit as observational evidence, as well as to devise the coding rules that permit us to assign categories or numbers to cases. In the second stage, by contrast, we are to ban judgmental elements and limit ourselves to applying our self-made rules of codification in a mechanical fashion. The first phase is deliberative, demanding the intersubjective justification of conceptual and operational decisions; the second one is observational, demanding the transparent collection of information and the quasi-bureaucratic application of rules.

In order to establish such a functional separation between deliberation and observation, we need empirical indicators that are valid, visible, and readable. The empirical evidence we are looking for must make theoretical sense across time and space (validity); it must be open to ocular inspection (visibility); and it must be sufficiently obvious to be processed on the basis of simple rules of interpretation that transform eventual ambiguities of meaning into operational clarity (readability). Clearly, the main methodological difficulty in identifying electoral authoritarian regimes lies in the obstacles they establish to the *visibility* of their manipulative practices.

In their widely (and justly) acclaimed *Democracy and Development*, Adam Przeworski and his collaborators identify democratic regimes on the

basis of three institutional attributes: (1) executive selection: the head of government is elected in popular elections; (2) legislative selection: the legislature is elected; and (3) party pluralism: there is more than one party (for a synthesis, see Przeworski et al. 2000: 28–29). Until this point, their operational definition of democracy is identical with the definition of electoral authoritarianism I proposed above. What distinguishes EA regimes from electoral democracies are not the formal properties of political elections, but their authoritarian qualities. It is not on the surface of formal electoral institutions that electoral authoritarian regimes differ from electoral democracies, but in the surrounding conditions of political freedom and legal security. Electoral authoritarian regimes, just like their democratic counterparts, hold multiparty elections for presidents and legislative assemblies. Yet, as they subject these processes to systematic authoritarian controls, they deprive them of their democratic substance. Formal institutional facts are easy to ascertain. By contrast, practices of electoral manipulation are much less accessible to public inspection.

What we can see in electoral authoritarian regimes are election results, the official distribution of votes and seats among parties and candidates. Under authoritarian conditions, however, electoral figures cannot be taken as reliable expressions of “the will of the people.” Rather, they represent the product of authoritarian manipulation and popular preferences. With  $v$  standing for votes,  $i$  for the integrity of elections, and  $p$  for citizen preferences, we can write:

$$v = p \cdot i$$

Under conditions of electoral integrity ( $i = 1$ ), election results correspond to popular preferences; under conditions of electoral manipulation ( $i \neq 1$ ), the official distribution of votes distorts the actual distribution of citizen preferences. In the former, democratic case, the institutions and practices of electoral governance are fundamentally neutral; in the latter, authoritarian case, they are gravely redistributive.<sup>8</sup> The problem, for the purpose of regime classification, lies in the fact that two of the three variables in the equation are unknown. Official election figures may be a “deforming mirror” (Martin 1978: 127), unreliable and imprecise, but at least they are out there, the tangible products of some central state agency. Acts of authoritarian manipulation and patterns of popular preferences, by contrast, are shadows in the dark.

To a significant extent, electoral manipulation is an undercover activity. Some things we can see, such as the enactment of discriminatory election laws, the repression of protest marches, or the exclusion of candidates from the ballot by administrative fiat. Such manipulative efforts take place in broad daylight, mobilize agents of the central state, and invoke the language

of legality and public reason for their justification. By contrast, many other authoritarian strategies of electoral control, such as the alteration of electoral lists, the purchase and intimidation of voters, or the falsification of ballots on election day, constitute more decentralized activities that involve a myriad of public and private agents trying to do their job without leaving public traces. For all the knowledge we may be able to gather, be it episodic or systematic, narrative or statistical, the hidden realm of authoritarian electioneering constitutes an impenetrable black box we can (almost) never whiten in its entirety. Only few regimes have the panoptic aspirations of the Fujimori-Montesino regime in Peru, whose comprehensive system of extortion, surveillance, and videotape recording allowed the public to inspect the black box of authoritarian maneuvering at least after the fact, once the regime had fallen. Normally, however, we will not even remotely know what nondemocratic actors are up to on the invisible backstage of electoral politics, and even if we knew everything, we could not know that we know everything. The logic of distrust that prevails under authoritarian rule would make us uphold the suspicion that the worst may be hidden from our eyes. The WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) rule never works under authoritarianism. Political actors know that usually what they see is *not* what they get from the authoritarian regime. They know that, if they wish to survive, they must practice the ancient art of *dietrologia*, the study of politics behind the scenes.<sup>9</sup>

With respect to popular preferences, the third variable in our electoral authoritarian equation, we face a similar situation of partial knowledge built upon foundations of fundamental ignorance. We may learn something about popular preferences, be it through access to “local knowledge” (Geertz 1983) or through representative public opinion surveys. Yet, under authoritarian conditions, we never know to what extent citizens engage in the public falsification of their private preferences (see Kuran 1995). We do not know either to what extent their genuine private preferences are endogenous to authoritarian governance. In the absence of individual autonomy and freedom, popular attitudes are always suspected as the products of authoritarian manipulation. Authoritarian rule distorts the formation of popular preferences as well as the expression of popular preferences.

We may deal with these problems of imperfect information in two ways. We may limit ourselves to the factual realm of official election results. Knowing that we cannot take official figures as simple expressions of voter preferences, we may treat them as proxies for electoral manipulation. The weaker the opposition parties are, the stronger we take the authoritarian controls to be. Alternatively, we may expand our scope of vision and gather evidence about either electoral manipulation or popular preferences or both. If election data are available, learning about one of our unknown variables (electoral manipulation, voter preferences) should allow us to

estimate the other. Similarly, we may combine information about all three variables in order to reach broad judgment about the authoritarian quality of the electoral process under scrutiny. I shall briefly discuss the “alternation rule” proposed by Adam Przeworski and colleagues (2000) as exemplifying the former alternative (the use of election data as proxies for manipulation) and Freedom House indicators of political rights as representative of the latter (the use of multiple sources of information to reach judgment on the authoritarian quality of elections).

According to the alternation rule introduced by Adam Przeworski, a regime should not be classified as democratic if it fills executive and legislative offices by elections, but the ruling party never loses elections (Przeworski et al. 2000: 27). Democracy involves the possibility of alternation in power, but without the actual experience of alternation, we cannot know whether a ruling party would be willing to give up office peacefully in the case of electoral defeat. Taking election results and, in particular, alternation in office as primary evidence of procedural integrity runs the risk of misclassifying some regimes—a risk the authors readily acknowledge. Still, the alternation rule makes sense in normative-democratic terms; offers a clear-cut, easily discernible criterion of classification; avoids the uncertainties that come along with counterfactual reasoning; and allows the analyst to stick with simple observables, rather than struggling to make sense of a myriad of diverse facts.

Przeworski and his coauthors hold that passing judgment on the authoritarian quality of elections is an elusive enterprise, as attempts “to assess the degree of repression, intimidation, or fraud . . . cannot be made in a reliable way” (2000: 24). If their skepticism is meant to indicate that our judgments on the democratic quality of elections are often controversial, at least in complex and ambiguous cases, they are right. They err if they mean to imply that disinterested election observers are generally unable to reach convergent, or at least overlapping, assessments that have a good chance of surviving public interpellations by actors as well as experts. Take, for instance, the annual reports on political rights in the world offered by Freedom House in New York since 1973. Despite its notorious penchant for methodological opacity (see Munck and Verkuilen 2002), Freedom House does a reasonable job in evaluating the democratic quality of electoral regimes.

In its assessments of political rights, Freedom House asks more questions than we need, yet still asks the right questions, in order to judge the democratic quality of electoral processes. Some items on its “political rights checklist” relate to the exercise of power rather than the access to power we are interested in here. In particular, Freedom House asks about the sovereignty, integrity, and accountability of elected decisionmakers. Yet, the questions that come first in its political rights survey concern the procedural integrity of elections: Are the chief executive and the national

legislative assembly, the Freedom House survey team asks, elected “through free and fair elections”? Do citizens enjoy freedom of association, and are there “fair electoral laws, equal campaign opportunities, fair polling, and honest tabulation of votes”? In addition to electoral procedures, Freedom House considers electoral outcomes as well, as it inquires into the intensity of electoral competition: Is the political system, the survey team asks, “open to the rise and fall of . . . competing parties”? Do we observe “a significant opposition vote, de facto opposition power, and a realistic possibility for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections”?<sup>10</sup>

Freedom House formulates its normative and empirical questions at a fairly high level of abstraction. Naturally, translating them into concrete assessments of national political processes demands a good sense of judgment, in addition to empirical knowledge and moral sensitivity. Still, by evaluating procedural and substantive information with recourse to a broad range of evidence and sources, the Freedom House team is able to reach judgments on the quality of electoral processes that seem fundamentally reasonable. In particular, the qualitative evaluations of political rights that Freedom House offers in its country reports commonly assess in their opening sentence whether “citizens are able to change their government through regular elections.” With no recent exception I am aware of, these summary judgments about the effectiveness of electoral processes are sound and defensible in the light of available evidence and democratic norms.

Despite their apparent validity, there are obvious methodological problems associated with using Freedom House political rights scores as a basis for classifying regimes. As mentioned above, for the particular purpose of distinguishing electoral democracies from electoral authoritarian regimes, their level of aggregation is too high, as they bundle concerns about elections (the access to power) with concerns about governance (the exercise of power). Besides, because the measurement effort is multidimensional, it is not clear how qualitative judgments on various dimensions translate into the seven-point scale Freedom House uses; nor is it clear what specific scores and differences between scores are meant to mean. For the same reason, any effort to translate the numerical scale (from one to seven) into qualitative regime categories is bound to raise suspicions of arbitrariness.

Nevertheless, because its survey questions address the core concerns that motivate our distinction between electoral democracies and electoral authoritarianism, Freedom House data serve reasonably well to identify electoral authoritarian regimes, if complemented with some basic electoral data. For example, we may (quite safely) classify as electoral authoritarian all those regimes that (1) hold multiparty elections to select the chief executive as well as a legislative assembly and (2) earn average Freedom House ratings between four and six (see Schedler 2004). Such simple rules of

delimitation (which some authors in this book use as well) seem to do a reasonable job of identifying electoral authoritarian regimes.<sup>11</sup>

### The Dynamic of Electoral Authoritarianism

Electoral authoritarian regimes set up the whole institutional landscape of representative democracy. They establish constitutions, elections, parliaments, courts, local governments, subnational legislatures, and even agencies of accountability. In addition, they permit private media, interest groups, and civic associations. Although none of these institutions are meant to constitute countervailing powers, all of them represent potential sites of dissidence and conflict. Without ignoring these multiple sites of contestation, the notion of electoral authoritarianism privileges one of them—the electoral arena. It assumes that elections constitute the central arena of struggle (see also Levitsky and Way 2002: 54).

Designating elections as the defining feature of a distinct category of nondemocratic regimes makes sense only if they are more than mere adornments of authoritarian rule. Talking about electoral authoritarianism involves the claim that elections matter, and matter a lot, even in contexts of authoritarian manipulation. Still stronger, it involves the claim that it is the intrinsic “power of elections” (Di Palma 1993: 85), more than anything else, that drives the dynamic of stability and change in such regimes. In electoral authoritarian regimes, if they are to deserve their name, elections are more than rituals of acclamation. They are *constitutive* of the political game. Even if they are marred by repression, discrimination, exclusion, or fraud, they are constitutive of the playing field, the rules, the actors, their resources, and their available strategies.

### Nested Games

Even though electoral authoritarian regimes establish competitive elections as the official route of access to state power, they do not, as a matter of course, establish electoral competition as “the only game in town.” At the same time they set up the electoral game (competition for votes), they introduce two symmetrical metagames: the game of authoritarian manipulation, in which ruling parties seek to control the substantive outcomes of electoral competition, and the game of institutional reform, in which opposition parties seek to dismantle nondemocratic restrictions that choke their struggle for votes. Authoritarian elections thus are not conventional games in which players compete within a given institutional framework, known, accepted, and respected by all. They are fluid, adaptive, contested games whose basic rules players try to redefine as they play the game itself. In the language

proposed by George Tsebelis, they form “nested games” in which strategic interaction *within* rules goes hand in hand with strategic competition *over* rules (1990). Formal institutions do not represent stable equilibria, but temporary truces. If the substantive outcomes of the game change, or if its underlying correlations of force change, actors will strive to alter its basic rules—either to prevent or to promote more democratic outcomes. The partisan struggle for votes is embedded in a partisan struggle over the fundamental conditions of voting (see also Schedler 2002a). Because authoritarian elections constitute the game of electoral competition, perpetually put into question by the metagames of manipulation and reform, they are also constitutive of its component parts, in particular, its lead actors and their available strategies.

### Citizens

By opening the peaks of state power to multiparty elections, electoral authoritarian regimes establish the primacy of democratic legitimation. They may feed themselves from various ideological sources of legitimacy: revolutionary (the creation of a new society), transcendental (divine inspiration), traditional (quasi-hereditary succession), communitarian (nation building, anti-imperialism, ethnic mobilization), charismatic (magical leadership), or substantive (material welfare, public integrity, law and order, external security). In the last instance, however, popular consent carries the day. Competitive elections recognize subjects as citizens. They endow them with “the ultimate controlling power” (Mill 1991: 97) over who shall occupy the summit of the state. By establishing multiparty elections for highest office, EA regimes institute the principle of popular consent, even as they subvert it in practice.

The institutional concessions EA regimes make to the principle of popular sovereignty endow citizens with normative as well as institutional resources. Most importantly, elections open up avenues of collective protest. They provide “focal points” that may create convergent social expectations and thus allow citizens to overcome problems of strategic coordination. Elections constitute citizens as individual carriers of political roles, but they also enable them to turn into collective actors, be it at the polls or on the streets.<sup>12</sup>

### Opposition Parties

By admitting multiparty competition for positions of state power, EA regimes legitimate the principle of political opposition. They may still try to shape the field of opposition actors to their own liking. Some regimes create official opposition parties and even assign convenient ideological



positions to them, as in Egypt under Anwar Sadat and Senegal under Léopold Senghor. Others exclude uncomfortable opposition parties and candidates at their convenience, which is a standard operating procedure in the post-Soviet regimes of Eurasia. Yet they still have to live with opposition forces that enjoy at least minimal degrees of autonomy. By the simple fact of instituting multiparty politics, they abandon ideologies of collective harmony, accept the existence of societal cleavages, and renounce a monopolistic hold on the definition of the common good. Subjecting the opposition to repressive treatment does not affect its basic legitimacy embodied in the formal institution of competitive elections. Quite to the contrary, once regimes recognize the principle of pluralism, silencing dissidence is likely to turn counterproductive; it is likely to augment the status of opposition forces, rather than diminishing it.

Because EA regimes are systems in which opposition parties (are supposed to) lose elections, electoral contests are a profoundly ambiguous affair for opposition parties. To the extent that they serve to legitimate the system and demonstrate the power and popularity of the ruling party as well as the weakness of its opponents, elections tend to demoralize and demobilize opposition forces. To the extent that they allow opposition forces to get stronger and to demonstrate that the emperor is naked, that his grip on power is based on manipulation rather than popular consent, elections tend to reinvigorate opposition parties. In any case, authoritarian elections do not provide any of the normative reasons for accepting defeat losers have under democratic conditions. They fail to display the procedural fairness and substantive uncertainty that makes democratic elections normatively acceptable, and they fail to offer the prospects of a government pro tempore losers may hope to replace after the next round of elections. What remains is a calculus of protest in which opposition actors have to weigh the uncertain pros and cons of different strategic options both inside and outside the electoral arena. Most importantly, as authoritarian rulers convoke elections, opposition forces have to decide whether to enter the game of unfree competition or to boo from the fences (participation versus boycott). Once the polls have closed and official results are published, they have to decide whether to swallow the outcome or to take their complaints to the media, the courts, the streets, or the international arena (acceptance versus protest).<sup>13</sup>

### *Ruling Parties*

EA regimes may display “sultanistic tendencies,” with patrimonial rulers ratifying themselves in power through periodic multiparty elections. The organizational demands of authoritarian elections, however, limit the degree of personalism they can afford. Rulers who wish to govern through controlled multiparty elections need a party (as well as a subsidiary state) to mobilize

voters, and they need a state (as well as a subsidiary party) to control elections.<sup>14</sup> Electoral authoritarian regimes do not rest upon single parties, but on parties they rest.

Elections are ambivalent tools, as much for the ruling party as for the opposition parties. They create opportunities for distributing patronage, settling disputes, and reinforcing the ruling coalition, but they also mobilize threats of dissidence and scission. Like their opponents in the opposition camp, rulers have to take some key decisions regarding their strategic behavior in the electoral arena. Most importantly, they have to decide how to mix electoral manipulation and electoral persuasion in order to keep winning electoral contests. To what extent should they rely on authoritarian controls, and which strategies are they to pick from the variegated menu of electoral manipulation? And to what extent should they rely on the persuasion of voters, and which strategies are they to choose from the variegated menu of electoral mobilization?<sup>15</sup>

\* \* \*

Authoritarian elections are creative institutions insofar as they constitute these three classes of actors (citizens, the opposition, and ruling parties) and their respective bundles of core strategies. They are not determinative, however, insofar as the actual outcomes of the conflictive interaction between the three groups is open. The nested game of authoritarian elections may facilitate gradual processes of democratization by elections, as in Senegal or Mexico. It may lead to democracy through the sudden collapse of authoritarianism, as in Peru and Serbia in 2000. It may provoke an authoritarian regression, with a breakdown of the electoral cycle through military intervention, as in Azerbaijan in 1993 and Côte d’Ivoire in 1999. It may also lead to extended periods of static warfare in which authoritarian incumbents prevail over opposition parties that neither succeed in gaining terrain nor accede to disband and abandon the unequal battle.

Under which conditions do authoritarian elections fulfill a “stabilizing” role (Martin 1978: 120), and when do they act as “subversive” forces (Schedler 2002a)? Under which conditions do government and opposition forces succeed in maintaining their coherence and act as unitary actors? Under which conditions do rulers and opposition parties adopt which kind of strategies and to what effect? When are they successful, and when do they lead to failure? How do their strategic decisions in the conflictive game of authoritarian elections shape their correlations of force? To what extent do the nature of the actors and their choices respond to the endogenous dynamics of “unfree competition” and to what extent are they molded by structural conditions, institutional factors, and external actors?

This book does not pretend to respond to these questions about the internal dynamic of EA regimes either exhaustively or conclusively. Yet,

each chapter addresses one particular analytical puzzle within the larger dynamics of electoral authoritarianism. The chapters strive to explain the emergence of actors, their relations of force, their conflictive interaction, and their institutional constraints under electoral authoritarian regimes on the basis of careful cross-national comparison, covering either a specific region or a cross-regional subset of cases.

### The Outline of the Book

“If I were to write a book on comparative democracies,” Juan Linz writes in his introduction to the 2000 book edition of his seminal essay on totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, “it would have to include a section on failed transitions to democracy, defective or pseudodemocracies, which I would rather characterize as ‘electoral authoritarian’ regimes . . . where a democratic façade covers authoritarian rule” (2000: 33–34). This book, while expectant of the piece we hope Juan Linz will write at some point, offers thirteen chapters of original reflection and research on electoral authoritarian regimes.

Part 1 discusses some basic conceptual problems and measurement issues that have been haunting the emergent study of electoral authoritarian regimes. Dissolving the dichotomy of democracy and dictatorship, the category of electoral authoritarian regimes occupies an intermediate position along the continuum of political regimes. It is sandwiched between two broad concepts, electoral democracies on the democratic side and closed autocracies on the authoritarian side. As both neighboring categories are afflicted by fuzzy frontiers, issues of boundary delimitation have been dominating the conceptual debate on electoral authoritarianism. In Chapter 2, on the construction of intermediate concepts, Gerardo L. Munck frames the discussion in new terms by identifying the generic problem underlying the controversy. Conceptualizing electoral authoritarianism as an intermediate category of regimes between the poles of democracy and dictatorship, Munck argues, involves the systematic construction of measurement points grounded in explicit relations of conceptual difference and equivalence. He illustrates his methodological point by drawing upon the twin dimensions of Robert Dahl’s seminal conception of democracy—participation and contestation.

If we succeed in defining generic attributes that allow us to distinguish systematically between democratic and authoritarian elections, we still face the challenge of taking our abstract criteria to the concrete, operational terrain of empirical observation. As noted above, authoritarian regimes are opaque regimes that do not lend themselves to easy observation. Much of their manipulative maneuvering takes place on the hidden backstage of pol-

itics. In Chapter 3, Jonathan Hartlyn and Jennifer McCoy discuss the systematic difficulties and paradoxes involved in the observation and evaluation of elections, be it from the perspective of participants (political parties) or observers (independent domestic or international election monitors). Specifically, the authors examine the problem of divergent and shifting normative standards, the challenge of choosing the appropriate scope of observation, the trade-off between comprehensiveness and firmness of judgment, the irritating yet inevitable impact substantive outcomes have on procedural judgments, and the frequent contamination of normative assessments by strategic calculations. Accordingly, an open mind, balanced judgment, and methodological refinement are indispensable for reaching defensible conclusions about the democratic or authoritarian nature of particular electoral processes. Despite the incremental sophistication and professionalization the business of electoral observation has experienced over almost two decades, the assessment of electoral manipulation, Hartlyn and McCoy conclude, remains “an enterprise filled with the potential for uncertainty.”

Part 2 of this book studies the logic of actor formation under conditions of electoral authoritarianism. In particular, it addresses problems of strategic coordination both ruling parties and opposition parties face. In her account of subsequent elite splits within the ruling Kuomintang in Taiwan and the Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico, Joy Langston emphasizes the centrality of the electoral arena for generating divisions within the ruling party. Under electoral authoritarianism, dissidents within the governing coalition need not risk their lives in armed insurgency or military rebellion. Rather, they may take their chances in an effort “to beat the official . . . candidate and win the presidency via elections.” Especially in critical moments of leadership succession, Langston argues, electoral contests may encourage elite ruptures as they offer low-cost exit options for discontented regime politicians.

In Chapter 5, on the dynamics of opposition coalescence in sub-Saharan Africa, Nicolas van de Walle analyzes the interplay between regime cohesion and opposition cohesion as a “tipping game” that may lead to rapid shifts from an authoritarian equilibrium, in which the regime is united and the opposition fragmented, to a democratizing situation, in which the regime disbands and the opposition gets together. In accordance with the literature, van de Walle observes “a clear correlation” between opposition cohesion and electoral victory. Yet, as he argues against the literature, the coalescence of the opposition camp appears to be “not a cause of transition but rather a consequence of a growing probability of transition.” As they derive from the complex and contingent coordination of social expectations, tipping games are typically “overdetermined” processes in which multiple events, actors, and factors intervene and intermingle. The author reviews some structural and institutional factors that affect tipping dynam-

ics: electoral systems, forms of government, previous democratic experience, ethnic fragmentation, and external pressures. As he finds, two-round majority systems in presidential elections seem to bear a “decisive effect” on the ability of opposition actors to forge effective antiregime coalitions.

Part 3 of the volume turns its attention to core conflicts and strategic choices faced by ruling parties and opposition actors on the “electoral battlefield.” In Chapter 6, on the variegated practices of electoral authoritarian governance in Southeast Asia, William Case describes the region as the homeland of electoral authoritarianism. In order to reconstruct the differing degrees of effectiveness of manipulative strategies, the author introduces the distinction between “skillful” and “clumsy” manipulation. The former are expressions of strategic rationality, whereas the latter are instances of strategic miscalculation. As the author contends, the “countervailing set of historical legacies, social structures, and cultural outlooks” that characterizes Southeast Asian countries provides solid structural foundations for electoral authoritarian rule. The ambivalence of electoral authoritarianism as the modal regime type in the region is rooted in the structural contradictions of Southeast Asian societies. When these regimes come under stress, though, as in economic crises, authoritarian rulers may either respond “skillfully”—with intelligence, foresight, and empathy—or they may respond “clumsily”—with stupidity, myopia, and arrogance. As Case claims, skillful manipulation has been a recipe for regime survival, but clumsy manipulation has worked as a trigger of regime crisis—leading to democratic change in the presence of a strong opposition (as in Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia) or to authoritarian involution in the absence of a strong opposition (as in Burma).

In their chapter on the logic of electoral theft, Mark R. Thompson and Philipp Kuntz ask about the conditions and calculations that may drive authoritarian rulers to “steal” an election they happen to lose. Although authoritarian rulers tend to “hold elections only because they expect to win, they sometimes make mistakes” (Przeworski et al. 2000: 25). As Thompson and Kuntz argue, the incipient literature on EA regimes has been trying to explain the origins, but not the consequences, of “stunning” defeats authoritarian incumbents may suffer in presidential elections. As their comparative review of emblematic cases suggests, quitting executive power after defeat may be a painful choice for the party in power, but clinging to the presidency and trying to steal an election is a highly “risky option” too. When presidents break off the electoral game the moment they stop winning, they step into “dangerous territory.” Rulers have to weigh the costs of abiding by the rules and conceding defeat against the costs of interrupting the electoral cycle and defending their grip on power in open defiance of the express will of the people. In their calculations, they have to take into account at least three aspects: the prospects of legal prosecution for abuses

in power, the probable loss of economic privilege and patronage, and the eventual discontinuity of their policy programs, in case they pursued any. After revising these utility calculations, Thompson and Kuntz conclude that electoral thieves are most likely to be found at the apex of “electoral sultanism”—highly repressive and weakly institutionalized regimes in which personal rulers have too much to lose from losing an election.

In electoral authoritarian regimes, citizens are the arbiters of last instance in the electoral arena. However, the police and the military are the arbiters of last instance *over* the electoral arena. Because the nested game of authoritarian elections is inherently conflictive, the security apparatus often has the last word (or the last bullet) in deciding the grave conflicts they provoke. In Chapter 8, John F. Clark examines the “contributing conditions” of military intervention in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa. His discussion of military intervention in electoral authoritarian regimes focuses on “the all-important question of legitimacy.” Authoritarian elections are standing invitations to military intervention to the extent that they create the typical conditions of military intervention: situations of political confrontation in which civilian actors “knock at the barracks,” asking the military to restore social peace and political order by resolving the conflict in their favor. Clark’s systematic analysis of military coups and democratic legitimacy (as measured indirectly by annual Freedom House scores of political liberties and civil rights) bears out his principal hypothesis, albeit with a twist: In sub-Saharan Africa between 1993 and 2003, backsliding regimes that held free and fair first elections while subjecting subsequent elections to authoritarian controls were most vulnerable to military coups. Stable democracies that continued their democratic trajectory after successful transitions were almost “invulnerable” to military unrest. However, military behavior in countries that underwent more limited transitions from single-party rule to electoral authoritarianism, without a democratic interlude, seemed largely determined by exogenous variables, such as economic performance and external support.

The strategies authoritarian incumbents pursue are fundamental to the topography and trajectory of electoral authoritarian regimes. Yet, rulers do not play their political games alone. If an “autocrat” is someone who holds “uncontrolled authority; an absolute, irresponsible governor; one who rules with undisputed sway,”<sup>16</sup> then rulers in EA regimes are not properly described as autocrats. Their authority is “essentially contested”; their power is constrained, at least to some extent, by the existence of elections; and in conducting government they have to take into account the players they empower by convoking elections: citizens and opposition actors.<sup>17</sup> In Chapter 9, Staffan I. Lindberg analyzes the sources and consequences of opposition behavior in sub-Saharan Africa’s electoral authoritarian regimes. His comprehensive dataset, covering ninety-five executive and 125 legislative

elections held between 1989 and 2003, registers whether opposition parties participate in or boycott elections and whether they acquiesce to or protest electoral outcomes. His empirical findings run counter to the widespread expectation that opposition protest drives democratization. Quite to the contrary, Lindberg concludes, it is neither boycott nor protest but opposition participation and acceptance of the outcome that are associated with “the transformation of electoral autocracies into democracies over a sequence of multiparty elections.” As the author suggests, if parties withdraw and protest, they do so out of resignation, in a position of weakness. Opposition boycott and protest, it seems, are acknowledgments of defeat rather than weapons of democratization.

Part 4 of the book switches its analytical focus from the strategic interplay between rulers and opposition parties to exogenous factors, both institutional and international, that condition their correlations of force in the electoral arena. In Chapter 10, on the impact of state capacity on regime dynamics, Lucan A. Way extends the common argument, according to which “a strong state is essential for democracy,” to nondemocratic rule. As he argues, a strong state is essential for authoritarianism, too. If the control of leaders over their subordinates is put into question, centralized efforts of authoritarian manipulation are likely to dissipate. Exemplifying his argument with the experiences of post-Soviet Belarus (1992–1994), Moldova (1992–1999), and Ukraine (1992–2004), the author shows how failures in establishing “control over coercive agencies and local governments” tends to frustrate authoritarian schemes designed to distort and contain electoral competition. In all three cases, alternation in government was less an indication of democratic success than a sign of authoritarian failure; rather than an expression of democratic commitment, it was a consequence of administrative incapacity. Unable to impose their authoritarian impulse on the state apparatus under their nominal command, chief executives found that they could not rely on their security forces to suppress dissidence or on local public officials to coerce voters or stuff the ballot boxes.

Just as the strength of the state bureaucracy matters for the dynamics of political regimes, the strength of the legislative assembly matters, too. In his analysis in Chapter 11 of the causal impact legislative powers have on regime trajectories, M. Steven Fish shows a striking association between weak legislatures and authoritarian governance in the post-Soviet world. His use of the Legislative Power Index, a new continuous measure of legislative strength based on expert assessments, cuts across the discussion of presidential versus parliamentary forms of government, and his empirical findings invert standard assumptions of constitutional debate. Authoritarian systems, the literature tends to assume, choose weak legislatures. The causal arrow, however, seems to go the other way round: weak legislatures produce authoritarian systems. As the author states, although “the origins of choices

about the powers vested in legislatures varied across cases, the consequences of those choices did not.” Post-Soviet countries that established strong legislatures at the moment of achieving their (either *de jure* or *de facto*) independence embarked on a trajectory of democratization; those that established weak legislatures bought a ticket to enduring authoritarian rule. Substantive initial differences in legislative powers translated into dramatic subsequent divergences in regime trajectories. As these findings suggest, strong legislatures tend to consolidate democracy and subvert electoral authoritarian governance, whereas weak legislatures tend to erode democracy and reproduce authoritarianism. The key causal mechanism, Fish suggests, lies in the negative incentives powerless assemblies entail for the development of political parties. Weak legislatures weaken political parties, and by doing so, they end up undermining both “horizontal” and “vertical” forms of accountability. The author illustrates his causal argument through the paired comparison of two contrasting countries: Bulgaria, a case of successful democratization driven by a strong parliament and strong parties, and Russia, a case of authoritarian regression driven by an executive unencumbered by either legislative or partisan checks.

Whereas most authors in this book embrace the domestic perspective on regime dynamics that has dominated the comparative democratization literature, Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way shift the explanatory focus from internal to international actors and factors. In Chapter 12, they strive to explain why democratizing pressures by international actors have borne divergent consequences in different settings. The key to success, they argue, lies in two factors that vary with relative independence of each other—linkage, “the density of economic, political, social, organizational, and communication ties,” and leverage, the “vulnerability” of national governments to international pressures. If both are high, as in Latin America and Central Europe, democratization is likely to ensue. If both are low, as in parts of the Middle East, Central Asia, and East Asia, the most likely outcome is stable authoritarian rule, with or without the adornment of electoral façades. Finally, if both diverge, we may expect “mixed regimes” (electoral authoritarian regimes) to survive, at least for some time, and muddle through the mixed signals of the international environment. In this respect, the authors’ argument echoes William Case’s contention (itself an echo of Harry Eckstein’s notion of “congruence”) that ambivalent societal settings tend to sustain the political ambivalence of electoral authoritarianism.<sup>18</sup>

In his concluding chapter, Richard Snyder, while lauding the emerging empirical research on new forms of authoritarianism, issues a plea for broadening the agenda beyond the study of electoral authoritarian regimes. His principal concerns are threefold. First, he warns against overlooking old forms of authoritarian rule that have continuing empirical relevance. At present, a large share of the world population continues living under single-

party regimes, military dictatorship, and traditional monarchies. The author also warns against obliterating the profound differences between these regimes by stuffing them in the residual conceptual box of “closed” regimes. Second, Snyder warns against limiting our attention to routes of access to power. If we place all emphasis on the electoral arena, we are neglecting the questions about the exercise of power that animated the vast literature on totalitarianism, bureaucratic authoritarianism, sultanism, and other forms of nondemocratic rule. As the author argues, old concerns about the goals and instruments of authoritarian rule and about the relationship between rulers and subjects have not lost their analytical relevance. Third, the author pleads for placing the conflictive electoral games we study in their structural context. In particular, he argues for “bringing the state back in” to the study of electoral regimes. We may ask about the consequences of electoral contests for state capacity, as elections may have state-building as well as state-subverting functions. Yet, in the first place, we should ask about the structural prerequisites of electoral contests in terms of state capacity. It makes no sense to study elections as routes of access to state power in contexts where there is nothing resembling a state. No state, no regime. Richard Snyder concludes his critical review by outlining the contours of a future agenda of research. The standard phrase summarizes the state of things pretty well: much research needs to be done on contemporary nondemocratic regimes.

## Notes

Work on this chapter was made possible by research grant 36970-D from the Mexican National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT). I wish to thank Jonathan Hartlyn, Staffan Lindberg, Jennifer McCoy, and Nicolas van de Walle for most useful comments on earlier versions.

1. A disclaimer of originality: The metaphor of the political specter, widely used in the literature on populism and other elusive threats to public tranquility, was originally introduced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the introduction to their 1948 *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. They described the “specter of communism” as a “nursery tale” they strove to demystify with their public declaration of principles (see [www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org)).

2. Actually, waves are not supposed to change the sea level. On the “third wave” of democracy, see, among others, Huntington (1991), Diamond (1999: Chap. 2), and Doorenspleet (2005). For a contrasting view that observes a gradual accretion of democracies, rather than the occurrence of waves, see Przeworski et al. (2000).

3. Freedom House 1975 and 2005 *Annual Report on Political Rights and Civil Liberties* ([www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)). As the number of nation-states has increased, in particular with the disintegration of the Soviet empire in 1991, the proportions become somewhat less impressive.

4. On the normative foundations of democratic elections and the corresponding

menu of manipulative strategies that undermine these foundations, see Schedler (2002b).

5. For a recent discussion of defective democracies, see the April 2004 issue of the journal *Democratization*.

6. On the distinction between access to power and exercise of power and its relevance to the literature on political regimes, see Mazzuca (forthcoming).

7. For instance, attention to the institutional bases of authoritarian rule (who rules) may lead us to distinguish between “party-based” EA regimes, which reproduce themselves through well-institutionalized ruling parties; “military” EA regimes, in which elections ratify military domination of politics; and “personalist” EA regimes, which concentrate state power in the hands of one individual (see also Thompson and Kuntz, Chapter 7 in this volume).

8. On neutral (impartial) versus redistributive (discriminatory) institutions, see Tsebelis (1990: 117). On the notion of electoral governance, see Mozaffar and Schedler (2002).

9. I owe the notion of *dietrologia* to Philippe Schmitter (see his corresponding entry in *Les Intraduisibles: The Dictionary of Untranslatable Terms in Politics*, [www.concepts-methods.org](http://www.concepts-methods.org)). On the generic research problems generated by secrecy under dictatorship, see Barros (2005).

10. The quotes are from the “Political Rights and Civil Liberties Checklist” in the methodological appendix to the Freedom House 2002 survey of political rights and civil liberties (Karatnycky, Piano, and Puddington 2003: 697).

11. Of course, no codification rule is perfect, and a rigid reliance on Freedom House scores is bound to produce false positives at the lower end. Freedom House assigns double scores of four (in the realms of political rights and civil liberties) to some regimes that are not in the grip of dictators exercising centralized authoritarian controls but are under the pressure of violent rebellion, organized crime, or military unrest that call into question the authority of elected state actors. Examples are Colombia in the late 1990s and Guatemala in more recent years.

12. On the role of stolen elections in coordinating citizens and triggering protest movements, see Thompson and Kuntz (2004).

13. For a somewhat more extensive discussion of opposition choices and dilemmas, see Schedler (2002a).

14. On the organizational demands of electoral fraud, see Chapter 10 in this book.

15. On the menu of electoral manipulation, see Schedler (2002b). On the menu of electoral mobilization, along the guiding distinction between “clientelistic” and “programmatic” campaign offers, see Kitschelt (2000).

16. “Autocrat,” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford University Press, [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com).

17. With apologies to W. B. Gallie (1956) for transposing his notion of “essential contestation” from the realm of ideas to the sphere of power.

18. On Eckstein’s theory of congruent authority patterns, see Eckstein (1992).