The Political Economy of Information Provision in Developing Democracies

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Abstract

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Political public opinion polling has quickly spread across the world into many developing democratic contexts. However, little research to date has either sought to probe this explosion in public opinion information cross-nationally or examine how this information is used by political elites, particularly during electoral cycles. This project develops a framework to examine political public opinion data and how elites react to them, particularly in developing democracies. The project examines the correlates of the presence of public opinion polling on a macro level, drawing on cross-national data, and probes what impact these data have on a micro level, drawing on elite interviews with a sample of over 100 candidates who ran for elected office in Georgia and the coding of newspapers and of elite interviews in Kenya and Georgia.

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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

BCG: Business Consulting Group. Georgian polling agency.

CUG: Citizen's Union of Georgia. Georgian Political Party.

CDM: Christian Democratic Movement. Georgian political party.

FNG: For a New Georgia. Georgian political party.

GDC: Georgian Dream Coalition. Georgian electoral bloc.

IRI: International Republican Institute. U.S. development NGO.

IPM: Institute for Polling and Marketing. Georgian polling agency.

LPG: Labour Party of Georgia. Georgian political party.

MMP: Mixed-Member Parliamentary. Type of electoral system.

NARC: National Alliance Rainbow Coalition. Kenyan political party.

NDI: National Democratic Institute of International Affairs. U.S.-based international NGO.

NRP: New Rights Party. Georgian political party.

ODM: Orange Democratic Movement. Kenyan political party.

OPN: Office of Opinion Research. Former Office of U.S. Department of State, which is now part of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR).

PNU: Party of National Unity. Kenyan political party.

IWSG: Industry Will Save Georgia. Georgian Political Party.

KANU: Kenya African National Union. Kenyan political party.

NELDA: National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy. A cross-national dataset of elections.

NSF: National Science Foundation. U.S. funding agency for academic research.

FPTP: First-past-the-post. Constituencies in which the candidate who wins the largest vote share is elected.

ODA: Overseas democracy assistance.

RDD: Random digit dialing.

SMD: Single mandate district.

SIDA: Swedish Agency for International Development. Swedish funding agency, which has extensively funded polling in Georgia.

UNM: United National Movement. Georgian political party.

UDR: Union of Democratic Revival. Georgian political party.

USAID: United States Agency for International Development. U.S. funding agency that often funds political polls.

WAPOR: World Association of Public Opinion Research.

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DEDICATION

To everyone who put up with me all these years.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Public opinion polling in politics, once constrained to Western democracies, has exploded across the developing world. Within developing countries' electoral cycles, these polling data are splashed across news headlines and hotly debated by citizen and politician alike. In some cases, polls have potentially constrained expectations, leading citizens to agree with the announced outcomes of the elections. In other cases, polls may have increased the likelihood of violence. For example, in the aftermath of the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya, the commission empaneled to study the violence wrote, "Many Kenyans took a different view: the polls predicted that their particular presidential candidate would win the election: this did not happen: therefore the elections must have been rigged" (Independent Review Commission 2008).

The National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) dataset contains one measure of the saturation of political public opinion polls: the number of elections where publicly available polls are carried out during an election campaign.[1] Figure 1.1 shows this large-scale increase in documented polls in NELDA. Whereas before 1960, fewer than ten percent of elections in any given year witnessed polling, the number has grown to over fifty percent after 2000, even with the increased number of polities where elections are carried out around the world.

Despite the growth of public opinion polling in developing democracies, the most basic

[1]This figure, as seen in Chapter 7, is not without its own measurement error and likely underestimates political polling.

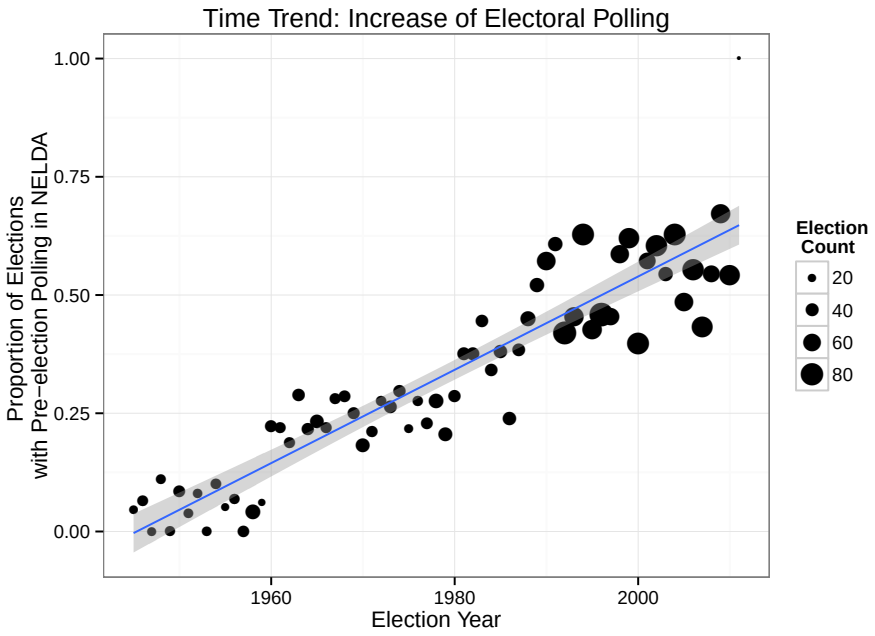

Figure 1.1: Elections are grouped by year; the size of the dot represents the number of elections in that year. This includes all legislative and executive elections. The line shows an iterated weighted least squares (IWLS) estimate of the slope of the increase over time.

theoretical and empirical questions about how political public opinion polling operates outside of Western democracies remain understudied. What are the correlates and determinants of both the presence and density of polling? Once polling is present, what effect, if any, does it have on these societies? Do the effects in developing countries differ from societies like the United States, where some of the questions related to the impact of polling have been systematically studied?

Information and its uses have long been an area of focus in the study of elite behavior. Simply put, elites need information to make decisions, and their information demands are much higher than those of the average citizen. However, the role that information plays among elites as it pertains to their electoral cycle, particularly in developing countries, is poorly understood.

On the macro level, newly created cross-national datasets provide variables that include some information on the presence of polling within electoral cycles (Hyde and Marinov 2012). Scholars of elections have begun to use these data to model the effect of polling information. Findings have included that in hybrid electoral regimes, a ruler who receives public opinion data that signal she is going to lose may be more likely to commit various types of election fraud or incite violence (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014). On the micro level, those deeply involved in the polling process have asserted that survey research — because of its ability to contest and refute claims of the leaders — constitutes a serious threat to leaders in emerging democracies (Mattes 2008, 119). It is therefore surprising that in recent years — and particularly outside of the United States — how elites respond to this information lacks empirical attention.

While important scholarship from more than twenty years ago exists (e.g. Jacobs and Shapiro 1994; Kingdon 1968; Putnam 1976),[2] in recent years, the literature reveals a paucity of theoretical and empirical attention paid to how elites respond to political polling information as it pertains to the electoral cycle. This is especially true in non-U.S. contexts. Moreover, the literature does not distinguish between the use of and effects on elites with regard to publicly available information regarding the electoral cycle, as opposed to privately held, proprietary information and the incentives that lead actors to generate these different types of information. A recently invigorated interest within the political science literature on the causal effect of information (e.g., Hill et al. 2013; Horowitz and Long 2016; Miller 2015) makes the lack of attention to this topic all the more acute.

While elites have been less of a focus, an important literature has studied the role and effects of citizens' lack of information in the election process in developed democracies (Bartels 1996; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin 1999). More recently,

[2]For example, Kingdon (1968, 92-93) studies Wisconsin politicians and finds that respondents raised similar issues to those subjects in my study in Georgia, such as faulty wording and interviewer bias.

experimentalists, including myself, have conducted studies, both inside and outside the U.S. context, about how information shapes citizens' beliefs (e.g. Broockman and Kalla 2016), and some studies have specifically looked at public opinion data (Erlich 2015).

While studies of elites have not focused on public opinion data, one important strand of empirical literature delves into the publicly available informational shortcuts that politicians use to make up for their informational deficit. This scholarship often focuses specifically on elites' use of ethnicity or race as an easily observable proxy for actual information about voters' prospective behaviors (e.g., Chandra 2004). In stark contradistinction to the heavily examined and studied role of private information in calculating the cost of going to war (e.g., Fearon 1995), how elites' private information factors into the calculus of what types of behavior competitors in elections should engage in has received much less attention.

Some formal modelers, approaching the issue of private information from a different angle, have begun to understand the equilibria in which incumbents in electoral authoritarian regimes manipulate information (Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009; Guriev and Treisman 2015). Their papers examine a host of questions about why information is important to elites and why they may want to control it. However, these papers consider information as a broad catch all category, focus on contexts that lie on the authoritarian end of the electoral spectrum (e.g., Russia), and do not think about elites' demands for objective information about their own standing in society.

To remedy the lacuna in the study of public opinion polling and its effect on elites, in this project, I lay out a framework within which to systematically examine the polling process in developing democracies. Next, I examine the correlates of election-related polling cross-nationally. After employing cross-national models to understand the diffusion of polling, I shift to an approach that focuses on the micro-level, which to date has not received significant scholarly treatment. Rather than discussing information and its effects on a macro-level, this

project zeroes in on one type of provision of information in one context: public opinion data in the context of elections in developing democracies. I believe that better modeling of information will come from a more micro-level understanding of the information provision process and help to develop better cross-national models. Moreover, by narrowing my focus, I hope to show that micro-theorizing can yield more actionable insight.

To do so, within these developing democracies, I ask: How are elites in developing countries impacted by political polling data in the context of their electoral cycle? I answer these questions based on extensive fieldwork in the former Soviet Union and East Africa. In Georgia and Kenya, I carry out interviews with all of the main polling firms, as well as with campaign staff involved in presidential campaigns, and parliamentary candidates. In carrying out theoretical cross-national and country-level analysis, I attempt to both understand the macro and micro aspects of how political polling has effected countries to which it has recently arrived.

The layout of the manuscript proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I argue that a comprehensive conception of public opinion polls in developing democracies is important to the analysis of how elites form their beliefs about their electorate. In this Chapter, I argue that the traditional way of examining polls — to look at whether they are public or private — is not sufficient to understand how elites will react to these polls.

In Chapter 3, I develop a new schema that goes beyond the public/private distinction and focuses on categories of actors involved in polling, in addition to types of polls (public/private) that are conducted. I argue that the economic incentives that drive the actors in the polling industry are key to understanding how this industry operates. I develop a schema for understanding the public opinion polling cycle. My schema isolates different actors involved in political opinion polling and specifies their incentives and constraints, thus providing insight into the public opinion polling cycle.

Chapter 4 takes a step back to understand the macro-sociological environment in which political opinion polls are carried out. The chapter argues that, while political public opinion polls have become more widespread over time, this increase is not randomly assigned. Indeed, regression analysis shows that opinion polling is highly correlated with the package of economic growth and increased freedom (Lipset 1959).

I then return to micro-level theory in Chapter 5. Given the constraints and incentives under which different actors in the polling cycle operate, I develop a set of hypotheses about how elites will react to polling data. While the paper is presented deductively, as Levi (1997) notes, much inductive work informs the deduction. In this chapter, I argue that elites will not treat all polling information in the same way. Those candidate or parties who carry out their own public opinion polling will value this information much more than data that are collected by other actors. Other variables that will impact elite reaction will include the elites' own priors, which are often proxied for by their age — since age often is important in the socialization of candidates — and the party of which they are a member.

In Chapter 6, I examine the hypotheses developed in Chapter 5 in the context of Georgia, where I interview all the candidates for MP from 1999 through 2012, who garnered more than two percent of the vote in a stratified random sample of districts. I find that the theoretical hypotheses developed in Chapter 5 generally hold true, but. However, in contrast to theoretical expectations, I find the role of political parties in shaping beliefs to be much larger than expected.

Given my micro-level findings, I return to measurement of political public opinion polling with an eye towards understanding its causal impact on elections in Chapter 7. In this chapter I discuss ways to improve the measurement of public opinion polls and develop a new data collection standard. I benchmark my method with the currently existing data collection efforts developed by Hyde and Marinov (2012). I find that my method, while requiring more

labor, provides a much better picture of the public opinion information environment.

Chapter 8 concludes, recapitulating and summarizing the argument.

Chapter 2

WHY DO PUBLIC OPINION POLLS MATTER FOR POLITICS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES? DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES WITH CONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACIES

A critic might argue that public opinion polling is merely a by-product of the political process; it does not lie at the heart of the practice of politics. Therefore, three questions arise that are important to answer immediately. First, why should public opinion polls matter at all for the study of politics? Second, what outcomes should they affect, and how does this shape the practice of politics? Third, how does the answer to the first two questions vary for consolidated and new democracies?

In order to answer these questions, I differentiate between two sets of actors: the citizen and the politician or political elite. The ways that elites use data are likely to be very different than the ways citizens use data. While average citizens may react to data, they are less active users. While my work elsewhere (Erlich 2015) focus on citizens, I focus on elites in this manuscript.

From the perspective of elites, theoretically, public opinion polls matter for two sets of reasons. First, public opinion polls can potentially serve as a powerful source of information for politicians both to plan their campaigns and make sure that their work in office coincides with the views of their constituents. Public opinion polling is particularly powerful because of its use of sampling and claims to representativeness of the population; however, politicians can also choose to either ignore public opinion polls altogether or use other forms of data to

gauge public opinion.[1] Politicians may also choose to discredit public opinion data by claiming data manipulation or that a research design lacks representativeness of the population of interest.

From an elite perspective, why is public opinion polling important in terms of how politicians view the world in developing countries in particular? Two reasons immediately stand out. First, many of these democracies are hyphenated or hybrid regime types and polling can be seen, depending on the context and the individuals, as a tool of either authoritarianism or democracy. Therefore, unlike the United States, which was a consolidated democracy at the time that polling was introduced, polling can serve different teleologies.

Second, if we suppose that beliefs are less certain in developing countries because of the high degree of societal and political change that often occurs, beliefs of politicians are subject to change. In *The Beliefs of Politicians*, Putnam (1973, 7) lays out a simple graphical diagram about beliefs:

Factors Determining Beliefs → Political Beliefs → Political Actions → Regimes

Therefore, the answer to the second question posed above is that, if elites chose to believe it, public opinion polling can clearly have an important role in shaping their beliefs, particularly about what their citizenry thinks, but also about their electoral chances. This belief formation is important for politicians because it can shape the actions they take, as Putnam highlights. In the case of an electoral campaign, it can determine what policy issues or promises a candidate chooses to highlight, or whether they chose to protest the outcome of an election because they thought they won based on polling data.

However, public opinion data are not all the same and in uncertain environments, such as many developing countries, not all data sources (including public opinion polls) will be

[1] A typical manner of doing this in the United States Congress in the early 20th Century was to tabulate mail, for example.

viewed as trustworthy. The type of data sources, then, that politicians use is of paramount importance to understand how politicians in new democracies operate and change their beliefs.[2] If politicians do not believe that polls are trustworthy, and rely on other sources of information because they do not trust polls, they can come to believe different things about their own electorate compared to those who do use polls. Based on their beliefs about their citizens garnered from different data sources, the ways that they choose to convey, make, and set policy will vary depending on the information they choose to believe.

I focus on the trustworthiness of polls because it is particularly salient in developing and hybrid democracies. As Igo (2007) and Converse (1987) document with regard to average citizens in the United States, much of social science quantitative inquiry was controversial in the United States not long ago.[3] Some politicians rapidly embraced the new technologies while others did not. In newly democratizing countries, the use of modern social science techniques — such as polling within the campaign cycle – often retains a high degree of controversiality. This controversiality is unsurprising, given the newness of the technology.

The second important way in which polling matters for elites is through elites' beliefs about how citizens react to public opinion data that they receive. At the broadest level, those opinion polls that are available to the public contribute to constructing what the public believes about societal beliefs writ large. As Susan Herbst argues, this has far-reaching implications for how democracy is practiced (Herbst 1998, 2); and elites must react to this construction of public beliefs.

To make this more concrete, we can examine two well studied effects in American political science: the underdog and bandwagon effects. Indeed, there is a large empirical literature

[2]Of course, this usage can vary for reasons such as financial constraints, but it can also vary in terms of whether politicians view these polls as trustworthy.

[3]Scholars such as Converse (1987) have pointed out that the existence of polling technology did not lead politicians to immediately adopt it.

about publicly available survey data such as political ratings, or vote predictions, empirically shape public opinion in terms of either having voters support the candidate in the lead in public opinion polls (bandwagon) or the candidate who is behind (underdog) (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Ceci and Kain 1982; Fleitas 1971; Kiss and Simonovits 2014; Simon 1954). But whether or not these effects change citizens' behavior may not matter to politicians. That is, politicians could believe that the public release of polling data has a large effect on shaping citizens' behavior, regardless of the actual effect. If this is the case, then polls can become the subject of political confrontation and argumentation over the accuracy of numbers, which relate to candidate ratings and candidate and political party support. I return to this argument, which I find this to be the case empirically in my study of Georgia, in Chapter 6.

2.1 Public vs. Private Polls

The dominant paradigm for discussing polls emerges from the United States, where the literature distinguishes between public and private polls. That is, scholars of public opinion distinguish between those polls ostensibly carried out for public consumption, which I will call *public* political polls, and those carried out for private interests such as political campaigns, which I call *private* political polls. As I will discuss, while the paradigm is not without problems in the developed world, it has even greater shortcomings in the developing world.

2.1.1 Public Polls

The manner in which public polling is generally conceived in the literature has two major flaws, the first which I call the *media-only assumption* and the second which I call the *benevolence assumption*.

The *media-only assumption* is an erroneous perception (based in American development)

that the most important if not the only pollster is the media, and the media are able to fund their own publicly available polls. Following from the *media-only assumption*, the *benevolence assumption* is that the main purveyors of public opinion data are benevolent actors looking out for the median citizen's best interest. As Mann and Orren (1992, 4), in their edited volume on the role that polls play in the media write,

> "the most important benefit reflects the main reason why news organizations got into the polling business in the first place: by doing their own polls they can gain an additional check on the accountability of political and governmental leaders."

The media-only assumption

The traditional model of commissioning polls in the United States, from where the bulk of the literature emerges, is through the media. Even in the United States, the number of actors in the American context has grown over time, but the variety of actors carrying out polls in developing countries is even greater, and their utility functions different. Despite the expansion of actors in the polling space, the underlying assumptions that govern a media-centric polling world remain strong.

Notably, in developing democracies, my study identifies that, in lieu of the media, international development organizations (generally NGOs) and domestic NGOs, along with international foundations, often carry out opinion polling that is public. Indeed, as Mattes (2008) notes, the paradigm of the major funder is different in the developing country context, where international foundations and bilateral aid agencies play a large role, as compared to the role the media play in the Western context.

The Benevolence Assumption

The benevolence assumption lies at the heart of the issue of identifying the underlying incentives for actors to poll, and, therefore bears more scrutiny. Regardless of whether the actor is the media or NGOs or international/bilateral agencies, I argue that this benevolent perspective, in fact, hinges on a wide variety of assumptions about incentives and behaviors, including those of elites. Notably, Herbst (1993) has pointed to both the instrumental and symbolic use of polls in American democracy. Herbst raises the salient point that there are also many non-benevolent assumptions about polling. I follow Herbst in making the point that we must seek to understand the incentives of those polling for the public, rather than by assuming their inherent goodness, particularly in developing democracies. I discuss the media and NGOs in developing countries in turn.

The benevolence assumption of the media is particularly problematic in developing countries. Often in countries with middle levels of democracy, press freedom remains constrained in various ways (Kumar 2006). Freedom House divides these types of restrictions on press freedoms into four categories: "Laws and regulations that influence media content", "Political influence over media content," "Economic influence over media content," and "Repressive actions." These restrictions clearly bear directly on the *benevolence assumption* since the media will often serve powerful elites — be they economic or political — rather than the average citizen in developing countries.

Beyond the clear problem of press independence, even if there were press independence, media is often capital poor in developing countries (Conroy-Krutz 2013); media often can neither afford to sponsor polls, nor do they have the capacity to judge their reliability in environments where there is little institutionalization of high quality polls.[4] Again, the lack of capital makes the media particularly susceptible to corruption in developing countries

[4]Journalists' ability to understand polls is a topic of concern in the U.S. literature as well (Traugott 2004).

and, hence, willing to potentially engage in poll manipulation or censorship, belying the *benevolence assumption*.

Second, international and domestic NGOs are subject to very different incentives compared to the media. Much like in the study of international NGOs (see Cooley and Ron 2002) — the original literature on the commissioning of public opinion polls saw those who commissioned polls as benevolent actors, whose only incentives were to provide a public good.

Certainly, there are more reasons beyond those specified by the media to hold the benevolent assumption about NGOs who conduct public polls in developing democracies. As Mattes (2008, 119) argues, the two reasons for carrying out polls in consolidated democracies, there exists two additional reasons for carrying out public opinion polls in emerging democracies, particularly those with hybrid elements. First, they enhance accountability by making information more transparent by letting "everyone else know what the government knows." Second, they provide an explicit mechanism for allowing the democratic reform process to move forward. However, despite all these good things that NGOs do – and many NGOs do engage in this type of polling, NGOs in the developing world can also be broadly partisan and have ulterior motives, such as conduct polls in order to cater to their political sponsors, calling the *benevolence assumption* into question for NGOs as well as media.

To summarize, from a political economy perspective, I argue, the benevolent ideological approach obfuscates the nature of the utility function of both those who commission polls and those who implement them. In the case of the media and NGOs, while benevolence may be in the utility function of the media, the focus on benevolence downplays other elements of that utility function, such as the profit motive. Indeed, it is surprising given the economics and political economics literature, which points to the economic incentives of the media to either sell content (Mullainathan and Shleifer 2005) or generate rents from the government

(Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009), that polling is considered solely a benevolent action on the part of the media and NGOs.[5]

2.1.2 Private Polls

Private polls exist when opinion polls are carried out, but the results are not released to the public; rather, they are held as private information. Such *private* polls are most often carried out by political campaigns for individuals seeking re-election or by officials in office seeking to understand how they are faring, as is often true of the American presidency; however, *private* polls could be carried out by other actors and such other actors carrying out private polls may be more prevalent in developing democracies. For example, business interests could be interested in deciding which candidate to support and commission their own private poll to identify the candidate that is most likely to support their interests, weighted by their probability of winning, as was suggested to me during several interviews in Kenya.

Private polls, I argue, suffer from a lack of study and theory building. Moreover, the theory that does exist comes almost exclusively one case: the American presidency. Understanding how politicians and campaigns use polling data has not been systematically studied in a cross-national context. Indeed, many studies make a key assumption that related elite behavior to publicly available opinion data. As Jacobs and Shapiro (1994) write, "The critical assumption has been that the published survey results found their way into the

[5]Indeed, even if we were to take an ideas approach to why the media carried out public opinion polls in the United States, there are several assumptions behind the public good rationale for the provision of public opinion data that are not true of most developing country context. First, to reiterate, the media play the pivotal role in collection and the dissemination of public opinion data. Not only do they report on the results, but they also commission the data collection. Second, the media's institutional position is taken for granted: the media is generally an independent agent, and the media's job is to help citizens play a direct role in democracy. Two further assumptions also highlight necessary but not sufficient conditions for the media to provide data on public opinion polls. First, the media must posses sufficient capital to sponsor public opinion polls. Second, the media either must have sufficient technical expertise to be able ensure that the result of the poll is reliable or there must be sufficient institutional constraints on polling companies to ensure that they do not cut corners on data collection.

campaign's decision-making process (or at least reflected comparable information that was used by the campaign)." That is, since they do not have access to research about private polls, in many cases, researchers use publicly-released polls as a proxy for the underlying behavior they believe politicians would would take, if they had the same data that were private.

Indeed, while there have been a few books written by academics-turned-pollsters in which they explain the tools of their trade (Egorova-Gantman and Mintusov 1999; Greenberg 2009),[6] the literature on the instrumental use of these *private* polls, to date has predominantly concentrated within the study of the American presidency (Jacobs and Shapiro 1994; Eisinger 2003).[7]

This may be true because obtaining empirical data on how campaigns use polling data are very difficult to achieve and also, perhaps, because it is so obvious campaigns carry out these polls in order to increase their chance of winning the elections. That is, given an individual's information, if there is marginal utility in collecting more information, and that marginal utility is greater than other uses of the money given the actors' budget constraints, private polls allow those who are privy to their findings to strategically allocate resources and campaign in an efficient manner. In contradistinction to the literature on publicly available polls, a specifically rationalist approach is taken for granted when thinking about *private* polls. But *how* politicians use polls is of vital importance, since elections, particularly in hybrid democracies, can be won in a variety of manners.

Indeed, generating theory from the American presidency and extrapolating it to how

[6]There was also a documentary *Our Brand is Crisis*made about the Bolivian elections of 2002, in which Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, an American PR and polling company, gave strategic advice to Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada.

[7]But see Moreno (1996) on Mexico. Also see Qodari (2010) on the use of polls in Indonesia. Interestingly, Qodari documents the use of polls to identify likable candidates as Indonesia democratized, a finding which my research uncovered in Georgia as well.

actors outside the U.S. context, or even worse, outside the developed world is likely to lead to misguided inferences for at least two reasons.

First, the literature on the American presidency assumes that there are many other polls in existence, so there is less reason to assume that the presidential apparatus will engage in strategic publication of results so that polling can be used exert psychological influence on the citizenry.

Second, because of the *status quo* of pollling's role within the American political arena, scholars have generally ceased studying variation in elites' use of polling,[8] at least outside of the foreign policy world (Powlick 1995). Indeed, there is a consensus about the trustworthiness of polling data across the American political spectrum. In the American political context, Robert Eisinger, for example, documents that every president with the exception of Truman since Franklin Delano Roosevelt has used public opinion polling as the predominant method of understanding public opinion. As Eisinger (2003, 5) writes, "Presidents do not ask if polls reflect public opinion, or if polls positively affect their reelection campaigns or their passing of legislation. They believe the answer is yes to both questions."

As a result, in the U.S. context, there is little theory about the adoption of *private* polling or about the specific incentives that politicians and parties have to carry out such work, as opposed to engaging in other goal-oriented activities. Particularly in developing countries, there are many other tools that can be used aside from polls to understand citizen's beliefs; however, since private polls continue to occur in some but not all politicians toolkit, it would seem that their use in campaigns bears more scrutiny.

[8]For a representative earlier study, see Kingdon (1968).

2.2 Conclusion: Beyond the Public Private Distinction

I have argued in this chapter that a lacuna exists in current theory, in that the literature does not suggest why polls are carried out in developing countries nor suggest a theory about why various institutions beyond the media carry out these surveys. As I have argued throughout this chapter,this lacuna has been partially perpetuated by the dominant distinction between public and private polls; this distinction does not sufficiently capture what public opinion polls' impacts are in a given country.

The benefit of the distinction between private and public, I argue, is that it remains true that only polls that are released to the general public can have an impact on citizens, and, therefore, shape their beliefs. For example, bandwagoning cannot occur if a poll is not publicly available. The main problem with this distinction is that ignores the actors involved in the polling process and what incentives they have when it comes to funding, implementing, and potentially disseminating polling data.

First, the distinction between public and private polls does not take into consideration the actors who have differing incentives to carry out polls. Two examples highlight these differing incentives. First, politicians in hybrid regimes can strategically make public polling data that is private but in their favor because they believe that it will create bandwagon effects or demonstrate to the opposition that they have no chance of winning. This strategy makes more sense when there is a vacuum of information and little to no public polling data available. Second, international NGOs often carry out opinion polling, which they make available to the public; however, these NGOs to meet their goals of party development (or perhaps to simply curry favor) can often provide private tabulations or breakdowns of the data for political parties. Given that the NGOs provide much information to parties that they do not release to the public these ostensibly public polls could also be considered partially private.

Therefore, in order to better understand why political polls are carried out during the election cycles in developing countries, I specifically adopt a rationalist framework where I identify a set of empirically grounded actors in the sphere of electoral public opinion polling. I then examine the different roles each of these actors plays in election polling, the strategic reasons why actors — not only the media — choose to either fund public opinion polls or not, how those actors who carry out the polls do so, and what the incentives are for results dissemination. This theory pays special attention to Mattes' statement that *public* opinion polls are germane in the feedback cycle between elites and citizens — and this may be particularly salient in the context of politicians campaigning for votes, although the literature to date regarding the role these publicly available polls may have on elites remains meager.

While I do not dismiss the presence of ideology when actors choose to poll and make the results either public or private, I argue that all of the actors who engage in the public opinion polling data generation process can be viewed as being governed by utility functions in which the incentives play a primary role. I further argue that public and private polls should be studied together because how they intersect is important to understanding how public opinion polling influences the electoral environment, and that an actor and incentive-centered approach is paramount in understanding the decisions actors make with regards to polling.

Chapter 3

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE POLLING PROCESS? ACTORS

As I have argued in the last chapter, it is not enough to understand polling to only understand whether a poll is public or private, but rather it is necessary to understand the series of decisions that brought that poll to life. Based on my fieldwork and survey of polling practice, I develop a new theoretical framework to think about how public opinion polls come to life. In this chapter, first, I develop a decision-tree framework that takes into consideration the incentives of actors to generate both *private* and *public* polls. Second, I highlight all of the actors involved at different stages of the process and the different roles they can play.

3.0.1 A Framework for Understanding Polling

I conceive of the polling process as an information pipeline, which goes through three stages: funding, implementation, and provision/dissemination of results, as seen in Figure 3.1. While many different groups can play the role of funder, implementer or disseminator of results, one actor can be thought of as being involved at each stage of the process.

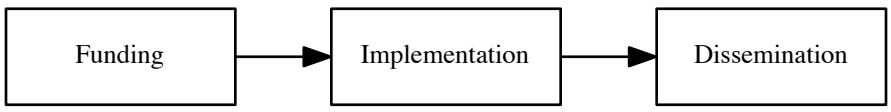

Figure 3.1: The poll production pipeline.

During each of these stages a series of decisions is made about a poll, but, in any context, and particularly a developing country context, I argue that that decision is about whether to manipulate or attempt to alter the results. While this is a highly abstracted model, it helps us to get purchase about what decisions are involved in bring a poll into being.

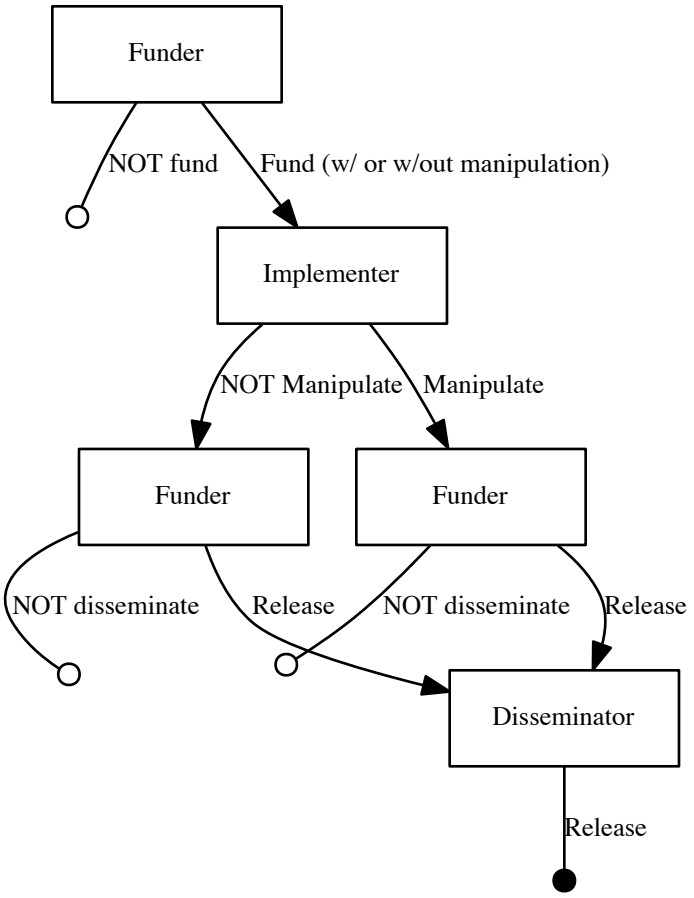

Figure 3.2: A polling decision tree.

In the first stage, a funder decides whether to fund a study. If a funder does not finance, the result is that no study comes into existence. I abstract for the time being about whether the decision is strategic (amongst funders), because for the purposes of the decision tree, it does not matter. However, it is important to note that the funder can potentially choose to fund a study with manipulation. That is, in collusion with an implementer, the funder will already know that she is attempting on some level to alter what would have been the true outcome of the study.

The implementer then carries out the study asked for by the funder. As stated above, if the funder asks for the study to be manipulated, she can do this ahead of time, but the implementer can only manipulate it during her turn to make a decision. Hence, the implementer then decides whether or not to manipulate the outcome.

Control is then handed back to the funder, who decides if the data will be released or not. However, in many cases the funder does not know if the implementer has manipulated the data or not. In the decision tree, this is represented by the two different funders at the third stage.

If the data are not released to the public, it becomes a private poll, where no dissemination occurs, and only the funder receives this data. It is worth noting that the funder generally does not have any incentive to order manipulated data from the implementer if the data is not going to be released. If the funder decides to disseminate the data, the funder can then choose to give the data to the disseminator. The disseminator then can choose whether to disseminate the data.

From a political economy perspective, I argue, it is important to identify the varying incentives that motivate different actors to better understand the impact of the data after it gets pushed through the poll production pipeline. This approach is different from the previous poll classifications, such as those by Heath, Fisher, and Smith (2005), who classify

polls into commercial, government, and academic without discussing the incentives driving each type; this classification does not distinguish between those who fund it, those who carry out the poll, and those who disseminate the results. Moreover, the set of funders of polls in developing countries differs from that in Western democracies, warranting closer examination.

If we move to a framework in which we think about who funds polls and separate those actors from the ones who implement them and those who disseminate the results, we can then think analytically about each organization involved as a unitary actor and with its own incentive structure. While this approach may not be 100 percent suitable to the study of complex institutional actors such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID),[1] I argue that the abstraction is nonetheless reasonable in the case of both funders and implementers of public opinion polls. Throughout my fieldwork, I have identified eight distinct first-order actors in the sphere of political public opinion polls. My proposed distinction, like all classification systems, may have cases that are borderline or difficult to classify. The funders are shown in Figure 3.3.

3.0.2 Categorizing Actors

Each of the stages pictured in Figure 3.2 is associated with actors. Empirically, however, there are categories of actors who potentially can play all three roles (funder, implementer, and disseminator), while other times they can only play a specific role. That is, the same actor may fall into multiple categories depending on the circumstances. Again, at each stage

[1]We can think of the set of possible first-order funders of political public opinion polls being carried out both around election time and between elections, though the former is much greater than the latter. I define the first order funders as those funders who maintain authorial control over the content of the surveys and retain ownership of the data. However, funders themselves are often beholden to other upstream funders. Therefore, we can also think of hyper and hyper-hyper sets of funders; that is, the second order funders that fund the first order funders, and the third order funders that fund the second. Nevertheless, the focus should be on the first order funders, since they are the ones that directly contract the work.

of this pipeline, it is important to think of the incentives driving the respective actors.

Of course any categorization scheme may have its borderline cases, but I argue that it is worth developing a set of categories in which to group these actors and think about the different roles they can play within the polling pipeline. While the sets may overlap, I discuss each of the eight categories of actors I identify and each role the actor plays

As a preview I show a Venn diagram of the roles they can play in Figure 3.3.

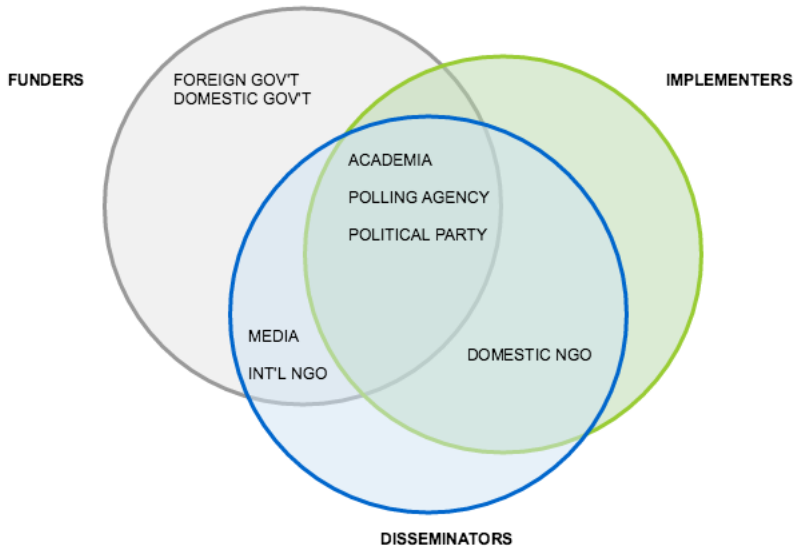

Figure 3.3: A Venn diagram, which shows the roles that actors can *possibly* play. They can, however, can play fewer roles than those pictured.

3.0.3 The Actors

International NGOs

Perhaps most ubiquitous in terms of polling results seen publicly in developing countries are international NGOs. These NGOs are still predominantly American, with a smattering of European and more far-flung NGOs rounding out the mix. As part of their remit in the

field of democracy and governance, these NGOs often directly fund public opinion polls in developing countries. In Kenya, for example, the International Republic Institute (IRI) was the first to sponsor public opinion polls during the 2002 election cycle, in the waning days of Daniel arap Moi.

Why do international NGOs specifically fund public opinion polling? The incentives here are murky. Often these polls are integrated into the larger programmatic goals of the organization. In many party-building aid programs, for instance, the goal of public opinion polling is to help better link parties better to public opinion and help them design platforms and policies around citizen demands.[2] Therefore, the NGOs often work directly with political parties to disseminate the results. Since public opinion data is often a high profile activity and elections a high-profile time for any developing democracy, public opinion polls also can potentially increase brand recognition and potential opportunities to fundraise for these NGOs. Sometimes polls are also carried out by development partners for more nebulous reasons, such as to increase the "credibility" of the electoral process or to inform voters and increase democratic discussion. As I have argued (Erlich 2015), this type of publicly released study likely decreases (albeit minimally) uncertainty in what is going to happen on election day, which, in turn, hopefully lowers the risk of violence and other negative outcomes that are potentially costly for donor countries.

While the international NGOs are the first order funders of public opinion polls and generally retain copyright and control of the data, they themselves are funded by second order donors, which are generally large multinational aid organizations such as USAID or the Swedish Agency for International Development (SIDA), which was responsible for funding

[2]For instance, see the National Democratic Institute's (NDI) manual on the topic (O'Hagan et al. 2007).

NDI polls in Georgia in the last five years.[3]

International NGOs generally do not have the capacity to carry out their own fieldwork, therefore, they are almost never implementers. However, they do sometimes disseminate the work they have funded, with their spokespeople holding press briefings and appearing on talk shows. This occurred in Georgia, for example, in the lead up to the 2012 elections, where the NDI country director became a nationally known figure on the basis of his discussion of NDI's public opinion polling results on TV.

Domestic NGOs

Domestic NGOs often implement public opinion polls, as part of their activities. Again, these NGOs are likely to be those that specialize in democracy, governance, and civil society building. However, they tend to have many fewer resources than their international counterparts and usually someone else funds their studies.

Like their international counterparts, the rationale behind why domestic organizations carry out polls is difficult to deductively understand. Because these organizations are small and have less stable funding than their international counterparts, continuing to function is often the primary goal of many of these organizations. Public opinion polling serves as a platform that stands to garner media attention, and can increase their likelihood of being funded for other activities, since the polling will likely increase the name recognition of the domestic NGO.

Unlike international NGOs, however, domestic NGOs can access a wider variety of funding sources (though often smaller pots of money), which include potential domestic and inter-

[3]There are funding mechanisms that are more directly political and where embassies or foreign governments sponsor these organizations also exist in many country contexts. Of course, foreign governments ultimately derive their money from taxes, making their citizens the third order funder of such polls.

national foundations and individual donors, as well as foreign and domestic governments.[4] This makes domestic NGOs potentially more susceptible to requests for manipulation by funders as compared to their international counterparts.

Foreign Governments

Foreign governments themselves may directly contract with polling agencies to carry out public opinion research. For example, the U.S. Department of State's Office of Opinion Research (OPN) (now part of INR) orders public opinion studies in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere. In the case of foreign governments, the incentive structure is deductively clear. The governments of global powers, like that of the United States, care deeply about global instability and unrest. They also want to be able to best pursue their own foreign policy agenda in the countries in which they operate. Paying for political opinion polling ostensibly will aid in the U.S. government's decision-making process and the polling itself may also provide signals about potential global instability.

Given that these polls often serve as part of intelligence gathering efforts, theoretically, foreign governments have a strong incentive to keep their results private and have no incentive to disseminate them publicly.[5]

To the best of my knowledge, polling results commissioned by foreign governments are almost never made public, and it is unclear from my research if any of the information is ever shared with any domestic decision makers.[6] It is also unclear the extent to which foreign

[4]For example, the Open Society Foundations, a network of foundations related to George Soros, the billionaire investor, often sponsored local NGO research projects across the former Soviet Union and continues to do so through their legacy foundations in countries such as Ukraine.

[5]Commissioning such polls is an interesting intelligence gathering strategy, which, to my knowledge, has not been systematically studied.

[6]Academic or policy citations to the OPN or of OPN data almost never occur, as it is part of the U.S. intelligence gathering efforts, but see Hanks (2007) and Konishi and Manyin (2009) for mentions of OPN data.

government-commissioned polls are systematically carried out on a schedule and whether they are carried out during election cycles of countries of strategic interest.[7]

Domestic Governments

Domestic governments also carry out political opinion polls, though the questions in these polls usually do not deal with electoral politics. They do, however, often deal with issues of public interest. Having access to information about what potential voters think allows politicians to mould their election campagns accordingly, thus giving them an advantage. These types of polls may be more prevalent in less free environments where the office of the country's ruler tends to be fused with the administration. For example, Eduard Shevardnadze, when he ruled Georgia, created a special office — integrated into the presidential administration — dedicated exclusively to polling. This office was technically part of the government, but obviously also served the interests of Shevardnadze's party.[8] Based on the cases studies involved in my fieldwork these polls are also not generally released to the public.

Political Campaigns

Political campaigns may also carry out public opinion polls. Campaign polls must be thought of as a different mechanism than polls carried out by governments. Whereas government polls can be carried out at any time, campaign polls are all carried out in the context of the electoral cycle, albeit potentially at different points during it. Unlike when national governments carry out polls, tax revenue does not support these polls, except where there is an abuse of administrative resources (which is regularly the case). Rather parties' or

[7]However, for implementing polling agencies, according to my interviews, these contracts with foreign governments form a lucrative, long-term revenue stream for local polling organizations. This source of income is often more secure than local funding streams.

[8]As documented by Eisinger (2008), the American presidency also relies heavily on polls.

candidates' war chests fund the studies.

As documented within the American political science literature, polls can be used by campaigns to judge potential candidates' popularity before they enter the race, track issues of public importance, track support for a candidate over time, test messages, and identify voting blocks, among other things (Eisinger 2008; Jacobs and Shapiro 1994; Murray and Howard 2002).[9]

However, in environments with authoritarian tendencies (and even in those without), polls commissioned by political campaigns can be used for a wide variety of non-democratic purposes, regardless of whether the data are fabricated. When released publicly, polls can be used to signal regime dominance and dissuade other players from entering the field. If they are fabricated, polling results released prior to a rigged election can be used as a *post-hoc* justification for the outcome of the election, a complaint common in the Georgian context, among losing parties.

The allegedly democratic incentives to carry out these polls differ greatly from the non-democratic ones. In the democratic set of poll uses, polls align with normative democratic theory in that they connect candidates to voters. Polls serve as a source of information for politicians, which shapes the behavior of those who carry out the polls. In these situations, the incentives for campaigns to have a strategic advantage over their competitors means that they do not release the data obtained to the public (and potentially not very widely within the party). On the other hand, there is usually an incentive to make public the results of the polls carried out (or fabricated) for non-democratic purposes, as the results serve as a mechanism of manipulation. One observable implication of this is theoretically that only campaigns that are behaving undemocratically will publicly release their campaign polls.

[9]Overall, as a pollster once told me, the overarching goal of every campaign is to win an election; however, recent work in the authoritarian politics literature has shown that simply winning may not be enough in the electoral context (Simpser 2013).

As the previous discussion highlights, campaigns can potentially play the role of all three actors in the poll production pipeline. However, most likely they play the role of funder, particularly when the polls are private.

Polling Agencies

Like political campaigns, polling agencies can also play multiple roles. Polling agencies themselves can fund their own public opinion work. Generally, they can do so because many of them run omnibus studies. In an omnibus study, different clients pay to add questions to a survey, and they also receive some demographic covariates. Polling agencies can choose to add questions that are not paid for by clients as their own proprietary additional questions to these studies. That is, while they charge each client money to add questions to an omnibus study, they can also decide that it is in their own interest to add further questions of their own choosing to their study.

Polling agencies' incentives to ask their own political questions is directly related to getting publicity (most commonly through media outlets) and raising their public profile to bring in more business, as interviews show. Polling agencies may also increase revenue by selling the data obtained from their own survey questions after they have carried out the survey in expectation of future demand. In less consolidated democratic environments where checks and balances on polling are minimal (though this also happens in the U.S.), polling agencies can also be paid off to release untrue results, which elites think can help influence the outcome of an election in their favor through turnout suppression, bandwagoning, or other electoral mechanisms. In these cases, polling agencies are not the true funders, but only appear to be the funders. Since polling firms can have incentives to release either manipulated or un-manipulated results, it is unclear whether their results are reliable.

Academic Institutions

Universities also sponsor political public opinion polls and many of these ask specific questions about democracy and elections, and are often run during election cycles. Some well-known examples of these in developing countries are large, cross-national projects, such as the World Values Survey (WVS),[10] which originated at the University of Michigan (and now has its own independent governing association), the Afrobarometer,[11] run out of Michigan State University, or the AmericasBarometer[12] run out of Vanderbilt University. Individual researchers at academic institutions may also carry out one-off or limited surveys in a country around elections (see Gibson and Long 2009).

The stated goals of most of these polls is to increase our knowledge about the way politics works in the countries surveyed and to compare them to one another (if the result is cross-national) (see Bratton, Gyimah-Boadi, and Mattes 2005; Seligson 2008). Given this goal, unsurprisingly, most of these cross-national studies have long planning and implementation horizons and they are generally not carried out during the election cycle. One-off studies, however, are more likely to be carried out during an election, but only if they deal with election related issue.

Almost all of these surveys are either paid for by western, well-funded, and/or state-funded scientific foundations, such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the United States, or by western development organizations, such as USAID. However, the academic institutions themselves fund the polls, making them the first-order funder. Sometimes they also implement the polls, and while increasingly they release the results because of academic

[10] http://www.worldvaluessurvey.us/

[11] http://www.afrobarometer.org/

[12] http://americasbarometer.org

replication policies, they almost never do so before the election results occur.[13]

Media

Finally, as is most common in a Western context, media can fund public opinion polling before an election, and is also the main vehicle for the dissemination of polling results to the general population, though not necessarily to elites. Of course, media environments vary by country, and the relative role of various media sources will be country specific (see Plasser and Plasser 2002). When they do finance public opinion polling, the incentives for the media to carry out such polls in developing countries (beyond the *benevolence assumption* are substantially similar to those in developed countries: polling drives increased media circulation, and circulation, in turn, drives advertising revenues. In my discussions with polling firms in Kenya, the polling agencies explained that profit incentives were the expressed reason why media houses paid them for polls: media houses thought opinion polls attracted readership.

As seen in Figure 3.3, media almost never have in house implementation teams for polling. Therefore, they contract with implementers to carry out the fieldwork and then release the results.

3.0.4 Summarizing the Roles

The discussion of funders, implementers, and disseminators demonstrates that the polling information reported in the media or otherwise publicly disseminated is potentially only a small percentage of such data that are available, and may also be only a small portion of the polling information many elites receive. Moreover, the polls that end up in the media are

[13] In most developing countries, domestic universities do not have the infrastructure or the financial capability to fund studies, though these universities may serve as implementing partners for the large cross-national surveys. Therefore, under the current classification system I group the two (foreign and domestic academic institutions) together.

not an unbiased sample of the total available polls. What generally is disseminated in the media are studies that are funded by the media themselves or by polling companies in order to get more publicity. Two other sources also potentially enter the public sphere: NGOs and political parties themselves. However, two additional sources of information elites have that often do not end up in the press. The government always has a bias in their favor if they fund their own public opinion. Academic and foreign government funded polls usually have no direct domestic impact among elites or citizens.

3.1 Manipulated Polls: A Reprise

Returning to Figure 3.2, it is important to reiterate that there are two main possible mechanisms through which inaccurate results are achieved, one of which is pictured in the decision tree and the other which is not. The first is that there is a problem in the data collection or estimating process that occurred not as a result of purposive bias on the part of the study implementer. I call this an *inaccurate* but not a manipulated poll.[14]

Second, as highlighted in the decision tree, purposive manipulation can occur. Any of the funders can potentially pay implementers to manipulate polling data, or they can potentially manipulate the polling data themselves. From a theoretical perspective, political campaigns have the most incentive to fund manipulated polling data. A typical refrain among many politicians I talked to, particularly in Kenya, is that their competitors purchased manipulated polling data to make available to the public. Purchasing manipulated polling data, especially data that include horse race (who is going to win the election) or likability numbers, serves two key purposes.

The first advantage of manipulated polling data that demonstrates one candidate is ahead

[14]It is important to note that as a result of a poll being inaccurate, different actors can accuse the implementer (or funder) of manipulating the result. This was clearly the case in Georgia in the run-up to the 2013 elections.

signals strong support before the election, a theme I will return to in Chapter 6. Being ahead may have two advantages for a candidate. First, it may persuade other candidates to either not campaign or drop out of the race. Second, being ahead may demonstrate to voters who do not support the candidate projected to win in the poll the popularity of the candidate. As a result, citizens may choose to bandwagon behind the winner or stay at home.

The second advantage of manipulated polling data is that it can provide an *ex-ante* demonstration that an election was not manipulated, if the actual election result coincides with the study carried out before the election. That is, politician could pay an implementer to achieve a result that she knows will be similar to the outcome she will announce since she knows *ex-ante* the manipulated outcome of the election.[15]

The first type of electoral manipulation can provide a very cheap substitute for electoral manipulation (Simpser 2013) and is potentially available to politicians who themselves cannot afford to engage in electoral manipulation. Manipulated polling distorts the informational environment around the campaign, and these distortions can be useful to politicians, if they believe these distortions will change the outcome of the election to their advantage. Others of the funders and implementers, however, can also have incentives to manipulate results if they want to curry favor with one party or another, and they think that party would want to see manipulated information rather than the best approximation of the truth.

[15]While this may seem like a convoluted logic, empirically this is a common response among politicians, particularly in my interviews in Georgia.

Chapter 4

CROSS-NATIONAL CORRELATES OF POLITICAL POLLING

As seen in Chapter 1 and visualized in Figure 1.1, data show a monotonic increase in public opinion polling throughout the world. However, it is unlikely that this growth in public opinion polling is randomly assigned. Before examining how elites interact with data, it is useful to put each country within the global context and to discuss the structural variables, which are correlated with the presence and intensity of political public opinion polling in any given country in any given year.[1]

To simplify the situation, let us imagine that we are discussing the presence or absence of publicly available polling data in a country during an election cycle. In reality, this variable is actually a count variable, since the number of publicly available polls often matter, but it may be that we only observe a zero or a one — as in the NELDA data, and we only observe the absence or presence of publicly available polling.

In the following sections, I hypothesize the variables that are correlated with both the presence and the intensity of polling, if polling is legal. First, I discuss the legality of polling. Next, I present the theoretical relationship between seven types of variables: wealth, foreign aid, diversity, diffusion, institutional design, level of democracy, and time.

4.0.1 Polling Bans

Before it is possible to discuss the correlates of public opinion polling, it necessary to discuss the fact that electoral polls are illegal in some countries. Indeed, one may ask: Why do elites

[1]Further modeling could examine the causal effect.

permit public opinion polls to be carried out, if those polls could go against them? From a decision-making perspective, then, before funders can fund polls, an incumbent regime has to make a decision about whether to allow or disallow polls.

Polls are banned regularly (Plasser and Plasser 2002). These bans may involve laws passed by the relevant law-making bodies or they may be *de-facto* bans. With regard to legal bans, Singapore, for example, bans public opinion polling for the entire campaign period and Lithuania also used to do so (Spangenberg 2003).[2] In practice, *de facto* bans often involve legal requirements for permissions to be obtained for the carrying out of of each individual public opinion poll — such as permission from the national statistics bureau — and this permission is simply not granted.[3]

There are at least three important reasons that elites do not ban polls. First, there may exist institutional constraints on doing so. Often constitutions have freedom of speech clauses, and, under some interpretations, these freedom of speech clauses can prevent elites from putting poll bans into place. Second, disallowing polls comes with a potentially high social cost in that the ban itself signals an unfree country. Third, there may be either a rational calculation or perhaps a miscalculation on the part of the incumbent that they benefit from polls around elections more than the opposition does. One reason this may be the case is that incumbents may have more money to invest in research and believe that publicly announcing these results will increase bandwagon effects.

While the majority of countries do allow electoral polling, the significant existence of bans must mean that structural models of polling presence or absence must take into consideration

[2]While outright bans on pre-election polling are often associated with a high degree of authoritarianism, many of these regimes with bans do have contested elections. Many more competitive democracies have shorter term bans on political polls. These bans tend to change in length with relative frequency as documented by a series of WAPOR studies (see also Plasser and Plasser 2002), and I do not discuss these here.

[3]This is often the case in Azerbaijan, for example.

that some zeros are "structural" zeros because it is legally impossible for polls to be carried out. Another way of saying this in the language of statistics is that any model should account for the zero-inflation in a measure in the density of polling — given that polls are banned in some places — or at a minimum discuss how the zero-inflation changes the interpretation of the data.[4]

After we account for polling bans and consider all of the cases where it is possible to carry out polls, the presence and density vary. Like election observation (Hyde 2011*a*), it is unlikely that public opinion polls are randomly assigned. What then are the covariates that likely determine the presence (or density) of political public opinion polling?

4.0.2 Correlates of Polling Density

Wealth

In almost all models in political science of technology or policy adoption, wealth is an important correlate (e.g., Baccini and Koenig-Archibugi 2014; Berliner and Erlich 2015; Simmons and Elkins 2004). Two reasons are important to note with respect to the correlation between wealth and polling. First, like many other election related activities, polling is expensive, so countries which have less money, will, overall, be able to afford less polling. Not only overall wealth but per capita income should also matter, particularly among the upper quintile of the population. Wealthy elites often fund NGOs and other types of organizations that may carry out public opinion polling, so their wealth can directly help fund poll.

Second, and specifically related to public opinion polling, a country's wealth may serve as a good proxy of a country's statistical infrastructure. Most developing countries do not have reasonable sampling frames or census data and, while cell phone penetration is increasing,

[4]Another option is omit these observations from an analysis of whether polls occur, restricting the sample to where they could occur. However, time series data on poll bans do not exist, so I am not able to fully model this in this chapter.

often it is difficult to obtain a random sample that can be weighted back to population estimates because population estimates are poor. Therefore, interviewing must occur face-to-face. Carrying out face-to-face studies is more expensive than in places where good phone lists and population data are available because random digit dialing (RDD) can be carried out. In other words, polling is often more expensive in developing countries then it is in developed countries, despite the lower labor costs.

Therefore, the overall presence of polling should be related both to the ease of data collection and the relative wealth of the country (an particularly a country's elites). The two of these variables are usually correlated and in practice can often be proxied for by GDP and GDP per capita, where an increase in both of these variables should be associated with an increase in public opinion polling.

Foreign Aid

As my research shows (see Chapters 6 and 7), like in election observation where foreign aid contributes to domestic (Kelley 2012) and international (Hyde 2011*b*) election observation, foreign aid also often contributes to the presence of publicly available polls. Funders generally give money to international or domestic NGOs to carry out studies. These studies are used for a variety of reasons, including providing the electorate with information about the upcoming elections. Therefore, it is likely that without this funding polls will often not be carried out. As in other models a measure of overseas democracy assistance (ODA) should serve as a proxy for foreign aid that contributes to polling and an increase in ODA should be associated with the increase in political public opinion polling.

Diversity

Societies differ in their level of heterogeneity. Given that priors of politicians and international funders will likely vary substantially by the amount of societal heterogeneity and the difficulty in reaching and talking to subjects (for more see Chapter 5), the overall demand for polling data is likely to be greater in geographically and socially diverse societies.

In other words, as scholars have pointed out that, even without polling data, cues abound for candidates to judge their overall level of support among voters (Popkin 1991). Such cues include previous election outcomes, ethnicity or tribal affiliation of voters, and, for incumbents, the amount of anti-incumbent protest, to name just a few. In environments where these signals are weaker, polling may play a more important role than where these cues provide high levels of information about the outcome of the election. In principle measures of ethnic diversity or politically relevant ethnic diversity (Posner 2004) and population density (Herbst 2000) may serve as reasonable proxies for the idea that an increase in such diversity increases the likelihood of polling, all else equal.

Diffusion

In recent years scholars have focused on how processes such as democratization diffuse across state borders (Beissinger 2007; Gleditsch and Ward 2006). Diffusion is likely to occur among political polling as well. Indeed, it is likely that pollsters within a region learn from one another. One mechanism that would encourage this diffusion that that, often, polling agencies have regional offices to serve multi-country geographic areas. For example. many polling agencies have an office in Nairobi that serves Tanzania and Uganda. Similarly pollsters in Georgia often serve the greater Caucasus.

Figure 4.1 visualizes the spatial diffusion of polling in Africa. As seen in the map, polling first appears to spread through the southern cone of African and then into East Africa. West

Africa, however, has seen little polling.

Institutional Design

The specific institutional design of an electoral democracy may impact the polling environment. To further unpack how type of electoral democracy should impact polling, let us examine the simplified two by two table of whether the election is first past the post (FPTP) or proportional (with party lists) and whether it is presidential or parliamentary as seen in Table 4.1.

Presidential, Proportional	Presidential, FPTP
Parliamentary, Proportional	Parliamentary, FPTP

Table 4.1: Types of elections

These different types of institutional structures should yield different polling densities. First, In the case where there is a presidential and proportional system, then there are returns to scale for all types of funders to support polling results since the outcome of a presidential race and a nationwide proportional race should be highly correlated and the same population can be sampled and asked both a question about presidential choice and party choice, if the elections occur at the same time. Implementing such studies is also easy since only one national sample is needed. Finally, dissemination of these results is also rather straightforward, since national papers can easily cover the national race. Cases that fit easily

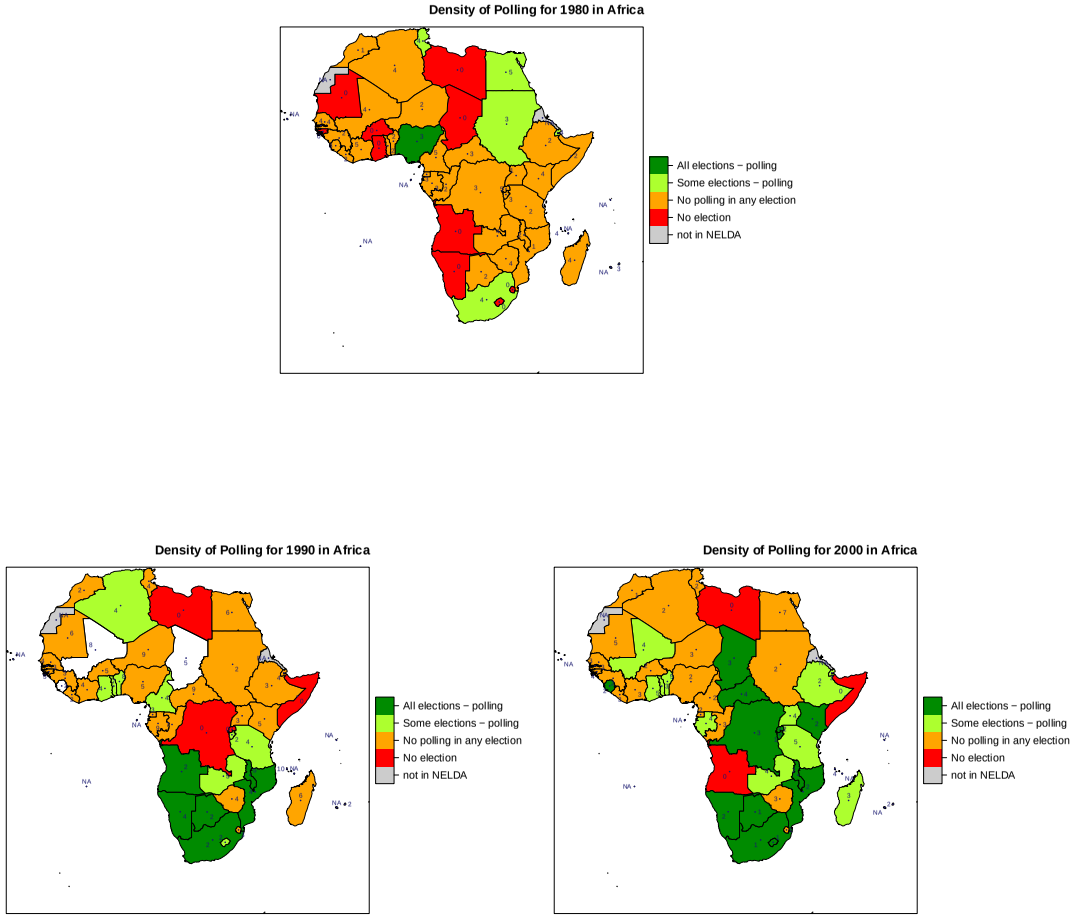

Figure 4.1: The presence of polling by decade from NELDA in Africa, with the number of elections held in each country printed inside the box. White means that the datum is missing

into this category include a variety of Latin American countries such as Uruguay.[5]

Second, in a FPTP system, with a president elected by direct national ballot, while there are strong reasons to poll for the executive race, the information from any individual legislative candidate's race is often weakly correlated with the information needed for a presidential race, which leads to fewer returns to scale. In effect, different populations need to be sampled to get predictions about each FPTP race, as compared to a national ballot for the presidency.

In this situation, for all non-campaign funders (besides the candidates themselves), there is less incentive to try to predict individual legislative seats, since it is costly.[6] Indeed, from a measurement perspective one number that measures the presence or absence of polling in FPTP legislative elections makes little sense. Individual candidates in a FPTP system likely care less about aggregate polling data, unless they believe that their constituency behaves like national averages. Since this is rarely the case, measuring the presence or absence of polling in a FPTP legislative election raises measurement challenges because some of the candidates could have reliable polling for their district while other candidates may not. In fact, it is unclear what it means to have national polling in a FPTP legislative race except in a very abstract sense. Media also have less incentive to disseminate local level results since the catchment area for any one race is small. Cases that easily fit into this category are a variety of presidential regimes in Africa, such as Kenya.

Third, in a FTPT parliamentary system, polling during the electoral cycle is less likely to occur, theoretically. There are no national races, so funders, in order to get accurate predictions about the outcome or other information nationally, need n number of predictions,

[5]Other countries, such as Bolivia and Georgia before 2012 have this system for some deputies but have a FPTP system for other deputies.

[6]From a fieldwork perspective, getting predictions for the distribution of Parliamentary seats requires separate samples in all constituencies (or fancy matching algorithms) which are very expensive.

where $\hat{n}$ is the number of legislative seats or a representative sample of these seats. This is the case in the United Kingdom, for example. Like in the Presidential FPTP systems, the individual campaigns of the FPTP have the largest incentives to carry out polls, but other funders, particularly those interested at the national level, have fewer incentives.

Fourth, for the parliamentary-proportional systems, there is again in effect one national race, so polling can occur on the national level to garner relevant information. However, individual politicians have little incentive to carry out public opinion polling because they are placed on a party list, so the outcome for them as an individual has little to do with their own effort. Therefore, the party should be more interested in funding polling, as are all other funders on the national level, while individual candidates should have little interest in funding polling. Regimes that fit into this category include many of the European democracies such as Belgium or Denmark.

The varying incentives existent in different types of democracies mean that all else equal, the likelihood of witnessing polling on the national level should be systematically related to the type of democracy. While there are many mixed systems and institutional variation, on average, we would expect that there would be a hierarchy of polling saturation depending on regime type.[7]

Presidential,Proportional > Parliamentary, Proportional >= Presidential, FPTP > Parliamentary, FPTP

In summary, the overall intensity of polling data should be a function of a variety of institutional variables. Nested within this overall intensity of polling is any one individuals decision to poll.

The previous discussion of type of electoral democracy has suggested two further implications of the overall level of polling. First, the levels at which a race determines the intensity

[7]In a federal system, this would have to be at the level of the federal unit.

of polling in any one race. All else equal, the smaller the geographical unit, the less polling will occur. This is in line Gandhi and Lust-Okar's (2009, 413) suggestion that ruling elites mobilize more for elections in which the head of state is elected. Part of this mobilization should see more intense polling. One proxy for this is whether the election was for legislative or executive office, where we would expect to see more polling for executive elections, all else equal.

Level of Democracy

The level of democracy should be related to polling for two sets of reasons. First, as levels of democracy increase, politicians should have more incentive to understand their electorate. For this reason, the level of democracy should be positively correlated with polling.

Second, it is also important to note that the set of available strategies elites can use to react to polls available in any country at any one time is varied.[8] That is, at different levels of democracy, elites have different strategy sets to respond to polls and this could affect the overall presence of polling. In a wide ranges of democracies, the possible responses by both aspirants and incumbents are limited by the credible enforcement of the law or cultural or social norms. Not all options are available to all actors any time.

Theoretically, These strategy sets are highly correlated with the type of electoral regime. For the sake of simplification, let us view democracy as one underlying latent trait. At low levels of democracy, incumbents would have a very large strategy set and aspirants very few options. These regimes tend to be authoritarian but hold elections. Therefore, the incumbents possess an entire "menu of manipulation" (Schedler 2002) available to them, and this could include manipulating public opinion polls to their advantage — particularly if they believe their electorate will bandwagon off political opinion polls, a proposition suggested in

[8]This differs than most formal approaches to such issues where a specified set of strategies is available (i.e., Guriev and Treisman 2015).

Chapter 6. This idea suggests that at low levels of democracy, there may be an advantage for incumbents to introduce polling.

Then, as levels of democracy go up, the set of strategies for both incumbents and aspirants tends to be large. For example, in Kenya, with its middle level of democracy, vote-buying and turnout suppression are strategies that both incumbents and aspirants can attempt. And they can potentially react to polling data by engaging in more or less of this activity. However, some strategies, like changes in the electoral laws themselves generally only remain available to the ruling party itself. At this level of democracy, it may be that there is less demand for the incumbent to disseminated manipulated public opinion polling.

However, at high levels of democracy, the strategy sets for both elites and aspirants are smaller. For example, pre-election violence and intimidation is not possible for either incumbents in Scandinavian countries or other highly consolidated democracies. Hence, we can think of any of the strategies that elites have as a result of receiving public polling information as independent of the provision of public opinion polling.

Therefore, while the exact theoretical expectation as this relates to polling is unclear for publicly available polling, it is likely that polling will increase as democracy increases from lower levels but that increase may attenuate at higher levels. Therefore, adding a variable such as POLITY (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2002) is important in any model of polling and a squared term could allow for attenuation at higher levels of democracy.

Time

The duration of time that polling has been in a country should also matter, as politicians become more accustomed to such data. Many MPs in Kenya, for example, simply explained to me that they do not understand that process of generalization from a sample. However, many noted despite this, the repeated exposure to polling has made it appear more reliable

over time. It follows that the continual presence of polling in a country will lead to less discrediting of the results over time, all else, equal just because the use of the scientific principles of polling become embedded in a society. Conversely, it may be that in early years of polling, politicians simply do not believe that polls work, and, therefore, there is no need to outlaw them.

4.1 Basic Model Setup

Since there are widely varying number of elections in which public opinion polling could be held, it is difficult to implement many time series methods for NELDA data. For the time being, we could specify a simple logistic statistical model as a base model, where I include variables that are currently available.[9]

$$\mathbf{P}(\text{Observed} = 1|\mathbf{x}_i)) = 1/(1 + e^{-x_i\beta})$$

where

$$\mathbf{x}\beta = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Wealth} + \beta_2 \text{ForeignAid} + \beta_3 \text{InsitutionalDesign} + \beta_4 \text{Democracy} + \beta_5 \text{Year}$$

I generate a set of preliminary statistical models to measure the correlates of polling using publicly available data. However, these models need to be expanded to include polling bans and to account for different types of diffusion and temporal lags. Models 1-3 present logistic regressions where the presence of polling (0-1) is the outcome variable for all years from 1960 onwards, while Model 4-6 present these regressions on a restricted subset of the data after 1990, where data on ODA is present.

The only variable that is statistically robust across all specifications is the level of democ-

[9]Further work could add and refine this.

racy, suggesting that polling is potentially part of a package of activities that accompany democracy (Lipset 1959). Indeed, the various models find that the marginal effect, holding all other variables constant their means of a one unit increase in the Polity2 score increases the predicted probability that a poll will occur by between two and three percent. This finding is supported by Moreno (1996) who finds the opinion polls also grew with Mexico's democratization. Moreover, this effect does not appear to taper off at the highest level of democracy, as witnessed by lack substantive or statistical significance of the Polity2 squared term.

Despite the lack of statistical significance, the signs on all of the other theorized variables are in line with theory — and many are significant in models that include all years — suggesting that perhaps there are not enough country years in the world to measure the hypothesized correlation. In the full sample, the presence of polling is statistically significant and correlated with measures of wealth and the type of election, with executive elections (the base category) being more likely to witness polling as compared to legislative elections.[10] More work, however, needs to be done to isolate the variables that may be more causally related to polling and to account for spatial diffusion.

4.2 Conclusion

As I show in Chapter 4, polling has quickly expanded across the globe. However, this expansion is not randomly assigned: macro level variables should matter in the context of polling. Indeed, it appears that polling is part of a democratic packages that appears as countries become more democratic.

Yet, as polling appears in newly democratized countries, what effects does it have on

[10]Further models could potentially take into consideration type of election. However, this is omitted for the time being. The current models also do not take into consideration a measure of fractionalization and total population size, which further models may also include.

political elites? In order to better understand how polling impacts these elites once it is present, I first develop theory related to elite reaction public opinion data in Chapter 5. Then, I conduct a within-country case study in the country Georgia to focus on within regime variation. The results of this case study are presented in Chapter 6.

	Full Sample			Post 1990		
	m1	m2	m3	m4	m5	m6
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Executive (reference)						
Constituent Assembly	-1.03	-1.12	-1.19	-0.03	0.11	0.03
	(0.65)	(0.67)	(0.65)	(0.82)	(0.84)	(0.89)
Legislative/Parliamentary	-0.45*	-0.45*	-0.45*	-0.32	-0.26	-0.25
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.24)	(0.23)	(0.23)
GDP (log)	0.30*	0.28*	0.28*	0.21	0.23	0.23
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)
GDP Per Capita (log)	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.07	0.07	0.09
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Year	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*	-0.00	-0.01	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Polity2 $(t-1)$	0.11*	0.11*	0.11*	0.12*	0.12*	0.12*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Polity2^2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
US Cold War Ally		0.24	0.25			0.09
		(0.29)	(0.29)			(0.38)
Uncertain Type			0.23			0.50
			(0.20)			(0.30)
Democracy & Governance ODA					1.60	1.53
					(1.37)	(1.41)
Constant	-81.52*	-87.48*	-88.28*	0.25	16.00	-10.34
	(20.12)	(20.60)	(20.88)	(44.99)	(45.89)	(47.66)
AIC	1397	1397	1397	623	616	616
BIC	1439	1444	1449	658	655	664
N	1390	1390	1390	585	579	579

Table 4.2: Logistic regressions where the dependent variable is a binary variable measuring the presence of pre-electoral public opinion polling data. In all regressions standard errors are clustered at the country level.

Chapter 5

A THEORY OF ELITE REACTION TO POLLS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I argue that understanding political polling can play a key role in the informational environment in developing countries. Chapter 3 then identifies the actors involved on the ground involved in the polling process. Chapter 4 takes a step back to ask how polling spread and expanded into many different states and develops my macro claim about the structural variables that affect the presence of public opinion polling data.

In this chapter, I argue that many developing democracies substantially differ from consolidated political landscapes with regards to public opinion data and belief formation. I argue that in contrast to consolidated democracies, in developing democracies it cannot be take for granted that elites see the utility of public opinion data or use it in their election campaigns.

While politicians in a Western context may make disparaging comments about public opinion polls, particularly horse race numbers, however, there are now very few campaigns that do not have opinion and social research data at their hearts. While some of this polling in consolidated democracies may focus on framing and marketing the campaign and candidate, much of the polling is dedicated to better understanding the electorate, so politicians can have informed beliefs. This usage of data is generally premised on the belief that data are trustworthy and can be relied upon.

Contrary to this state of affairs, in consolidated democracies, I argue theoretically and confirm empirically, that how politicians come to form their beliefs about the electorate

in developing democracies varies widely. More specifically, attitudes towards using public opinion polling data as a source to understand their electorate varies substantially. This variation in politicians' beliefs about where to obtain information about their electorate and their trust in public opinion polling data begs important research questions. Once public opinion polls are present, how do politicians decide whether or not to trust this information? Do public opinion polls change the way that politicians draw inferences about their own electorate? And how do parties fight over the data that becomes publicly available? Finally, what do they believe the impact of publicly available data is?

Since Putnam (1973) wrote *The Beliefs of Politicians*, few researchers have systematically tried to theorize and research about politicians outside of the United States to understand how they come to generate their beliefs. An even smaller subset of academic work has specifically addressed the beliefs of politicians in non-consolidated democracies, and, in particular, almost no work has addressed how politicians form beliefs about issues related to public opinion. If trust in data varies across politicians, then how they come to form beliefs about their electoral environment, specifically, and politics, generally, may differ.

Hence, I argue that trust in data among politicians is an important variable that comes early in the causal pathway developed by Putnam and referred to in Chapter 1. That is, whether politicians believe that data obtained from public opinion polling is trustworthy may fundamentally shape the way politicians understand their electorate's viewpoints and desires or their own electoral chances. It may also affect how they publicly react to polling data.

Trust in polling result validity → Beliefs about current state of electorate

What then causes this variation in trust in public opinion data?

To preview the theory, in this chapter I draw on the literature from American politics to argue that politician's trust is determined by their prior beliefs, the source of the data, and the psychological biases they bring to political life. This argument leads to further hypothesize that three types of variables correlate with the above-mentioned factors . These correlates are party, constituency, and individual-level characteristics. I investigate this theory in relation to two outcomes: trust in data's efficacy and public reaction to public data.

With respect to both public and private data's efficacy, from a party perspective I argue that, because of power dynamics in developing country environments, particularly ones with hybrid or authoritarian tendencies, trust is usually politicized across party lines, and the incumbent party will have a more favorable view of data, on average. In contexts where constituency size and heterogeneity varies, elites in smaller and more homogeneous constituencies will feel less compelled to use public opinion data because their priors are much stronger. On the individual level, typical covariates such as age and education should matter, particularly in contexts, such as the former Soviet Union, where age is synonymous with time spent socialized under authoritarian rule. These covariates affect their prior beliefs and the type of psychological biases they are likely to hold.

With regard to public reaction to public data, I hypothesize, that generally, in many developing contexts, publicly announced data will become a form of information warfare, with each publicly available poll being cast as supporting the opposition or the incumbent. The politicization of this data, I argue is based on the presence of widespread beliefs that data has the power to create large bandwagoning effects.

From a policy perspective, for democracy-building NGOs and funders, my argument elucidates the importance of working across political parties to deepen their use of and trust in information about citizens' well-being and to actually engage them in the process

of generating data themselves, so that they learn its utility. Such work may make it less likely that publicly available polls will be politicized, given the extent of the belief in the bandwagoning effect. It also points to the fact the we should expect different types of strategy in different types of constituencies and a one size fits all approach may not work.

5.2 Literature Review

5.2.1 Who are the Elite and What is a Belief?

Discussing how political elites come to believe what they do about the world is subject to a series of definitional challenges. First, the concept of "political elite" itself has been the topic of serious debate centering on how to define a political elite (Zuckerman 1977), and how this term differs from politicians, which is also used, often interchangeably (which I will also do). For this study, the scope of which only extends to democracies, I constrain my definition of elite to mean people who desire to hold political power and have a reasonable chance of obtaining it. This means that I not only include office holders but also individuals who run for office. That way my definition coincides with Dahl's, who wrote that "political elites" are "a small stratum of individuals [that] is much more highly involved in political thought, discussion, and action than the rest of the population." (Dahl 1961, 90).[1]

I conceive of a belief as a mathematical expectation with a continuous distributional form. In the context of this project, for elites, expectations can be about whether they are winning or losing their current race for office or about what they think their electorate wants from them.

[1]This is a different conception of political elite that emerges from scholars who study authoritarian regimes and based on the Scholars from Pareto and Mosca and could, which could also be applied to Georgia (see Chiaberashvili and Tevzadze 2005).

5.2.2 Who Influences Elite Beliefs?

While the literature is relatively silent on the *belief* formation of politicians, there does exist a large body of quantitative research, particularly in American politics, that seeks to understand how elite *opinion* forms non-elite individual opinion (Zaller 1990; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Gabel and Scheve 2007). Many scholars in this literature have noted the causal arrow operating in other direction. Gabel and Scheve (2007, 1014) rightly point out it is unclear from many of the studies of elite opinion whether public opinion may be an important determinant of elite opinion.[2] However, there is very little quantitative evidence about how elite opinion itself is formed, and, moreover, this literature tends to be in American politics, particularly in American foreign policy.

While opinions and beliefs differ, the same type of logic should hold for beliefs. It is unclear whether non-elite beliefs impact elite beliefs. For example, it may be the case that Donald Trump's belief that Obama is not a U.S. citizen impacts American citizens' views about the issue. However, the earlier question then remains: what causes Donald Trump to form this belief about Obama? Of course, it could have been that he knew that many citizens believed that Obama was not a citizen, and so he formed his belief, impacted by other Americans! Hence, one key to understanding elite belief is how they choose to synthesize what their constituents believe.

5.2.3 Source Choice

One major variable, which will determine a politician's beliefs about her electorate will be her choice of information sources. The foreign policy literature has most fully explored the topic of source credibility. This literature seeks to understand when public opinion should

[2]In their review of the literature Baum and Potter (2008) also highlight the bi-directional relationship between the general public opinion and elite opinions.

be taken into consideration on issues of foreign policy, and, if public opinion should be taken into consideration, what form of public opinion data should be considered representative. As Foyle (1997, 144) writes, the linkage between elite and public opinion "raises the question of what elites view as representative of public opinion."

While the foreign policy context differs slightly from that of electoral cycles, it is worth noting that the categorization of sources used to gauge public opinion about foreign policy are germane to elections; they include: public opinion polls, letters, editorial opinion, and others (Powlick 1995; Foyle 1997).[3] These sources identified by Powlick and Foyle would be grouped together by Cohen (1973) as the "faceless" public. Indeed, Cohen (1973, 79) makes the distinction between "identifiable" and "faceless" sources.[4]

In the context of election cycles, particularly in developing countries, elites choose between all of the above "faceless" sources and social interaction with their own constituents, which are "identifiable." In other words, they are often choosing to trust beliefs formed in meetings with citizens or social interaction with those they know from their constituency, rather than data from formalized public opinion polls or even letters from constituents.[5]

5.2.4 Reaction to Data

Whether elites choose to believe public opinion data will be based on their cognitive predisposition or prior beliefs about how reliable other sources of public opinion are in comparison with public opinion polling. Once political elites engage with data, it is likely they are subject to the same types of biases as are average citizens, particularly those two that Taber and

[3]For instance, Powlick (1995) identified the "general or mass public" as only one of five groups that foreign policy elites are interested in. U.S. President Ronald Reagan used the votes in Congress has a proxy for public opinion (Sobel 1993).

[4]He further denotes the identifiable into three sub-categories, "Intimates," "Specialists," and "Institutions."

[5]These are often non-existent in Georgia and many other developing countries.

Lodge (2006) call "motivated-reasoning:"[6] Given the high costs of changing their campaign platform and strategy, it is likely that politicians will suffer from *confirmation* and *disconfirmation* bias. That is, politicians will most likely accept data that confirms their existing beliefs and argue with data that disconfirms their beliefs. This is particularly true of public data that they did not themselves collect.

5.3 Theory

Behavioral reactions

To clarify how the aforementioned literatures apply specifically to elites in developing countries, with respect to the impact of polls, I classify two different types of behavior. The first type relates to candidates' internal changes in beliefs. They second relates to how elites publicly respond to a public poll. The public response is, of course, partially dependent on whether elites privately update their beliefs.

Hence, I make a conceptual distinction between internal belief change and public reaction to data. Belief change can be assessed based on how politicians change their strategy dependent on new information they receive. That is, if elites adjust their own internal campaign strategies based on the polling information received, then they clearly have viewed this data as trustworthy and believe the results. Theoretically, this behavior should provide us much more understanding of how an elite sees her own position in the race, because her behavior should reveal her true understanding of her own position.

Secondly, we have public reaction to the data, which refers to elites' strategies for reacting to public opinion data in public. In other words, what strategies do elites use to respond to data put out in the public sphere? These reactions will be, by nature, harder to interpret, because elites have a large incentive to be deceptive in their reaction to such data.

[6] Also see Redlawsk (2002); Slothuus and de Vreese (2010).

5.3.1 Belief Determination

Elites' internal strategic response to choosing either to collect or observe data and how they respond to it will first be dependent on their prior beliefs. As a practitioner in the U.S. context put it straightforwardly, "All things being equal, knowledge of poll results will have less impact on participants who 'do not trust polls' and more impact on participants who tend to believe the accuracy of results" (Hickman 1991, 108). I state this as H1:

> H1: The strength of a politician's prior beliefs about the issues addressed in a public opinion poll and her priors about the utility of polling will affect whether she believes it to be worthwhile to collect public opinion data and how she responds or interprets polling data, once it is collected.

The corollary to H1 is that, in political systems such as Georgia and Kenya with first-past the post constituencies, priors will vary by constituency composition and size. In smaller and more homogeneous constituencies, where communities are often tight knit, it is expected that politicians will have stronger prior beliefs about their constituents. Therefore, they will have a diminished perception of the expected utility of collecting public opinion data. They will also be less likely to perceive the need to privately collect public opinion data, and even if it is publicly available, they are less likely to desire to interpet it.

> C1H1: Politicians in homogenous and smaller constituencies are likely to have stronger priors and, hence, feel less need to collect and interpret data.

Given that citizens in developing democracies may view — or at least be perceived by elites as viewing — the public opinion collection enterprise as untrustworthy and subject to manipulation, this will also impact elites' decisions on whether or not to privately collect opinion data or interpret a public poll. Since most of these developing countries emerged

from authoritarian contexts, where information was manipulated, it stands to reason that individual characteristics associated with previous experience would affect citizens' priors. In turn, elites' prior beliefs about citizens' priors will affect how much reliable information they believe they can actually garner from private or public polls.

> C2H1: Elites' priors about citizens' beliefs of the trustworthiness of public opinion data will be affected by elites' lived experience, with those who lived for a longer time under authoritarian regimes believing that the polling process is inherently less trustworthy because citizens will obfuscate their true beliefs.

Given their strategy sets, holding all else constant, it would stand to reason that elites would trust the data they themselves finance and fund first and foremost. If elites are paying people money to advise them with the help of collecting data, then it would it follow that elites should heavily discount other polls that they did not commission themselves. This is particularly true in countries with low levels of data collection regulation. In other words, while elites may change their behavior and internal strategy as a result of either private or public polls, they are more likely to do so as the result of private polls, because their priors lead them to believe that the data quality is higher. I state this as H2.

> H2: Priors about data quality will also be affected by who collected the data. Political elites will weight the data they collect themselves much more heavily in internal strategy decisions than they will other data, to which they have access, including all public data. They will tend to update their internal strategies based on private data more than on other data.

This argument suggests that when NGOs and other funders enter into an environment of a political campaign, they will have much less impact, if either individuals or parties are

themselves polling. The argument also has an important corollary about party level effects. The fact that a party carries out its own polls likely affects prior beliefs of any individual MP within that party, in that she will consider her party's polls, and, by extension, polls in general, to be more trustworthy than will MPs in parties who do not poll.

> C1H2: MPs in parties that poll will like have stronger priors about the trustworthiness of public opinion data and are hence more likely to trust it.

There is also a more subtle reason why elites would trust the polls they conducted themselves more than they would those conducted by other campaigns or funders documented above and update their strategies based on their collected data: The data collected specifically for campaign purposes is generally more actionable. Other people's data, in the way it is publicly disseminated, hides everything except for the distributional frequencies of answers to poll questions.[7] The elites (and their advisors) cannot see the correlational structure of the data that can potentially help them identify important sub-groups within the population or issues that are most pressing. Moreover, the questions in NGOs' polls, even if they do show the correlational structure, are often not focused on winning elections.

It should be noted that parties do not share data equally among all members of the party, and access is often restricted to party leadership. Even though regimes may hold democratic elections, the internal structure of the parties themselves are may be undemocratic, and party data not shared among all party candidates.

> C2H2: MPs in parties that poll will like have stronger priors about data quality and hence be more likely to trust it, conditional on having access to that party's data by virtue of being a member of the party's leadership.

[7] These are often known as the top-lines in the industry.

Beyond the source of the data and their priors, politicians, in forming their beliefs about polling data, are likely subject to same types of cognitive biases as are citizens. The stronger their priors, the greater the degree to which their beliefs are affected by these biases.

> H3: Given the existence of priors, politicians will also be subject to confirmation and disconfirmation bias in polls, choosing to believe data that confirms already held beliefs and choosing to argue with data that does not confirm their beliefs.

While determining whether to believe polls is a first step, the next step, (which needs to be held in mind but is not the subject of this Chapter) is how elites internally react to the polls. Of course, reactions should also depend on the timing of the release of the result and the magnitude of the gap between elites' expected level of performance and their performance in the polls. If we believe that, generally, electoral manipulation is a costly strategy, then — depending on what the strategy set is available to them — if the magnitude of difference between candidates' expectations and polls' current estimate of their support is small, candidates should choose to invest in campaigning or a similarly low-cost tactic to convince voters to turnout and/or vote for them. As a secondary set of strategies, they could invest money in the types of electoral manipulation open to them. Given that violence is a high risk and potentially costly strategy, politicians would only want to engage in fomenting pre-election violence if they felt that other strategies would not achieve their desired outcome and only violence would.

5.3.2 Public Reactions

Elites' public reaction to poll can provide leverage in understanding elites' perceptions of polls' impact on the electorate. As discussed above, the main choice elites have to make, with respect to a publicly available poll finding, is whether or not to attempt to discredit

the results. Moreover, it is important to remember that elites can choose to discredit a poll whether or not they privately believe that the results are trustworthy.

Theoretically, the decision to refute a public poll can be conceptualized in a cost-benefit analysis framework, where, ignoring future payoffs, for heuristic purposes, we can think of the net present value of discreditation simply being equal to the benefits of discreditation minus the costs. If the net present value is negative, then there should be no reason to publicly discredit polls.

I argue that for elites, the benefit of discrediting published polling data is a function of the size of the vote share they believe they will lose as result of citizens' beliefs in that data and the ensuing bandwagoning effect. In other words, because elites believe that some percentage of voters will inevitably align their vote with the candidate leading in a poll, the more of the vote share they believe they will lose as a result of the published poll finding, the greater the perceived benefit of discreditation.

Concretely, there are no benefits of criticizing the polls if the polls do not change individual behavior at all. That is, if a politician is going to receive 15 percent of the vote, regardless of whether she criticizes the poll, then better not to criticize. However, if a politician who is behind in the polls believes that polling numbers will result in a bandwagoning or similar effect to increase the vote share of the candidate who is ahead in the polls, then there is ample reason to attempt to discredit the polls. Conversely, it stands to reason that elites will never criticize polls when they are doing as well as they hoped. However, as Simpser (2013) documented, in the case of incumbents, just being in the lead may not be sufficient, so an incumbent party that expects a large — but has a small — lead in opinion polls may still choose to discredit that poll.

> H4: The benefits of discrediting a poll are the reduction in bandwagoning effects that can be accrued from criticizing the poll.

Three variables should feature into the cost to elites of discrediting a poll. The first variable is related to the reputation of the organization announcing the poll. The more reputable the organization, theoretically, the more costly it will be to undermine the poll's credibility, since the politician will have to convince citizens that she is more reputable than the pollster. Second, in the case of multiple polls that reach the same conclusion, it will be more costly to discredit any one poll on its own. Conversely, it should be easier to discredit one poll if the other polls do not accord with it. Third, elites whose campaigns are far behind in an electoral race may have more incentive to discredit polls regardless of the potential cost, because they have less to lose by doing so.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have started from the premise that in many developing democracies, elites' trust in polling data is not robust and, moreover, that their prior beliefs about the trustworthiness of polling data will determine whether they believe the polling information they receive. This, in turn, may lead elites to draw different inferences, or no inferences at all, about what their citizenry cares about and whether or not they have a realistic chance of winning an election from the polling data.

As I have argued in this chapter, even if political elites have access to the same polling data, politicians will interpret these polling data differently. In other words, all politicians have prior beliefs about their (and their party's) current position in an electoral contest, but these priors can differ from politician to politician. Hence, it is the combination of a politician's prior beliefs and the new information that determines a politician's reaction to it. On the one hand, it may often be that polling data has no causal impact on politicians' beliefs, either because their priors about the trustworthiness of data itself are weak or because their own prior beliefs about the outcome measured in the poll are strong before they receive

the data.

Hence, a politician's reaction to a poll is not merely the result of her reaction to the data she received, but may simply be a manifestation of her previously formed and unchanged (by this data) belief. This will always be a hypothetical however, since polling information is not randomly assigned to politicians. However, substantively, this means that we have to be cautious in emphasizing the impact of public opinion data, because we will believe that politicians have reacted as a result of the data and not of their already existing prior beliefs.This is likely particularly true in consolidated democracies, where elites' trust in both polls and their own priors is strong. One example of this is the revolution currently occurring in U.S. politics, where few question the efficacy of either public or private public opinion polling, though the pollsters do sometimes get it wrong.

I have further argued that in hybrid regimes that constitute most developing democracies, information may often play a different role than it does in regimes that are competitive, and one must think carefully about elites' incentives for trying to discredit public opinion polling data. There are often accusations of distortion of information, and information is often seen not as an approximation of truth, but also a tool of propaganda or a tool to promote bandwagoning effects.Therefore, the use of such information is often a topic of hot debate, and usage of and trust in public opinion data varies across parties in politicians.

Chapter 6

ELITES AND TRUST IN POLLING IN GEORGIA

To understand how these theoretical arguments work practice, I carry out an elite research project in a recently democratized post-Soviet state: the country of Georgia. In Georgia, I interview a representative sample of politicians from four electoral parliamentary cycles spanning a 17-year period. Additionally, for background (which also informs the rest of this project), I interview all the main polling implementers currently involved in political polling in Georgia, and individuals from some previous polling companies, which no longer exist. Finally, I interview officials from the most recent presidential campaigns.

To gain leverage on the current state of trust towards political data, in this chapter, I focus on my sample of MPs, as representative of the political elite and ask all politicians in my sample about their current trust towards data and seek to understand how that trust was constructed over time. Additionally, I also ask them about their use of that data in their own electoral cycles, since this is a behavioral implication of the theory I develop in Chapter 5.

The chapter proceeds in six sections. First, I highlight how Georgia fits within the structural model described in Chapter 4. Second, I describe the research design aimed at understanding political elites' trust in polls, but also a great deal about the campaign environment in which polls operate. Third, I then describe the four electoral contexts which my research covers. Fourth, I describe my findings qualitatively, using interview transcripts and descriptive statistics. Fifth, I show the results of a statistical model from my qualitative data to confirm my qualitative findings. Sixth, I draw conclusions from my findings.

To preview my findings, I show that in the Georgian context, my findings related to trust align with my theoretical expectations; more specifically, variables related to both party and constituency composition play outsized roles, while individual level variables play a less important role. Moreover, I find a monotonic increase in trust in public opinion data over time, particularly among opposition parties. This finding generally substantiates the idea that trust in polling comes with higher levels of democracy, as Georgia has become more democratic over time.

I also find, in line with theoretical expectations, that attempts to discredit polls are particularly prevalent among opposition parties. In the Georgian context, I find that politicians generally believe that bandwagoning effects exist and are substantively large. Moreover, the strength of the bandwagoning effect that politicians believe is at play increases incentives for opposition candidates to discredit the polls of the incumbents.

Contrary to my beliefs before carrying out the research, I also find that while elites' distrust of public opinion data stems from a fear that the data has been manipulated, elites' using public opinion data will increase their trust in the data over time. Indeed, in many countries, including Georgia, politicians enter politics having no experience with polling data.

I show in the Georgian context that exposure to polling information is related to two party variables and one individual variable. The first important party variable is the amount of polling that a party itself carries out. Second, as for example in the Georgian context, it matters who within the party has access to the polling data. Just because the party is carrying out polling does not mean that individuals, who are competing for parliamentary seats, have access to this data. Therefore, in line with theoretical expectations, the position of a politician within the party hierarchy in the Georgian context can play an important role.

On the individual level, I find additional rich support for the importance of elites' con-

struction of different prior beliefs about polling data's trustworthiness. In the Georgian context, for example, some elites have business backgrounds in competitive industries and have extensive experience in the use of behavioral and opinion data. This type of experience increased their trust in public opinion data.

6.1 Structural Context

Like many developing democracies, Georgia has had much flux in the institutional structure of its electoral system. For all the elections covered in this study, Georgia has had a Mixed-Member Parliamentary (MMP) system with strong presidential powers. During the period of study, Georgia's presidential elections were staggered and not held at the same time as the parliamentary elections.[1] There is also no replacement mechanism for the FPTP seats, so these seats are even more important than in some other systems. According to my schema presented in Chapter 4, then, from an institutional design perspective, the level of polling should be relatively high because of the intense competition for majoritarian seats and the presence of presidential elections, albeit staggered, because the earlier parliamentary elections are a signal for the upcoming presidential election.

Particularly since the Rose Revolution, Georgia has undergone rapid economic transformation, with strong GDP growth.[2] As the structural model in Chapter 4 posits, the level of public opinion polling should increase over time in Georgia due to the greater financial resources available. The relatively high prevalence of political opinion polling in Georgia may also be linked to the strong role NGOs have continued to play.[3]

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[1]Georgia is in the process of transitioning away from a presidential system to a system with strong powers for the Prime Minister.

[2]The Rose Revolution is probably the most written about event in the history of Georgia. For two books on the topic, see Mitchell (2009) and Hash-Gonzalez (2012).

[3]NGOs have had a robust presence in Georgia as a result of continued foreign aid relating to the Rose Revolution (which spurred aid by Western countries), as well as the 2008 war with Russia.

There is one mitigating factor that would indicate a lower presence of polling in the structural context of Georgia. Overall, Georgia will likely have less polling because the country is geographically small and increasingly homogenous, as ethnic minorities have left the country in large numbers after independence. As I discuss in the theory, constituency size and homogeneity should matter. Relatedly, in many FPTP, the population of constituencies varies greatly. Another way of stating this from a democratic theory perspective is that, within the FPTP system there is a high level of malapportionment (Samuels and Snyder 2001) among seats. In Georgia, the current system varies by orders of magnitude in size, with rural areas with small populations being overrepresented.[4] Often these rural constituencies are so small that the entire population of the constituency could not fill up many American high-school athletic stadiums, making elites presuppose they do not need to poll because they already know what their constituents believe.

6.2 Research Design

As I argue and show in Chapter 4, the structure of the political marketplace will have a large effect on the availability and usage of public opinion data. While structural level variables are important in determining the availability of polling, many variables that affect belief formation once polling occurs, will occur on both the party and individual level, as I argue in Chapter 5.

From a methodological perspective, I argue more time ought to be spent talking to politicians themselves, particularly outside of campaign cycles, as at these times politicians may be open to talking honestly about polling. There have been methodological critiques of this type of inductive research centering around politicians' incentives to lie. I propose

[4]For example, in 2013, within my sample, Lentekhi, the second smallest overall constituency, had 5968 voters. Samgori, one of the districts within Tbilisi (and the third largest overall) had 139,934 registered voters.

there is a strong case to be made to re-engage with politicians and that there are ways to alleviate some of the scholarly methodological concerns, particularly on topics such as polling. I engage two tactics aimed at obtaining accurate information. The first concerns question design. As I demonstrate in my study, asking retrospective questions can diminish, if not eliminate, politicians' incentive to lie. I also specifically refrain from asking politicians questions about their own fraud or other illegal behavior, and instead phrase my questions as pertaining to their beliefs and their experience campaigning. Second, my research design specifically takes into consideration that different politicians may have very different beliefs about the same electoral race, so I triangulate by sampling at the level of race, rather than at the level of individual.

Sample Design

In order to draw inferences about the political elite as a whole and examine cross-party use and trust of public opinion data over time, I develop a research design to target a cross-section of Georgia's political elite. To do so, I select a stratified random sample of 14 constituencies for first-past-the-post seats within Georgia over four election cycles (1999, 2003, 2008, and 2012). I then attempt to contact all politicians who obtained more than 2 percent of the vote (for a fuller explanation of the methodology, see Appendix B). In order to mitigate drawing incorrect inferences in any individual race and also to understand different narratives of the same story (including how different politicians from the same race viewed public opinion data and their own campaign), I choose to interview multiple candidates from the same race. I sample historical races because I am also interested in individuals' views in the past as compared to now, though obviously some politicians would carry over from election to election and would continue to be involved in other ways. Figure 6.1 shows the geographical distribution of the constituencies sampled, and Appendix B contains small encyclopedia

entries about each of the constituencies.

Since Georgia has an MMP system, to understand electoral competition in Georgia, I make a range of decisions about whom to interview. While there are a number of ways in which I could have constructed my sample of political elite, I choose to interview only FPTP candidates, as opposed to candidates who are only on a party's electoral list. One may argue that I have not defined "politicians" or political "elite" properly by only specifying FPTP candidates. However, I choose to understand the dynamics of information and competition in FPTP races only for two reasons. First, those politicians who compete in majoritarian races encompass a broader cross-section of the elite, as they include not only local elites and businesspeople, but also national elites, who often compete for majoritarian seats, as well. Second, those who compete in majoritarian races should have a greater incentive to understand public opinion and public opinion polling than do list candidates, as they generally directly campaign in their constituencies. Those who are exclusively on lists may have a much wider set of roles within a party and may therefore not directly campaign.

While inferential discussions in positivist political science research have addressed the importance of sampling (Lynch 2013) generally, the issue of non-response bias in qualitative interviewing has been less frequently tackled head-on by positivist qualitative researchers (see Rivera, Kozyreva, and Sarovskii 2002). Such bias is particularly important in studies that interview subjects about past events, where some sampled subjects may have died between the event and the interview or cannot be located, as is the case in my study. In order to better understand and potentially control for this bias in my interviews, I also develop a protocol to systematically contact respondents. I keep track of information regarding efforts to locate respondents and am able to discuss how sample bias may have impacted my findings.

Even less attention has been paid to which types of elite respondents may or may not be willing to have their interviews audio-recorded. In IRB documentation, I gave respondents

the opportunity to choose not to be recorded. While I do not have experimental conditions that give me "as if" random assignment to treatment and control about how similar groups of respondents would have answered had they not been recorded, I can discuss the types of respondents who chose not to be recorded.

Interview Instrument

Another topic to which little attention has been paid previously in the positivist tradition is the interview protocol itself (Kapiszewski 2015). I used a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A). As part of this guide, I asked politicians about their use, knowledge, and trust of public opinion data. How do politicians view this information in the context of their own campaigns? Do they believe it? Do they think it is useful and important to use? Do they currently trust public opinion data?

I drafted the interview protocol in English, Georgian, and Russian, so that the general order of the protocol would be followed in each interview, with the stipulation that if some questions had already been answered by a respondent, they would be skipped. Whenever possible, the interview was carried out in Georgian, though a few with ethnic minorities were carried out in Russian. The reason to carry out the interviews in Georgian, rather than in English, was to ensure that the interviews went quickly, avoid having to wait for interpretation, and also to ensure that respondents felt most comfortable expressing themselves. Finally, the protocol attempts to build rapport (Leech 2002) with respondents from the outset of the interview by asking them about their careers and family background. All of the interview guides can be found in Appendix A.

For the interview aspect of the research, I had three research assistants, all of whom were both native speakers of Georgian and trilingual in Georgian, Russian, and English. I personally I attended each interview with one research assistant who asked the questions so

I could concentrate on understanding the answers and ask follow up questions. My research assistant transcribed and translated all the interviews that were recorded. My lead research assistant, who had attended more interviews than either of the other two, completed the vast majority of the translations into English, and she and I used the editing of the transcripts as an opportunity to raise and answer questions about the content of the interviews (Fujii 2013).

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, I use `RQDA` (Huang 2014) to apply codes to all of the transcripts. That is, I insert all of the transcripts and notes from the interviews using each individual politician as a case into the `RQDA` system. After I enter the data into the `RQDA` system, I generate a wide variety of codes that I use to tag the data, and then group these codes into categories to help me analyze the data (Saldaña 2009). I show an example of the codes included in the category "flaws in polls" in Figure 6.2.

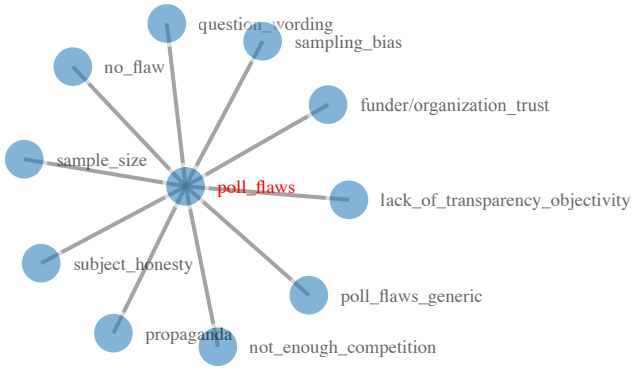

Figure 6.2: The "poll flaws" category and associated codes from `RQDA`.

Beyond strictly qualitative codes, I also apply two sets of codes to create matrix form data that can be analyzed statistically. These codes include attribute codes, which describe features of each politician, and magnitude codes.

Attribute codes include the politician's status as an MP, whether the subject is currently in politics, her age at the time of study, and other measures. The most important magnitude code I employ judges the intensity of each politician's trust in polling data. Many of these descriptive statistics about politicians who agreed to be interviewed are shown in Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

Variable	**Levels**	**n**	**Min**	**x**	$\widetilde{\mathbf{x}}$	**Max**	**IQR**	**#NA**
Age	1999	22	47	60.32	62.00	82	12.00	0
	2003	18	40	58.22	54.50	79	16.00	2
	2008	29	34	50.66	52.00	65	15.00	1
	2012	20	34	47.15	44.50	64	13.50	1
	Multiple	9	42	53.33	54.00	66	4.00	0
	all	98	34	53.74	54.00	82	15.75	4
In Politics	1999	22	0	0.23	0.00	1	0.00	0
	2003	18	0	0.33	0.00	1	1.00	2
	2008	29	0	0.59	1.00	1	1.00	1
	2012	20	0	0.70	1.00	1	1.00	1
	Multiple	9	0	0.78	1.00	1	0.00	0
	all	98	0	0.50	0.50	1	1.00	4
No. Times in Sample	1999	22	1	1.00	1.00	1	0.00	0
	2003	20	1	1.00	1.00	1	0.00	0
	2008	30	1	1.00	1.00	1	0.00	0
	2012	21	1	1.00	1.00	1	0.00	0
	Multiple	9	2	2.22	2.00	3	0.00	0
	all	102	1	1.11	1.00	3	0.00	0

Table 6.1: Continuous descriptive statistics for those who agreed to take part in the study

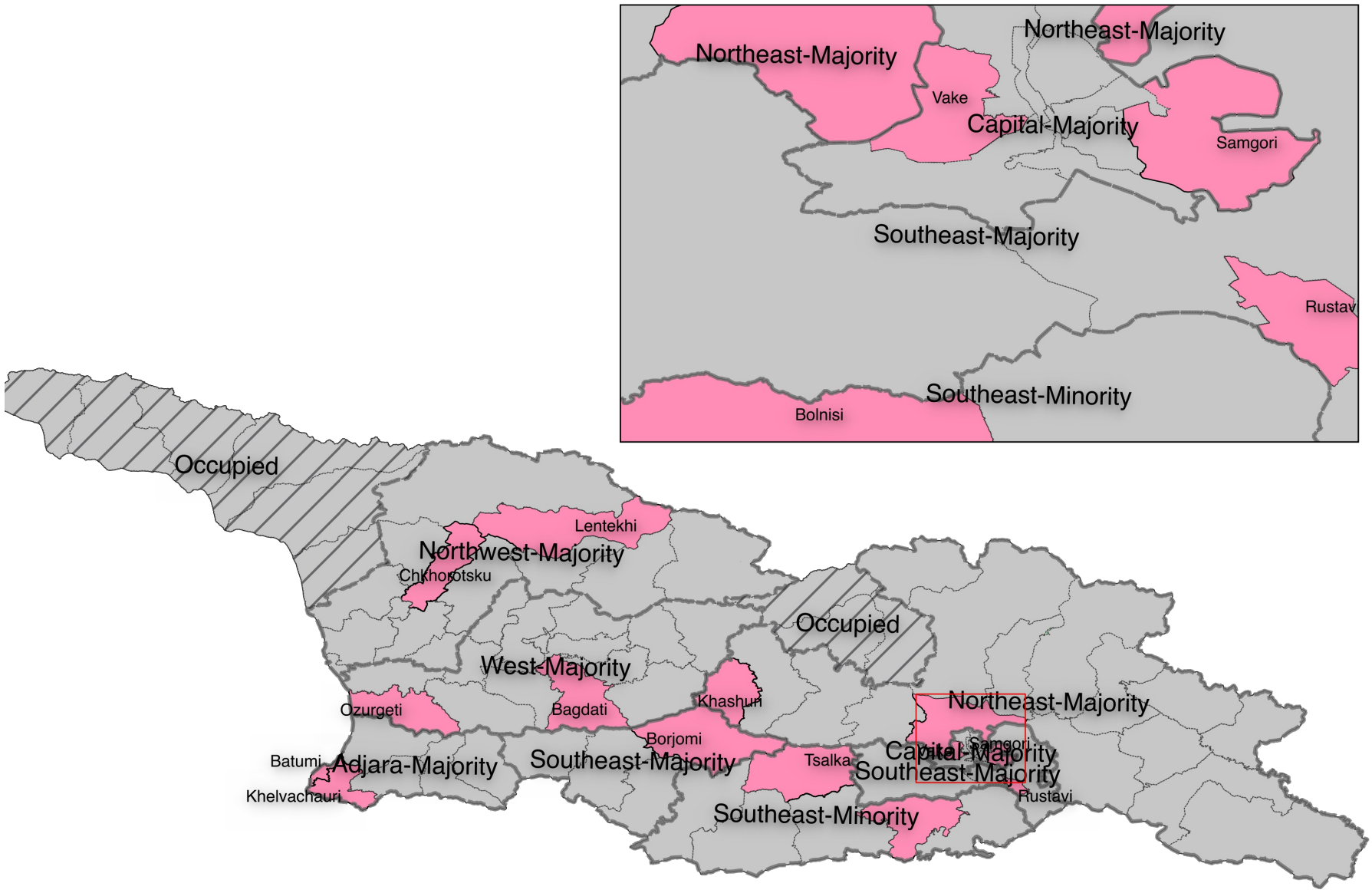

Figure 6.1: A map of the electoral constituencies sampled in Georgia shown within their strata.

Variable	**Levels**	$\mathbf{n}_{1999}$	$\%_{1999}$	$\mathbf{n}_{2003}$	$\%_{2003}$	$\mathbf{n}_{2008}$	$\%_{2008}$	$\mathbf{n}_{2012}$	$\%_{2012}$	$\mathbf{n}_{\text{Multiple}}$	$\%_{\text{Multiple}}$	$\mathbf{n}_{\text{all}}$	$\%_{\text{all}}$
MP Status	0	13	59.1	12	60.0	20	66.7	11	52.4	2	22.2	58	56.9
	1	2	9.1	1	5.0	4	13.3	8	38.1	4	44.4	19	18.6
	2	7	31.8	7	35.0	6	20.0	2	9.5	3	33.3	25	24.5
	all	22	100.0	20	100.0	30	100.0	21	100.0	9	100.0	102	100.0
Trust	Low	10	45.5	7	38.9	14	48.3	2	10.0	5	55.6	38	38.8
	Middle	6	27.3	7	38.9	8	27.6	4	20.0	1	11.1	26	26.5
	High	6	27.3	4	22.2	7	24.1	14	70.0	3	33.3	34	34.7
	all	22	100.0	18	100.0	29	100.0	20	100.0	9	100.0	98	100.0
Agreed to Recording	No	5	22.7	1	5.0	1	3.5	3	14.3	4	44.4	14	13.9
	Yes	17	77.3	19	95.0	27	93.1	17	81.0	5	55.6	85	84.2
	Yes, halfway through	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.5	1	4.8	0	0.0	2	2.0
	all	22	100.0	20	100.0	29	100.0	21	100.0	9	100.0	101	100.0

Table 6.2: Nominal Descriptive statistics of sample who participated in study by year of competition

6.3 Election and Party Background in Georgia

Georgia's parties, despite their supposed ideological positions, are predominantly seen as personality or "elite-driven" parties, regardless of whether they are parties of power or opposition parties (Wheatley 2005, 196). This is evinced by the fact that many parties put the name of their leader or their voting bloc or party on the ballot. Another key characteristic of these parties is that the party leadership often chooses the individual who will run on their ticket in single mandate districts (SMDs). The distinction between those who do the picking and those who are picked forms a good indicator of an individual's standing in the party hiearchy, and I call those who do the picking the "leadership." The number of individuals who are in the party leadership for smaller parties can often be counted on two hands. However, even in the bigger parties, the leadership form a small cadre.[5]

The four electoral cycles covered by my interviews can be divided into elections held under former President Eduard Shevardnadze (the first two) and elections held under former President Mikheil Saakashvili (the second two). The first period — from 1999 to 2004 — was the period leading up to the Rose Revolution. The era of the United National Movement (UNM) (*ertiani natsionaluri modzraoba* lasted from 2004-2012). During this period UNM radically extirpated low- level corruption but also continued non-democratic practices of the previous regime. Levitsky and Way (2010) categorized Georgia as a hybrid regime that is "unstable authoritarian." Indeed, the country itself has witnessed a type of political punctuated equilibrium, where a dominant party emerges for two to three election cycles only to witness its downfall and the arrival of a new dominant party to the scene. Under each dominant party, the opposition has historically remained fractured and weak, with many parties being founded and others often becoming moribund. The result of this punctuated

[5]No true party primary systems exist in Georgia, so bottom up, grassroots development of individual candidates is only starting to emerge.

equilibrium is that some politicians are able to survive multiple parties and switch identities, but candidate turnover is high across elections.

From 1992, until 2004, Eduard Shevardnadze the former Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs under Mikheil Gorbachev and a native of Georgia, served as Georgian President. During this period a dominant political party allied with him controlled Parliament (see Jones 2015). The 1999 parliamentary elections witnessed the continued dominance of Shevardnadze's party, in this incarnation named the Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG) (*sakartvelos mokalaketa k'avshiri*). However, within CUG there existed a variety of factions, including the faction known as the "reformers." Opposition during the 1999 cycle was splintered between Industry Will Save Georgia (IWSG) (*mrets'veloba gadaarchens sakartvelos*), which specifically represented business interests, The Union of Democratic Revival (UDR) (*demok'rat'iuli aghordzinebis k'avshiri*),[6] and the Labour Party (LPG) (*sakartvelos leiborist'uli p'art'ia*), which had emerged out of a group of independent MPs (Wheatley 2005, 124) and had done well in the previous local elections. It was also possible to register as an independent candidate for a single member district if 1000 signatures were collected (ODIHR 2000). The 1999 elections witnessed a high number of such independent candidates because, as my research showed, many former MPs, who came from a cadre of government officials who had served during the Communist era, had been pushed out of the CUG. The CUG replaced these MPs and put forward younger candidates in the SMD districts. These young candidates were generally not part of the party leadership of CUG, however.

According to interviews with my sample of candidates and background interviews, Zurab Zhvania, who ran the 1999 campaign for CUG, employed political consultants and polls

[6]This was the personalistic party of Aslan Abashidze, who ruled the Georgian autonomous province of Ach'ara. He went into opposition during the 1999 election. His reason for going into opposition during the 1999 election was attributed as Shevardnadze's increased reliance on both the reform faction within the CUG and several smaller opposition parties (Wheatley 2005, 124). Others have also claimed that the advice of political consultants brought in from Russia, who advised Shevardnadze to paint Abashidze as the enemy (Areshidze 2007, 48), contributed to his opposition.

during this election cycle.[7] These consultants were brought in from Russia, and they worked on the CUG's campaign. However, polling was not widespread during these elections, and the polling was only available to s small group within the CUG.

In the run up to the 2003 elections, Shevardnadze's CUG had fallen apart, with two of the main opposition parties being created by the previous members of the "reformers" faction within CUG: The National Movement under Mikheil Saakashvili and Democratic Movement-United Georgia under Nino Burjanadze. The LPG also continued to compete and the New Rights Party (NRP) (*akhali memarjveneebi*) also emerged as another contender. Shevardnadze rebranded his rump party with the name For a New Georgia (FNG) (*akhali sakartvelostvis*) and ran in alliance with the Aslan Abashidze's UDR, who had been in opposition in the previous election cycle. Given the numerous defections, Shevardnadze had few remaining political forces behind him and relied on two supporters with regional control who were willing to engage in fraud and violence — Aslan Abashidze who firmly controlled the Autonomous Republic of Ach'ara, and Levan Mamaladze, the Governor of the province of Kvemo Kartli, which had large ethnic minority populations (Mitchell 2009).

The fraud that FNG committed in the 2003 elections, exposed through Western backed exit polls, brought about the Rose Revolution (and the undemocratic removal of the Shevardnadze government) and a new election in 2004, in which Saakashvili and Burjanadze's opposition parties merged into the UNM. After the Rose Revolution, however, it was decided that those candidates who had won the FPTP seats pre-Rose Revolution in 2003 would retain their seats.[8] The candidates whom I interviewed and discuss in my study competed in the 2003 elections.

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[7] This fact is also mentioned in passing in (Areshidze 2007).

[8] In several FPTP seats, there were repeat elections, since the candidate who had won had fled the country or was indicted. This occurred in Bolnisi, which was in the sample, where the former Governor of Kvemo Kartli region, Levan Mamaladze, had fled to Russia. In this case, I chose to interview those who ran in the repeat election.

There were two main changes in polling in the 2003 Georgian election. First, the role of political opinion polling significantly expanded, and, second, it was in the 2003 election that polling became politicized in post-independence Georgian society. For example, with regards to polling expansion, Areshidze recalls the strategy of the New Rights Party, and specifically points to two polls which were carried out by NRP before the 2003 election.

In 2003, many politicians and analysts viewed polling not just as a tool to improve campaigning and to inform the public of opinion trends, but also as a political tool. Areshidze makes the claim that both of the opposition groups that formed from splinters of CUG used polling strategically to attempt to create a bandwagon effect among voters. Areshidze (2007, 14) claims that Burjanadze's polling agency, the Institute for Polling and Marketing (IPM), was inflating the polling numbers for Burjanadze and disseminating them on the main opposition television station, Rustavi 2. According to Areshidze's narrative, Saakaskvhili responded by funding a polling/marketing company that had splintered from IPM, the Business Consulting Group (BCG) and had not not existed previous to the campaign cycle. party bought coverage on Rustavi 2 and put Saakashvili's polls front and center — giving them more airtime than IPM's. Whereas BCG polls put Saakashvili's party in the lead, IPM had put the Burjanadze-Democrats first. Whether or not the results were manipulated, interviews and data back up Areshidze's claim that both Burjanadze and Saakashvili's parties had their own pollsters, and their respective polling results supported their narratives, as seen in Chapter 7.

Just as the CUG had dominated the 1999 elections, UNM dominated those in 2008. Nine of the main opposition parties came together to form a bloc. The LPG, while enfeebled, continued to run on its own and passed the electoral threshold in many districts. A new political force, the Christian Democratic Movement (CDM) (*krist'ianul-demok'rat'iuli modzraoba*) also emerged to contest the elections against UNM. the CDM was formed under the

leadership of Giorgi Targamadze, who had strong links to the former ruler of Ach'ara, Aslan Abashidze. Many in the opposition argued that CDM was simply a stooge party designed by UNM to siphon votes from the nine-party bloc and create a pseudo-opposition loyal to UNM.

Also similarly to 1999, only one party funded polling in the 2008 elections. The UNM worked closely with Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, an American polling firm, who trained a local partner — ACT — to carry out extensive focus groups and surveys as part of their election campaign. UNM released some of this data to the public. Additionally, two international NGOs, NDI and the International Republican Institute (IRI), actively polled and publicly released some results. NDI and IR results tended to coincide with the polls Greenberg, Quinlan Rosner announced.

The 2012 elections witnessed increased opposition to UNM. The Georgian-French-Russian billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili was able to unify most opposition parties into Georgian Dream Coalition (GDC) (*kartuli otsneba*). The coalition included the Georgian Dream Party (GDP), confusingly a party within the GDC, the Republican Party, which had not joined the nine-party bloc in 2008, The Conservative Party, Our Georgia – Free Democrats, National Forum, IWSG, and the Green Party. The CDM, which was in disarray and the LPG did not join the coalition. The GDC's electoral standing was dramatically improved right before the election, as video emerged showing prison rape by UNM officials (see Kldiashvili 2012).[9]

The role of public opinion polls, like in the 2003 election, once again became politicized, when the UNM and the GDC funded their own polls and made public pronouncements about their results. Additionally, IRI and NDI continued to poll, and the GDC claimed these organizations were in the hands of the UNM, given the high support their polls accorded to the UNM. Rancor about polling reached such a level that a whole week's news cycle was mainly

[9]Male rape is a highly taboo topic in Georgian society and the videos galvanized much of the population already upset at Georgia's high incarceration rates.

dedicated to discussing poll results. The Open Society Foundation of Georgia (an affiliate of the Open Society Insitute) brought in a panel of foreign experts from ESOMAR and WAPOR to try to de-politicize the role that polling was playing in the elections (ESOMAR/WAPOR 2013).

6.4 Trust Findings

Now that I have set the backdrop, I return to the discussion of my research findings. Given my research design, I provide different slices of the data to understand how different factors impact the politicians' beliefs about polls. I start by examining the party variable, which plays a large role in the Georgian case.[10]

6.4.1 Prior Beliefs about the Trustworthiness of Polling Data

What determines individuals' prior beliefs about the trustworthiness of public opinion polling data? Many subjects had explicit reasons for their strong prior beliefs about the untrustworthiness of public opinion polls, and offered up concrete justifications for this.

The most frequently mentioned reason among respondents is what I term "subject honesty." Particularly those in opposition parties believe that Georgians systematically lie to pollsters because of the politically sensitive nature of the questions being asked and the potential threat of reprisal.[11]

As one candidate from the 2008 nine-party opposition bloc bluntly put it:

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[10]I use the word "party" here. But in the Georgian context, where a candidate did not necessarily have to affiliate with any one party within a bloc to run, a solely party level analysis is impossible. Therefore "party" will sometimes also mean "bloc." This also means that the descriptive statistics only show data at the level of electoral bloc rather that at the level of party. In many cases, Georgian themselves do not know if a party is a "party" or a "bloc." For a classification of blocs and parties for elections in the the 2000s, see (Kuchinka-Lancava and Grotz 2001).

[11]This is actually interesting support of the hypothesis that some form of masking technique, such as a list experiment, is required for any politically sensitive question, such as party support, because subjects will refuse to disclose their true beliefs (Corstange 2009; Blair and Imai 2012; Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013).

> We haven't done any polls, especially in those conditions — as everybody knows — a social poll doesn't give a real result in the case of an authoritarian regime. [CAND-157]

That is, for those in opposition under UNM, the authoritarian nature of the regime rendered asking any question about politics pointless, since subjects would feel compelled to hide their true positions for fear of the government sanctioning them as a result.

Many respondents, particularly from older generations, viewed lying to pollsters as second nature to post-Soviet citizens, always weary of the government asking them intrusive questions. As one respondent, who ran for office in 1999, related,

> ...my neighbors — who would insult Saakashvili all the time — when someone would ask them, they answered that they would vote for Saakashvili; because we prefer this lie, we are always lying to the government. How was Georgia the richest nation during the Soviet Union? We were used to lying; the government was always oppressing us. [CAND-125]

As is evident from this respondent, the long-term conditioning under the Soviet Union created a culture of lying to anyone collecting data, a phenomenon also mentioned in an older Sovietology literature (Golitsyn 1984).

Some respondents also suspected that the organizations carrying out the polls harbored nefarious motives. Indeed, some thought the polling firms knew exactly whom to poll, so that their sampling bias would lead to results favorable to UNM. As a Republican Party member from a mid-sized constituency stated:

> UNM was doing opinion polls, they knew exactly whom they had to visit; as a result, opposition party results [in UMN's polls] were derived from that. [CAND-007]

While implementing such sampling bias may be technically feasible, based on my in-depth interviews with the firms carrying out the maligned polls, I think it is unlikely that most of the polling implementers actually engaged in this type of manipulation — although I cannot entirely rule it out.

A smaller but significant group of respondents thought that polls were just outright forged. As one candidate relayed:

> ...they will write the results as the ruling party will tell them. [CAND-017]

Again, while straight-out forgery is possible — and certainly does occur – based on my interviews, I believe this position confounds the reality of what was occurring on the ground.

6.4.2 Prior Beliefs about the Issues Addressed in Polls

Many respondents expressed that they already had strong prior beliefs about their citizenry without having received such insight from public opinion polls. As one candidate from a mid-sized constituency related:

> I know everyone. I don't need polls, I was mayor of the city, people were coming from villages, I had power and I never refused anyone, doing something for each of them; even sometimes I have given my own money to them. [CAND-064]

Another candidate from the city of Batumi suggested that he simply knew better than any poll results.

> They [pollsters] are giving incorrect results about the obvious issues, on which people are already informed. [CAND-179]

These views inevitably were rooted in candidates' deep engagement within their constituencies – and their perceived ability to judge their constituents' desires. Interestingly, some the respondents who proclaimed to have their fingers on the pulse of their constituents were the same respondents, who believed polls were inaccurate because subjects likely lied to pollsters; nonetheless, these respondents rarely expressed the concern that their constituents might have lied to them in their personal interactions.

6.4.3 Correlates of Trust

As suggested by the corollaries to my hypotheses, the views of respondents were not randomly distributed across responses. Three variables that were associated with trust stood out front and center in the Georgian context: party, constituency size, and generation.

Political Party/Affiliation

In the theory chapter, I hypothesized that because polling often occurs at the party level, parties will shape the priors of individual politicians. I find that parties played the singularly strongest role in conditioning elites' views about trust in public opinion polling in Georgia. Party affiliation was highly predictive of politicians' views on trustworthiness and utility of polling data; this was particularly true for those who were still active in politics. That is, regardless of their priors about the population, politicians in parties that polled had much stronger priors about the utility of polls.

This party element, from a theoretical perspective, is surprising because of the institutional weakness of post-communist parties more generally, and the personalistic and patrimonial nature of party politics in Georgia, specifically (Bielasiak 2002; Wheatley 2005). The explanation for this theoretically counterintuitive finding lies in the role that party leadership plays in the polling process. My fieldwork reveals a mechanism that appears to

link leader-driven politics to strong party conditioning of trust in polling. First, the leadership determines whether or not to carry out polling. If they do carry out regular polling, then often (though, as we shall see, not always) their MPs are exposed to this polling and come to recognize its utility, even if they do think it is also capable of being manipulated. However, MPs from those parties whose small leadership cadres do not fund public opinion polling themselves, either for financial reasons or for lack of trust, tend to have a much poorer understanding of polls' utility, do not trust polls, and are more apt to believe they are fabricated.

For example, contrast the position of one elite UNM MP, who has interacted with a myriad of public opinion data, with that of a politician who currently advises the GDC, but has never commissioned polls himself:

UNM:

> Yes, of course, this is something like when you walk into the streets you feel the general mood. We had 30%, and this is true because wherever you go, in every third shop a salesperson will smile at you and the other seven are either confused or frown at you sternly. [CAND-120]

GDC:

> I will tell you why they are not trustworthy; people are not saying the truth out loud. [CAND-108]

Several elements of the internal composition of Georgian political parties, along with my fieldwork design, allow me to gain further leverage on the importance of party affiliation. In 2008, the UNM sought to further incorporate the Georgian business elite into the party.[12]

[12]The reasons for this go far beyond the scope of this chapter, but it clear from the interviews that this strategy included a variety of sticks and carrots. UNM offered these MPs limited political power and prestige, but also expected them to invest their own money in public works, particularly infrastructure projects. If they did not agree to becoming an MP, they were threatened with tax investigations.

These individuals had very different backgrounds from the core leaders of the UNM, who had emerged out of the "reformist" movement within CUG. While it may be unsurprising that the "reformists" shared the same beliefs about polling, it is notable that those businessmen who were recruited into UNM also share that same view to a much greater degree than many other businessmen talked to in the study. As one very wealthy businessman from UNM related:

> I trust these polls. They bring benefits to understanding a picture of Georgia. [CAND-144]

Contrast this to a businessman in the GDC, who was very concerned about subject honesty and foreign financing of polls.

> Somewhat; our region does not need it, it is not needed... [CAND-53]

Indeed there are several notable elements of the UNM's trust in polls. First, despite polls predicting they would win the 2013 elections, UNM politicians continue to trust in the value of public opinion data. They attribute their loss to a change in public opinion in the run-up to the election, rather than on any problems with public opinion polling in Georgia. That is, they fully see the change in the public's mood and the difference between 2012 pre-election polls and the election outcome as predominantly related to the prison scandal footage released two weeks before the election. Indeed, the view among almost all varieties (previous, current) UNM politicians and the leadership of the CDM is that respondents are honest, however, opinions change.

One interesting question on which this research can shed light, though not conclusively answer is whether the strong role that parties play is a selection or conditioning issue. However, if we believe the weaker assumption that the distribution of business people who are

exposed to data previous to joining politics is similar across parties, it is likely that the party or coalition views played a strong role in shaping the difference in their views after joining the party.

Another two pieces of evidence speak to the conditioning of parties. First, the businessmen whom UNM coerced to participate in politics for the first time in 2008 appear, on average, to have pro-polling views. Second, it is possible to exploit the fact that the cohort of individuals within parties have changed over time. That is, even though party members' composition has changed over time, the views espoused about polling within the party remain similar.[13] For example, the Labour Party, which was a serious opposition party in 1995 and had many influential members, has witnessed waning support over the years. Only a small group of party diehards, supplemented by less experienced recruits currently are involved in the party. My sample contained several generations of Labour Party politicians. As a group, they are the least likely to have served in government, and if they have, it tends to have been in the early 1990s. They are the politicians who are likely to see no use for polls or to view them through a lens of conspiracy theory.[14] Moreover, they believe the only way to gauge public opinion is to interact with close friends. Compare a 1999 Labour Party politician who is no longer involved in politics with a current LPG politician.

A former Labour candidate from 1999 relates:

> I don't trust them [polls]. I am trustful when I walk in the streets and talk to my friend and people who share their opinions freely. [CAND-106]

And a current Labour politician states:

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[13]For those parties who have existed for some time, their former cadres, even if they are no longer in politics, generally have the same viewpoints about polling as their current members, though those that are no longer active may have more extreme views.

[14]Even the leadership of the Labour Party, however, claims they only believe their own internal polls, which are highly problematic because they are unsystematically carried out by party activists in the street, apparently unaware of any of the biases that accompany such a polling method.

> I was meeting people in villages, those meetings were warm and friendly, people were positive towards me. I never heard bad things about me. [CAND-166]

The diversity of the GDC parties, even though they are in the same coalition, demonstrates the effects of not only the coalition but also of the individual parties on beliefs about polling. Those that were previously in the nine-party opposition in 2008 and then in the GDC in 2012 generally display varying degrees of the same position. They almost uniformly argue that fear of the authoritarian UNM rendered polling useless before 2012 and are the strongest proponents of the "subject honesty" narrative.

While they mostly believe in the utility of polling as a way to understand public opinion, they believe that fearfulness of respondents led to incorrect inferences from the data. Some, who are more conspiracy theory oriented, believe that, particularly before 2012, the way most polling questions were worded or the language employed was designed to yield answers that misrepresented the "true" anti-UNM nature of most citizens' opinions.

Despite these strong beliefs, many skeptics concede that some inferences from polling data were possible, even in what they perceived as the authoritarian conditions that were present under UNM. Indeed, many concede the opposition successfully used some novel techniques in their polling in 2012 which overcame many of the issues of subject honesty to tell a more accurate story. Moreover, GDC coalition members claim that interviewees do not fear answering polls honestly only *after* their rise to power.

Since UNM's electoral loss in 2012, GDC coalition politicians now generally recognize the importance of polling in governance and for social and economic problems. Many now say they have increased degrees of trust in public opinion polling because they now believe that people are less fearful. As on GDC interviewee states:

> Today I think we have to trust polls more, people are free from fear, and if he/she just does not respond honestly this is another thing, but no one is afraid

> to express their opinion publicly, that is why polls are reflecting reality much more today. [CAND-001]

However, these views of polling do vary somewhat by party within the coalition. The GDC, when elected, had two liberal factions, the Free Democrats and the Republicans. Those who are members of these parties have much higher faith in polling generally, but also have the most to say about the linguistic, social, and other barriers to polling.

Those that are in the Georgian Dream Party itself or in other non-liberal coalition parties, had low participation rates in my study, but those who did respond appeared less hopeful about the future utility of polling than did those within the liberal factions of the GDC. The reason for polling skepticism may be attributed to the fact that some of those members of the Georgian Dream Party are new to politics and hence, much more naive about polls.

Insider versus Outsider

The conditioning effect of parties, however, is sometimes mitigated by a candidate's position within the party. That is, resources are often only given to party leadership, so only they get access to polling data.

To understand the difference between party leadership and MPs who did rise through the party ranks, it is important to understand the search for what is known as "authority" in Georgia. "Authority," which denotes that a figure is widely respected and sought for advice, is seen as important for parties to be viable in FPTP constituencies in Georgia. A problem arises often for parties because they do not have rank and file members with "authority" in every constituency. Therefore, a challenge for parties is to locate recognizable and liked figures that possess this "authority" within their communities. Hence, for MP races in majoritarian districts, local political figures are often recruited that are not closely linked to the party and are in many cases not even members of the party (or at least claim

they are not members of the party).[15]

Because a party's central office is usually in charge of polling, the candidates, who are local elites, but not strong party members or party members at all, are often left to their own devices; in many cases, party leadership to not give these local elites access to the polling data that the central party elite orders. This was stated explicitly to me by the individual in UNM who was in charge of that party's polling nationally. The party leadership used the information to allocate its own political forces, but did not share the information with candidates further downstream.

This failure to share polling data was verified by UNM candidates outside of the party's leadership. For example, one UNM politician who ran in one of the smaller constituencies, stated that he knew about such polls carried out by the party, but

> To tell the truth, I have not been introduced to the party polls. [CAND-180]

Another stark example of insider/outsider polling data access can be found in the Christian Democrats' recent history. The Christian Democrats, after success in 2008, fielded weak candidates in 2012. The party leadership from 2008 was trustful of public opinion data and had worked with closely with NDI to understand it. However, the weak candidates recruited in 2012, when the party was in the process of disintegration, had not been exposed to public opinion polling and did not have any trust in it.

District Size

As is clear from the interviews and consonant with the first corollary to H1 — that priors will vary by constituency composition and size — the anonymous nature of urban life contributes to the perceived necessity of paying for polling by political parties.

[15]Further work can verify this, as the lists actually state their party status.

Tbilisi showed the highest rate of constituency-level polling by parties themselves, particularly by UNM, which allocated its resources based on where they thought there would be the largest need. However, Rustavi, another major city in my sample, also reported high levels of polling. In Rustavi, UNM allocated resources to leadership and non-leadership within the party to carry out polls, again lending credence to the important of district size.

Many of the politicians who had participated directly in these exercises came to recognize the diversity of their own electorate. As one UNM politician who ran in Tbilisi related:

> We were doing polling to identify problems people had, I never thought about such kind of polls before, I had a feeling that they had a psychological influence on us, because what we wanted to talk about, was coming in large-scale [was being properly shaped – our ideas were taking form]. [CAND-103]

This view stands in contradistinction to those of politicians in smaller constituencies, and the lack of polling was particularly evident in the smallest of constituencies. Explaining that surveys were unimportant, a respondent from Chkhorots'q'u related that:

> ...how many people are attending your meeting, this was the main indicator... [CAND-043]

Candidates in only one of the ethnic minority constituencies, Ts'alk'a, specifically mentioned ethnic head counts as relevant to understanding the views and desires of their constituents. Specifically, candidates voiced the belief that there was no sense in polling in their constituency, because the constituency is relatively small and ethnically diverse, and they already knew the needs of each ethnic community. The view that polling is unnecessary, in turn, leads candidates to remain unfamiliar with and thus less likely to trust polling and any utility it may have, and — indeed — to be more likely to assume polling data are fabricated.

I found this to be particularly true of non-UNM politicians, who overall had less exposure to polling.[16]

As explained by one respondent from Ts'alk'a, a region that is heavily Armenian but has a strong Georgian eco-migrant community:

> Polls practically are not happening here, respondents are chosen beforehand and they extract information from them, and as a result of that, wrong information is spread abroad…that we are a blossoming country, we hold best places in the ratings; in reality, when I read about Georgia in the foreign press, I think that I live in a different country. [CAND-187]

Generation

For an older generation of politicians, particularly those who are no longer politically active, public opinion polls cannot replace personal contact. Trust cannot reach past an interpersonal level.

Two facts about political life in the Soviet Union appear to have contributed to this view. The first is the perceived lack of ability to share ones true views in public during Soviet times. Second, in Soviet times, statistics were often ordered by elites to meet what Moscow wanted to hear in terms of production targets. While this attitude appeared across generations, the generation of respondents that was active within the political system during Soviet times was particularly apt to believe that politicians could order the results they wanted. "He who pays, orders the tune," was a common refrain from these respondents.

[16]UNM defections occurred in many small constituencies, include Ts'alk'a and Chorots'q'u after the 2012 election. These politicians who defected were substantially more likely to refuse to talk with me. However, there is no *prima facie* evidence that these politicians held substantially different attitudes. A winning politician from one of the smaller districts who had not defected, showed interest and belief in polls, but it was clear that he had not used them in his own campaigns.

The elections they participated in also shaped their views. According to many respondents, Georgia's elections in 1999 involved widespread ballot stuffing and tampering. Therefore, these respondents believed that politics was not about understanding opinions, but a form of warfare to defend votes from being tampered with.

Surprisingly, I found only minimal evidence of education playing a role in shaping priors in the Georgian context. This is likely related to the uniformity of the Soviet education system. Nonetheless, some politicians with advanced scientific or mathematics training tended to have more nuanced views of polling. Those who had studied abroad in the West also tended to have relatively more trust in polls.

I did encounter some idiosyncratic individual politicians who carried out their own studies because they believed in their efficacy. As one former FNG politician related:

> No one had time for that, sociological research/polling was usually conducted on the Georgian scale, and everyone was interested in party ratings; I was struggling in a more independent manner, I was doing polling by myself, with my own means… [CAND-087]

6.5 Public Findings

In Chapter 5, I hypothesized that a candidate's willingness to discredit a poll would be dependent on both the costs and the benefits of discrediting the data. In Georgia, I found significant variation in the costs, but not in the benefits of discrediting polls.

It is important to highlight that, of all of the actors in the current Georgian polling industry, NDI and IRI were by far the most commonly mentioned actors releasing publicly available polling data. During the 2008 and 2012 elections, both of these international NGOs were active in polling, with NDI being funded through a grant from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and IRI funded through USAID. However, it

is impossible to talk about these two organizations individually, as respondents regularly conflated or confused them with one another. Generally, the findings of NDI and IRI's polls were similar to each other, so any attempts to discredit polls by candidates in the 2008 and 2012 elections focused on data released by these two NGOs.

6.5.1 The Costs: Bandwagoning

An interesting finding from my study is that across all groups of respondents, there is a general belief in potential benefits of discrediting public opinion data. This is due to the robust belief, across the political spectrum in Georgia, in the power of bandwagoning effects. Not once did a respondent mention belief in an underdog effect (Krosnick, Visser, and Harder 2010).

I present below a cross-section of quotes from candidates' responses to questions they were asked about the impact of public opinion polling.

- An important Labour politician states:

> Poll results are one of the ways of fraud; when people are watching on TV that NDI is publishing poll results, there is a trust towards American institutes still, and they believe the results. Seeing that the leading party has such support, they think there is no sense in participation in the election, or they just have to go and vote for that winning party. [CAND-166]

- A young CDM party leader, who was also a former MP:

> It is a natural for someone who is flexible, and it is a psychological factor. He goes to the stronger side. [CAND-006]

- A former MP in the early 1990s, with a long work history in the Soviet Union:

> Not politicians, it is the electorate that is influenced. When the majority of the population is assured that a certain political power has an advantage, some think – there is this category – [who say] let's support them, they will win anyway, and I can use it. [CAND-054]

- A member of the IWSG party, who had never been elected as an MP:

> When people watch these polls and your rating, the ones believing it, which did not know that it is a lie, they take sides accordingly. Ten to 15 percent approximately, this is a big number. [CAND-093]

- A non-leadership UNM member relates that:

> It is also the mentality. The Georgian mentality is that we support those that have power. [CAND-142]

- An non-leadership CDM candidate opines:

> The research is of great importance, I'm telling you as a doctor, there is the psychological moment, it is possible, when the survey is announced and tells us, the conscious [brain] accepts it. [CAND-133]

- And a non-leadership UNM former MP stated:

> The most powerful poison is an informational poison, when the information is put in your mind you are already poisoned. Nothing can help that. Therefore, public opinion research is important to the public. So it is always financed by those who have an interest in them. In this case, the Nationals

> were financing them of course, you know that the Nationals sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly finance the public surveys, for them to be in their favor and that is precisely what Ivanishvili did before elections in 2012. [CAND-184]

- And a current GDC MP stated:

> Unfortunately, a certain segment of the electorate, because they don't possess a distinct set of values, are shaking and leaning towards the side where the wind blows.[CAND-156]

As these quotes make evident, politicians across the political spectrum in Georgia believe in large bandwagoning effects. Therefore, unless a candidate is projected to win, she will always perceive a benefit to discrediting polls to attenuate these effects.

However, while the perceived benefits are similar across candidates, the costs are quite different. Most importantly, the costs to UNM for discrediting polls are much higher than they are to other parties. Due to UNM's very pro-Western orientation and reliance on data, attempts to discredit polling data would conflict with both their internal vision of the party's *modus operandi* and their public face. Moreover, as a party that was generally ahead in the polls, the UMN also saw no benefit in discrediting any of the publicly available polls, since any bandwagoning effects would accrue to them. Despite the fact, however, that bandwagoning effects are no longer accruing to them, UMN politicians continue to express their faith in opinion polls.

The opposite was true of the main opposition parties in 2008 and 2012. They believed that the bandwagoning effects were accruing to UNM, so that they had to do everything in their power to discredit these polls. It helped that they had not previously extensively relied

on polling data for their own campaigns or discussed its use in public, making it easy for them to discredit the publicly available data.

6.6 Statistical Analysis of Trust

To complement my qualitative analysis, I show that the findings with regard to trust hold true in a statistical context as well. In order to show how trust is correlated with party and generation, I code each of the transcripts for the level of trust that the respondent currently has, overall, in public opinion polls on a five point scale. For the purposes of modeling, I collapse this five point scale into a three-point scale, with "low," "medium" and "high" trust.

I then run an ordered probit regression on this three-category dependent variable. In the model, I control for strata from which the respondent is sampled, and the election in which the candidate ran.[17] I also include a dummy for gender, which is generally included in such models. My two variables of interest are party and age, which proxies for generation. For party, I code all parties that are currently part of the Georgian Dream Coalition, or those who ran under the banner of the nine-party opposition bloc in 2008 as being "Opposition." Labour Party politicians are given their own code ("Labour"), and all other smaller or defunct parties are given the code "Other." The results of the model are shown in Table 6.3.

To ease the interpretation of this model, I simulate predicted probabilities for both age and party. These results are shown in Figures 6.3 and 6.4.

As seen in Figure 6.3, while UNM candidates have a 2 percent predicted probability of having low trust, opposition candidates have a 28 percent probability, and Labour Party candidates have a 95 percent predicted probability of having low trust, holding all other variables in the model constant.

While age has a less marked effect, as age increases, the upward trend for those in the

[17] I code "multiple" for those candidates who ran in multiple elections.

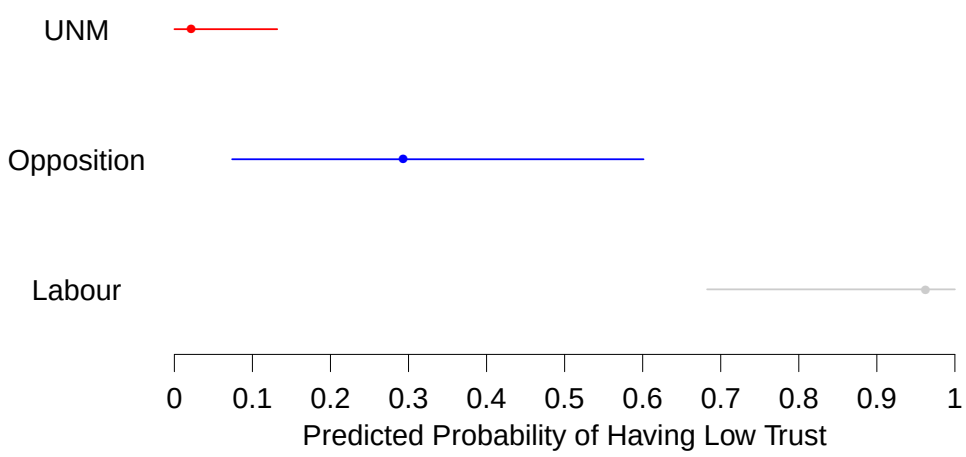

Figure 6.3: Predicted probabilities from and ordinal probit model, holding all variables at their mean while varying party grouping. Here only the lowest category of trust is shown.

lowest trust category is clear and evident from Figure 6.4.

In summary, the results of the statistical analysis confirm the qualitative findings that party and generation play a large role in determining overall trust in public opinion data.

6.7 Conclusion

The results of this Chapter have shown how aspects at the party, constituency, and individual level shape both the strength of elites' prior beliefs about polling and about how well they know their electorate.

In the Georgian context, I have found that parties appear to condition many of the beliefs about polling, which is surprising given the weak and volatile party structure.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, I find that candidates in smaller constituencies have less use of and less trust in public opinion polling. That is, elites' priors about trust in data are

lower and claimed knowledge about constituents' needs are higher. Public opinion in larger constituencies, on the other hand, is viewed by candidates as more difficult to understand and more competitive without polling; candidates in those constituencies are therefore more likely to use and trust public opinion data.

Finally, in congruence with the cross-national rise in public opinion polling observed in Chapter 4, it appears that, as new generations of politicians emerge onto the political arena, use and trust of public opinion data increases.

	Model 1
Age at Study	−0.05
	(0.03)
In Politics Now	−0.82
	(0.50)
y1999 (reference)	
y2003	0.22
	(0.73)
y2008	−0.20
	(0.73)
y2012	1.29
	(0.83)
Multiple	−0.67
	(0.92)
Male	−0.09
	(0.75)
Tbilisi (reference)	
Achara	−0.45
	(0.88)
Minority	−1.08
	(0.92)
Northeast	−2.32*
	(0.98)
Northwest	−0.75
	(1.13)
Southeast	−1.28
	(0.81)
West	−1.57
	(0.90)
UNM and predecessors (reference)	
Opposition	−1.84*
	(0.73)
Labour	−5.12*
	(1.30)
Other	−1.47
	(0.75)
1|2	−6.52*
	(2.25)
2|3	−4.85*
	(2.20)
AIC	190.97
BIC	237.32
Log Likelihood	-77.49
Deviance	154.97
Num. obs.	97

*$p < 0.05$

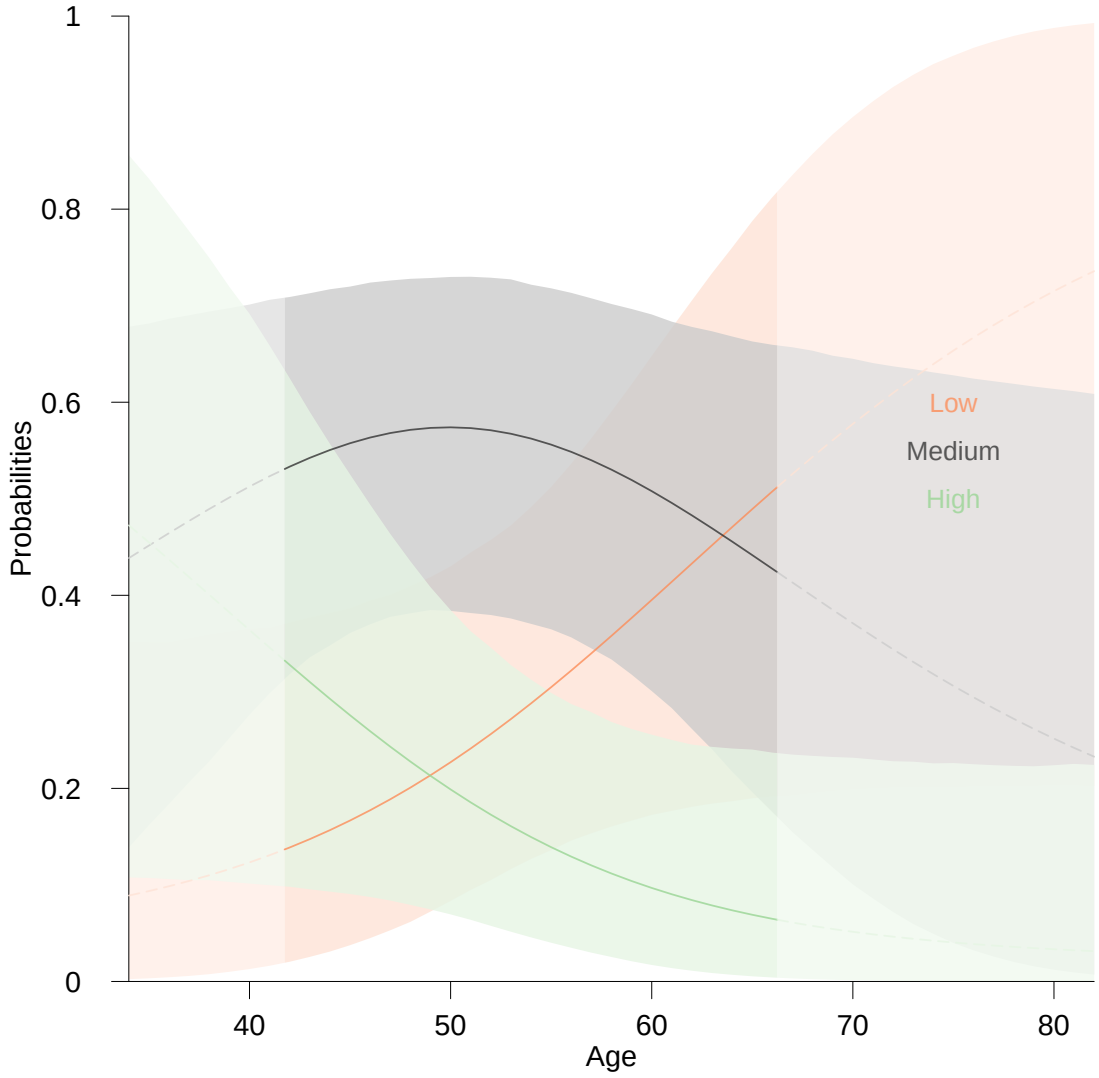

Figure 6.4: Predicted probabilities from and ordinal probit model, holding all variables at their mean while varying age

Chapter 7
MEASURING POLLS

In Chapter 4, I used data from NELDA to analyze the correlates of the presence of *public* political opinion polling — and NELDA provides an unparalleled dataset for those studying elections in a cross-national context. However, as Chapters 5 and 6 highlight, within-country studies can help scholars to better understand the meaning of the cross-national statistics they collect and to deploy more efficacious methods to collect cross-national data. Therefore, in this chapter, I specifically discuss the issues of measuring political opinion polls. First, I start by presenting a method to collect publicly available opinion polling data at a much more fine-grained level and discuss implementing this method in Georgia.

Second, I return to the NELDA dataset and discuss NELDA's coding of public opinion related variables in the context of how NELDA aggregates much more granular data. I use Kenya and Georgia, where I conducted extensive fieldwork to illustrate these codings. To do so, I compare NELDA's coding of two of its public opinion polling variables to my own coding of these variables and code three additional variables.

7.0.1 A Schema for Collecting More Fine-Grained Data

As discussed throughout this manuscript, it is necessary to distinguish between publicly available polling data and privately available data. With regard to publicly available data, I argue that there is much to be gained from collecting disaggregated data. For example, one can measure the density of public opinion polling and various measures of difference between those polls and the ultimate outcome of the election, or the deviation from the mean of all the

polls collected. That is, by collecting disaggregated, publicly available data scholars can take into consideration much more of the richness of the data at the local level, if desired. In the public context, the analysis can go far beyond the mere "presence" or "absence" of publicly available opinion polling data. Indeed, as this manuscript has highlighted, the density of polling and the actual vote shares for different candidates in different public opinion polls should be of theoretical importance.

Moving to aggregate statistics is a useful data reduction strategy if the data reduction is based on sound measurement of the underlying variables.[1] Indeed, it is difficult to judge whether those aggregate variables are properly coded, if the data that created them is not available or not stored. One way to counter claims about inappropriate aggregation is to expose the underlying disaggregated data that generates aggregate statistics. Such a strategy allows researchers to test various aggregation assumptions on their theories and also allow for different coding assumptions to be tested in a more rigorous fashion. That is, I argue that data about each publicly available poll should be collected, rather than merely a binary variable about the presence or absence of polling.

With regard to public opinion data, this immediately raises the question of what should be the sources for this disaggregated data. Contra to Hyde and Marinov (2012), who use aggregate English language sources in NELDA, it would seem that a more reliable strategy to measure publicly available polls is to examine local newspaper coverage in the period before each election, given that how local politicians and voters react to the data will be mediated through the dissemination process locally rather than internationally.

Two immediate critiques of this approach may arise. First, print news coverage may be less important than television coverage. In many developing countries, newspapers have much lower circulation than TV or radio. While this may be the case, coding television coverage

[1]Indeed, a broad array of social science disciplines have rightly criticized aggregation (see Franzosi 1989; Snyder 2001).

seems unlikely to be possible in the medium term. Newspaper archives are more accessible, and may contain more information than TV or radio coverage. Moreover, publications have increasingly moved online, making the task easier in the future. Therefore, nationally based newspapers should serve as a reasonable proxy to measure what political public opinion data are available to the public. If the study involves horse race or candidate evaluation numbers, it is also possible to capture this information from local print news coverage.

Second, one could argue that international news coverage should suffice, as it does in the coding of violent events (Best, Carpino, and Crescenzi 2013). I propose that is important to measure data reported in local news rather than in international news, however. While elections are important news items across the world, the rate at which major international wires cover different country's public opinion polls is unclear. Theoretically, we should have missing data in elections in countries less important to the English language news cycle and in older elections. This may be particularly true for polls that happen several weeks or months before the election because the focus of the international media will not yet have centered on the particular country's election. But perhaps even more importantly for theory building, elites react to domestic media rather than international media when it comes to electoral politics (Strömbäck and Nord 2006). Therefore, coverage in local papers should be monitored rather than in the international press.

Schema for Publicly Available Data

What variables should be present in such disaggregated data? I argue that data should be viewed as relational tables with four basic levels, since different variables pertain to different levels of analysis.

On the highest level, we have publications. Since each published poll comes out in a publication, it stands to reason that researchers should collect basic data on each publication

within the universe of publications that she is monitoring. At a minimum, basic data on these publications should include the *publication date [pub_date]*, *paper name [paper_name]*, and *article title [article_title]*.

Article level data is also of interest to collect. Article size may be related to the importance of the article. I suggest two measures, *[article_size]* and *[size_select]*. The first measure captures the approximate size of the article, whereas the other variable is a four point scale, where four is a whole page or more and one is a fourth of page or less.[2] I also code a binary variable of whether there was a visualization of the data or not *[visualization]*. I also code whether the article is a news story, an editorial (written by the editorial board), a front-page feature, or an op-ed piece *[artcl_type]*. I also code information about the author of the article and have the coders rate the overall balance of the story *[balance]*.[3]

Within each article there are several sub-tables. At the third level of analysis is the poll itself. I argue that scholars should collect a series of variables about the poll, if they were reported. Given there may be hypotheses related to the timing of polls beyond the publication data, it is important to measure when the poll was carried out. I collect the start and end of fieldwork *[field_start]* and *[field_end]*, if they are mentioned. Since I conceive of the poll production pipeline in Chapter 3, I also suggest collecting information about the funder and the implementer. A categorical variable should also exist about what the type of poll in the article is: horse race numbers, ratings of politicians, issues-based questions, foreign affairs, or other, since I am inclusive in the type of polling information that is coded.

At the fourth level, within each poll, I argue that it is necessary to collect relational data for each piece of polling information reported. To provide an example, for each horse race number or rating, it is necessary to collect the point estimate of each candidate or party for

[2]In principle, this method should be adjusted for Internet based publications.

[3]Other variables could include circulation size and political affiliation.

each poll announced. This is important to illustrate differences between candidates or parties within polls. When multiple polls are carried out, such a data collection method allows me to show the richness of information available to the public about the relative standing of candidates or parties. I also collect information about each pundit who is mentioned in the story and have the coder rate pundit's coverage of the poll's overall quality and reliability as "positive," "neutral," or "negative."

Finally, multiple survey questions and multiple pundits can be found within the same article. Therefore, separate rows within relational tables capture this data and are connected to each article.

In order to show this data collection concept in practice, I go back to every national election held in Georgia after independence (1992, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2008, and 2012). I code articles from seven main Georgian newspapers for the sixty days prior to each election. The newspapers are *24saati*, *Alia*, *Akhali Taoba*, *Asaval Dasavali*, *K'viris Falit'ra*, *Rezonansi*, and *Sakartvelos Respublika*. To collect data from all of these newspapers, coders were sent to the Georgian National Library and instructed to skim the entirety of the coverage for each newspaper in the two months running up to each election.

The main unit of analysis is a polling-fieldwork-newspaper story — that is, one set of fieldwork embedded in one news story. For each article, where there was newspaper coverage involved, the coders took photographs of the articles, so they could be referred to in the case of any issues in the original coding, and any scholar could recode the data based on a different schema if they so desired.[4] I collect all of the data with the idea being that this data can be collapsed to aggregate election-year data, but the process of obtaining one type of data from the other is transparent and replicable. To ensure broad coverage, I collect all stories based on public opinion data, not only horse race data.

[4]They cannot validate that the researchers collected all of the stories. Further intercoder reliability could test this.

Such a method allows me to discuss in more detail the polling environment during each electoral cycle. Given the focus on the electoral cycle in this article, I return to the discussion of whether polling data existed and whether it was favorable or not to the incumbent.

While I only carry out the newspaper coding project in Georgia, I also present measurements from Kenya as well, where I gained information through interviews and other secondary sources. I compare my data to the measurement in the NELDA dataset and, in doing so, question the causal mechanisms through which polls have been theorized to operate. For example, Figure 7.2 visualizes all of the horse race numbers announced prior to the 2003 Parliamentary elections in Georgia in local papers.

7.0.2 Expanding and Correcting Measurement of Polling in NELDA

In order to compare my method to NELDA's, I discuss NELDA in some detail. The NELDA database has become a rightly influential database in cross-national research on elections. It is one of the first datasets to collect systematic data about a wide variety of variables related to national elections (Hyde and Marinov 2012). In this section, I describe the NELDA data structure and point to some areas where my own fieldwork and data collection lead me to believe it could be improved and expanded on, as it relates to public opinion polling.

The NELDA data structure contains elections between 1960 and 2010 and distinguishes between legislative, executive, and constituent assembly elections, regardless of whether they happened on the same day or not.[5] NELDA codes 58 covariates related to each electoral context. All of these variables are binary variables, though an "unclear" option is added in some cases. While the coding protocol is not entirely clear, what we do know is that undergraduate students code all of these variables from a wide variety of sources listed on

[5]The dataset, which first was published in 2012, already has 58 peer-reviewed articles which cite it, according to Web of Science and 204 Google Scholar citations (June 1, 2016).

the project's webpage (http://www.nelda.co/).[6] There is a space for notes (in a notes field) with regard to each question; however, the source of each piece of information is never present in the dataset, making it impossible to replicate the data collection process.

Two questions from the dataset directly ask about public opinion polling. While it is not outrightly stated, both of these measures are *aggregate* measures. The first question, *NELDA_25*, asks, "Were there reliable polls that indicated popularity of ruling party candidates for office before elections?" One can deduce that the goal of this question is to ascertain whether there was reliable information about the outcome of the election before the election. However, four questions arise from the way the question is posed. First, the notion that a poll "indicates popularity" is vague. For example, no horse race numbers or likability ratings could exist during an election cycle, but numbers about how citizens thought the incumbent was performing at providing government services could exist. These numbers could provide a good proxy for popularity. Second, the question only refers to ruling party candidates. Popularity of the ruling party should be relative to popularity of the non-ruling party. Even if the ruling party was doing a poor job, if citizens thought the non-ruling party was doing an even worse job, what would that say about the ruling party candidate? Third, what happens if there is turnover among parties, and there is no ruling party candidate? Should this be coded as "Not applicable"? Fourth, the word "reliable" used in NELDA's determination of how to code the variable is not easy to define, and it is unlikely that undergraduate coders would be able to accurately determine whether a poll was reliable (a separate issue from intercoder reliability). Distinguishing reliability is even more difficult, since the question does not ask anything about the source of the polling information and does not distinguish between different types of pollsters, nor does it mention the name of the organization who performed the polling, or what the source of funding was.

[6] All of the sources are English language sources that aggregate information or provide curated news content.

The second NELDA Question, *NELDA_26*, is only pertinent to those elections where a) there was polling, and b) there was an incumbent. The question asks, "were they [the polls] favorable for the incumbent?" This question has a potentially faulty underlying assumption built into it. It assumes that all of the polls came to the same conclusion. As discussed in the theoretical section, it is very possible that different polls came to different conclusions. Moreover, the word "favorable" is vague. Since *NELDA_25* only refers to popularity and not to quantitative evidence of the position of the candidate, in order for the answer to be "no," it may simply indicate that the this poll put the candidate in a bad light, but does not necessarily predict the candidate is going to lose.

7.0.3 Measurement and the Georgian and Kenyan Examples

To better understand the coding of public opinion data, I merge the dataset that I have collected for Kenya and Georgia with the NELDA Dataset. Figure 7.1 shows all of the elections and corresponding years for Georgia and Kenya.

In this section, I focus on four issues that bear on the theory of the explanatory power of public opinion polls. These issues are both theoretical and empirical. My data collection strategy for newspapers, combined with extensive fieldwork in Georgia and Kenya, allow me to gain better purchase on (1) the existence of bans on polling, (2) the existence of private campaign polling, (3) the existence of public campaign polling, and (4) whether polling was unfavorable.

Polling Bans

As discussed in Chapter 4, measurement of the presence or absence of public opinion polls needs to take into consideration the presence of structural zeros during the campaign cycle, something that NELDA currently does not implement.

There are several issues in measuring polling bans. First, in some contexts there are only short-term polling bans. Measuring shorter term bans is more difficult. This is related to the problem of what the appropriate time horizon for measuring polls is. Since different countries have different election cycles, polling will vary based on the length of the electoral cycle. However, a reasonable measurement strategy could be to code whether it was possible to carry out political public opinion polls at all during the election cycle. This is the strategy I implement for Kenya and Georgia.

As Figure 7.1 illustrates, Kenya and Georgia have different polling histories. When it was part of the Soviet Union, there was no political polling in Georgia. Since its independence from the Soviet Union, however, Georgia has always had some form of pre-election polling operations. These operations emerged from social psychology and sociology departments in the Soviet university structure, as my interviews with pollsters revealed.

Some of the people affiliated with these academic departments founded market research firms, which carried out public opinion polling. However, because of foreign donors' interest in funding civil society organizations — since none had existed during the Communist era — many NGOs also sprung up. Many of these NGOs also carried out polling.

Before Georgia's infrastructural collapse, telephone public opinion polls were carried out in the major metropolitan areas; but by the mid-1990s, all interviewing was done face-to-face, as massive rolling electricity outages and the destruction of the telephone infrastructure to sell as scrap metal made telephone polls an untenable option. Generally in Georgia, polling has historically been unregulated. Interviewers have not faced problems from the authorities in conducting their fieldwork, though minority non-speaking Georgian areas are often not sampled, leading to large bias in estimates, since these minorities make up more than 10% of the population.[7]

[7]These numbers are shrinking because of out-migration to Russia and assimilation.

In Kenya, during the era of Daniel arap Moi and his single party state, which lasted from 1982 to 1991, no election related polling was carried out. The question, then, to ask is: was polling banned?

Kenya has a long history of capitalism, despite its authoritarian politics. Unlike in Communist countries, in Kenya, during the Moi years, market research organizations, such as Steadman, operated; however, they focused almost entirely on carrying out media monitoring to ensure that advertisements were properly placed on television and also conducted other work for commercial firms. While there was no outright ban on polling data, as interviews revealed, each market research firm had to be licensed, and, technically, each study approved by the government. The result, therefore, was a *de facto* polling ban, because companies were fearful that they would have their license revoked and be put out of business for carrying out explicitly political studies. They therefore refrained from even applying to carry any out.

With the return of *multipartyism* in 1992, political polling also slowly began to return to Kenya. Despite the fact that Moi's party, the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), won the 1997 elections, polling began to flourish after these elections. However, the sources for polling were public and not private. Market research firms potentially became less fearful to engage in polling because Moi was constitutionally barred from running again. Some have argued that the failing economy in Kenya also put pressure on Moi to liberalize. Perhaps allowing opinion polling was part of this liberalization.

What do polling bans tell us about data that aggregates the presence or absence of polls? Not carrying out a poll because it is not in one's interest and not carrying out a poll because it is illegal indicates two different causal pathways. Outright polling bans suggest that in order to estimate the effects of polling, in many cases it is necessary to first predict where polling can occur.

Polling bans also tell us about a regime's interest in curtailing information. Polling

bans, for example, could be a good measure of freedom of information. While WAPOR has collected significant data on the *de jure* bans on polling, their focus is on wealthy countries, where the majority of their market share lies. They do not focus on *de facto* bans in electoral authoritarian contexts. Indeed, theory predicts that only in countries with few institutional constraints on violating freedom of speech will polling be banned outright. In principle, not allowing polling at all should also be correlated with elections that opposition parties cannot win, which was the original reason for the collection of the NELDA data set.

Do Campaigns Poll?

Public data, as is collected in the schema discussed above, is not the only type of polling data. As the previous discussion has made clear, access to polling information by a candidate's campaign will be key to that campaign's calculus about how to behave. Theoretically, differential ability to poll can help one side over another. It is both a result of having resources to pay for polling and can also have an effect on the outcome (Sides and Vavreck 2013).

In a perfect world in which everything was observable, it would be ideal to know the budget the pollster had available, the number of polls that were carried out, and the results of these polls. Unless they are publicly released, which is unlikely, particularly if the incumbent is losing, this information is not obtainable. Therefore, the next best proxy would be a measure of whether the party itself funded opinion polls during the electoral cycle, since generally implementers and pollsters are hired for the whole cycle, and this information is obtainable via interviews with polling firms or with elite party operatives. It is important to not only collect data on whether the incumbent party polled, but also the other main competitors. I collect these variables for Kenya and Georgia.

In Georgia, the differential access to private polling data is marked. Historically, the

ruling coalition in Georgia had access to information and its competitors did not. According to my interviews, polling innovation arrived to Georgia through Zurab Zhvania, who joined Shevardnadze's party in 1992. Zhvania worked closely with several different companies to help understand the party's position in the eyes of the public. Moreover, while several interviewees reported that polls were carried out in the run-up to the 1992 election that may have been made public, I did not find any stories in the media discussing polling data in the two months before the 1992 election.

Indeed, it appears that internal party polling emerged in Georgia before publicly available pre-electoral polls. Clearly, unequal data access may be both a cause and an effect here. As is clear from interviews, in a partly free context such as Georgia, where the ruling regime had almost all of the resources, the money needed to work with market research firms was only available to the ruling party. In fact, the unequal playing field reliably predicted that the incumbent power would poll and the opposition would not.

Private public opinion polls could potentially increase the support for the incumbent party, since they may have had much better information about the electorate than the opposition. Qualitative interviews confirm that first the CUG and then Mikheil Saakashvili's UNM were extremely concerned with their own image and making sure they maintained an unassailable majority in Parliament, as well as control of the presidency. These parties contracted international market research and PR firms and used sophisticated methods to ensure their messaging was palatable to the population, particularly around elections. The opposition did not do so until 2012.[8]

The general case of differential data access in many Georgian election cycles stands in firm contradistinction to the two elections where there was a change in party — the first extra-constitutionally (in 2003) and the second constitutionally (in 2012). That is, the two

[8]These incumbent parties also withheld this information within their own party to main internal party discipline, which is another interesting topic and addressed in Chapter 6.

elections in which the incumbent lost in Georgia were the only two elections where the challenger had access to polling data. However, this access to polling data was conditional on the playing field being more balanced in terms of resources, where opposition parties had money to conduct public opinion polling.

In Kenya, prior to 2007, no campaign carried out their own polling, according to interviews. Moreover, KANU's reaction was to relentlessly attack the publicly available polls in public in 2002, and they were not privately interested in carrying out their own polls.

Unlike Georgia, Kenya has not witnessed differential polling access, at least not in its presidential elections. Before 2007, no presidential candidate had their own polling data. Both parties have polled around elections, both in 2007 and 2013. Although one party (TNA or PNU) is reported to have more money than its main competitor in 2007 and 2013 (ODM), inequality in financing has not prevented the purportedly poorer party (ODM) from polling. Indeed, in both presidential elections where one major candidate has funded polling, the other major candidate has also done so.

Public Presence of Data

How does local knowledge and disaggregated polling data confirm or disconfirm NELDA's coding of the presence of public opinion polling data? I argue that NELDA tells part of the story, but also potentially misses much of the variation.

Two elections occurred on the same day in 1992 in Georgia: presidential and parliamentary elections. In these elections, Eduard Shevardnadze ran unopposed for President, while the elected president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was in exile, having fled the country amidst civil war.[9] According to the NELDA database, it is unclear if there were reliable polling data for

[9]Interestingly, Georgia's last Communist election, where almost the entire population voted for the nationalist Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the opposition candidate, is not in NELDA, because it was before Georgia's declaration of independence.

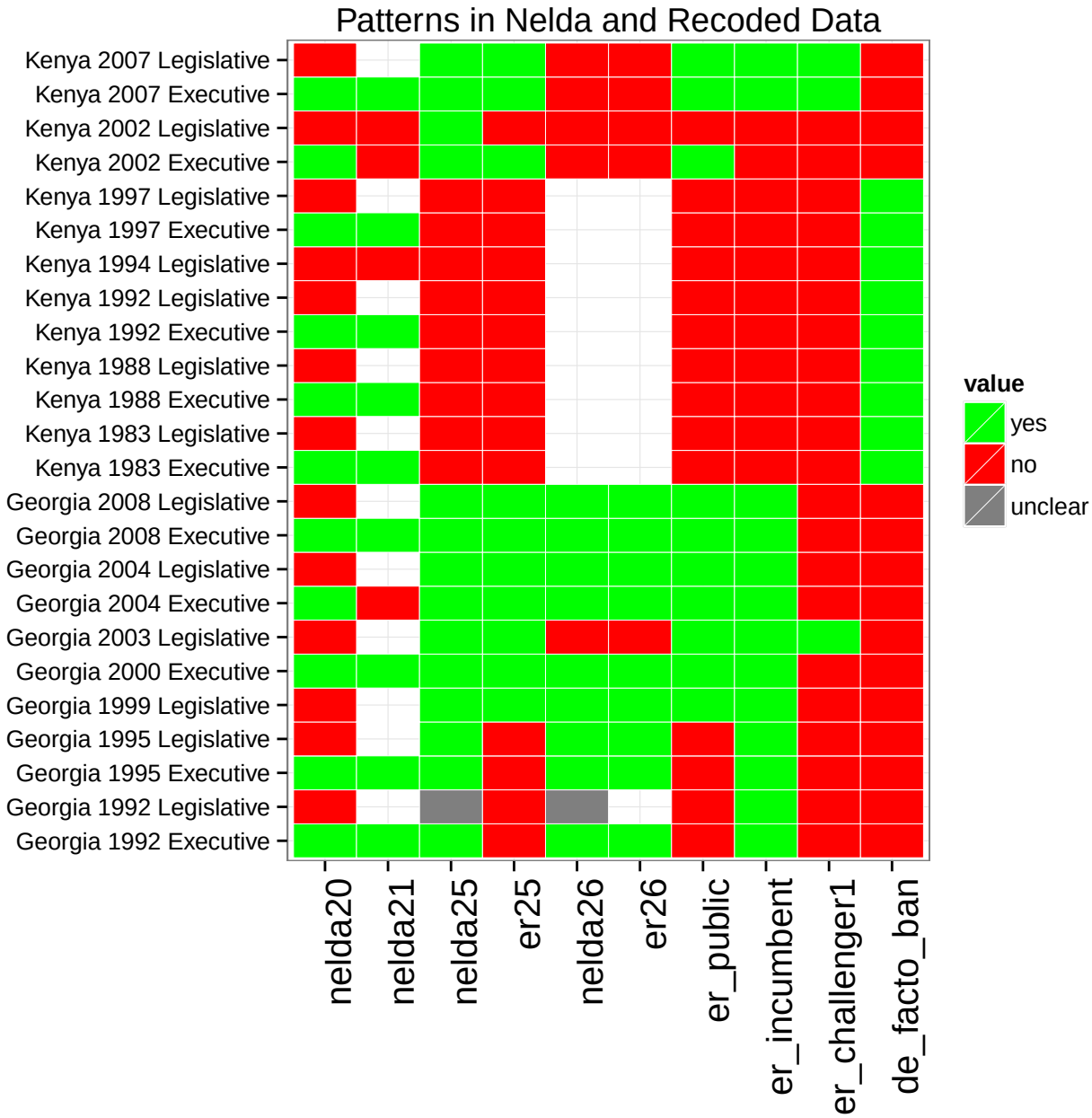

Figure 7.1: textttnelda 20, 21, and 25 and 26 show the original codings of the Nelda variables. `nelda20` refers to whether the incumbent leader contests the election (referring to presidents in presidential systems and prime ministers in parliamentary systems). `nelda21` asks if the incumbent candidate contested the election. `nelda25` and `nelda26` measure the presence of polling data and whether is was favorable to the incumbent, respectively. The prefix "er" stands for variables I coded; `er25` and `er26` compare my codings of Kenya and Georgia with NELDA's. `er_incumbent` is whether the incumbent polls, while `er_challenger` indicates whether the main challenger polled. `de_facto_ban` measures whether or not there was a *de facto ban*. White squares are not applicable (NA) values, where there is a skip pattern.

the parliamentary election, but there were polling data for the presidential election. The "yes" here for the presidential election is almost assuredly a false positive. As my newspaper coding shows, no polling story appeared in the local print press in 1992, neither about candidates nor about issues directly. Moreover, the presidential candidate was running unopposed. Therefore, from an incentive structure perspective, nobody should have had a need to conduct a public opinion poll. The "unclear" for the legislative election is also likely a "no." Given that Georgia was a presidential regime at the time, with most of the power vested in the presidency, it would seem unusual that polling would occur just for the legislature and not for the presidency.

Interviewees did document that they worked on polling for Zurab Zhvania during the 1992 elections — and one interviewee said that they released information to the press as a check on fraud and manipulation — however, much of Zhvania's polling served to help provide him with information in order jockey for position within Eduard Shevardnadze's party. It was important for Zhvania to sideline conservative elements within his own party. Therefore, there would be little incentive to release this data publicly. In fact, I do not find this data when I code the newspapers.

The 1995 legislative and parliamentary elections in Georgia, which occurred at different times, also present an interesting problem. Again, while interviewees report that polling occurred at the time, particularly for the regime party, the CUG, I do not find any mention of these polls in the press in the sixty days leading up to the election, though I do find other opinion-related questions that could bear on the popularity of the regime. However, neither of these elections had much uncertainty to begin with, again suggesting that the incentive for publicly available polling is endogenous to funders' priors about the uncertainty of the environment.

Because of Kenya's *de facto* ban on polls, the break between when polling occurred and

when it did not is much easier to document and makes the Kenya case more clear cut. The KANU one-party state ended in 1992, and while it may have been possible to poll before the 1997 elections, it would have been an extremely risky endeavor. Moreover, given the inaccessible parts of the country, fieldwork is also extremely challenging and expensive.[10]

The earliest pre-election data in Kenya was collected before the 2002 elections. The first company to enter the market was Strategic Research, supported by the IRI after the 1997 elections. Strategic's enumerators were beaten up on multiple occasions by KANU officials. After Strategic began to poll, Steadman also joined in. While Steadman had been hesitant to enter the market because of fear that the government was going to rescind their license, Strategic, a smaller start-up, entered the space and perhaps paved the way. While these polls mainly did not focus on who was going to win the election, they did paint the Moi regime in a dismal light, as Hornsby (2012) documents.

However, interestingly, from my interviews, the role that public data played in Kenya in the early days of *multipartyism* the theoretical implication that in locations with public data, but little or no private data, public data may have a larger impact on the electoral landscape. Moreover, the 2002 elections in Kenya were an uncertain environment, given that Moi was stepping down, again adding evidence to the argument that, like in Georgia in 2003, polls were endogenous to uncertain environments.

Was There Unfavorable Polling Data?

For good theoretically relevant reasons, NELDA collects data on whether polling is unfavorable to the incumbent. The variable *(NELDA_26)* is only relevant when there is either an

[10]Indeed, Kenyan polls also often possess large bias. While many companies do not explicitly say so, they often do not cover the entirety of Northern Kenya, which is large and sparsely populated. Historically this has not been a problem for national estimates, as the population was relatively small. However, with high birth rates and migration into Kenya from Somalia (and purchase of illegal documents), the population of Northeastern Kenya has swelled, making its inhabitants behavior more important for aggregate voting estimates.

incumbent party in legislative elections or an incumbent for executive elections.

To examine how polling unfavorability might operate, I examine two elections where there was pre- and/or post-election protest and violence — in 2003 in Georgia (where there was more protest than violence post-election) and in 2007 in Kenya, where there was serious post-election violence. Comparing two elections where there was election-related violence allows me to examine the role of polling in a uncertain electoral environments and how favorable or unfavorable polling contributes to election-related unrest. In Georgia, *NELDA_26* codes the polling data as "unfavorable" in the 2003 legislative elections, and also codes the data in Kenya in 2007 as "unfavorable."

Georgia

As documented in Chapter 6, the 2003 legislative elections in Georgia involved a rump incumbent party, FNG. The run up to the 2003 elections had resulted in a split of the ruling coalition, which led to six parties that gave signals of being able to seriously contest the elections. Two of the parties that emerged to contest these election had splintered from the ruling CUG, headed by Eduard Shevardnadze. As a result, Shevardnadze formed the FNG party.

According to interviews, the decision for many of those who defected to do so was based on their own internal polling data. This data showed that Zurab Zhvania and Mikheil Saakashvili had enough popular support among the electorate to splinter from CUG; Saakashvili formed a new party called the National Movement. A second splinter group was led by Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze and called the Burjanadze-United Democrats. Both of these parties conducted their own private polling.

The 2003 level of polling constituted a qualitative break in the intensity of polling in

Georgia compared to previous elections.[11] I find 21 mentions of horse race numbers in polls in the run up to the 2003 elections. However, this data needs to be de-duplicated, as the same horse race story may appear in more than one paper. As others have found in news stories, de-duplication is extremely difficult to automate.[12] After de-duplication, I therefore discuss 13 unique polls carried out by five pollsters, as shown in Figure 7.2.[13]

While I argue that *NELDA_26* is properly coded, and there is evidence that the polling is unfavorable for the incumbent party of Eduard Shevardnadze, it is unclear from this polling data that Shevardnadze would lose control of the Parliament. First, it is important to note that "Don't knows" remain extremely high. While in Georgia, "don't knows" are generally correlated with opposition support, the proportion of the "don't knows" supporting opposition parties was unknown. Since the two parties coded in red were running in a coalition, it also appears that they could together win more than any other party.

In other words, while the data do show that the environment is uncertain, they do not show as dire a situation for Shevardnadze's government as a naive interpretation might allow. The combination of UDR support coupled with that for FNG meant that, if the opposition did not unite, there was a possibility for the incumbent to stay in power. Shevardnadze's ability to maintain power was even more likely because the MMP system gave preference to rural voters, who, for reasons of either coercion or conservatism, tended to vote for the regime in power, as explained in Chapter 6.

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[11]It is important to note that most Georgian polls about vote choice did not include a "likely voter model;" that is, some polls specifically asked about not voting, while others did not. Moreover, these polls often had a wide and differing sets of parties to choose from and some polls give the options of those who haven't made up their mind and others do not.

[12]One newspaper, *Kviris Falit'ra*, publishes regular polls, where they poll their readers on a wide variety of questions, including voting. The large support of the Labour Party in these polls likely reflects the paper's readership. I also do not show one poll that is patently fabricated, claims 99% for UDR and does not mention a pollster

[13]In many stories, not all the numbers for all the candidates are reported. Therefore a simple match on all of the numbers is impossible. It may also be the case that the newspapers misreport the numbers from some of the survey data. For this data, I manually de-duplicated.

This disaggregation of data, as I have argued, allows researchers to code the *NELDA_26* variable differently, if they so desire. Perhaps they would want to change the *NELDA_26* binary measurement to a nominal measurement with a middle category. Or perhaps scholars would prefer to use other measures of unfavorability, such as the mean distance in all of the polls from the party that is in the lead.

The disaggregation of the data also allows researchers to discuss poll biases and house effects. In none of the polls shown in Figure 7.2 were the funders of the polls disclosed in the newspapers; however, the polling implementers were. BCG is run by the wife of a long-standing Saakashvili supporter, now a high-ranking UNM official. They worked internally on the National Movement's campaign in 2003.[14] Indeed, from my theory, it appears likely that this poll was released publicly in order to send a signal of National Movement support before the elections. The poll's rank order of parties, which shows the National Movement ahead of the Burjanadze-Democrats, is the only poll to ranke the National Movement ahead of the Burjanadze-Democrats. This finding also agrees with the theoretical prior that party affiliates tend to release polls only when they want to influence the information marketplace.

During fieldwork I tried in vain to contact anyone related to Alia/MGM or Socium, and, while I could not find any direct contacts, it appears that Alia/MGM were working with IPM, who were conducting private polling for the Burjanadze-Democrats at the time.Interestingly, at least in the print media's reporting on these polls, estimates of the incumbent's party are not included. Without knowing the incentives of Alia/MGM, it is hard to comment more on the polls. Yet the regularity with which they were carried out and the stability of the results, with decreasing levels of unsure voters, provided a consistent picture of a very close multi-party race.

The density of polling also allows us to theorize why there was so much polling in a leg-

[14]The poll they publicly released was conducted with some university affiliates as well.

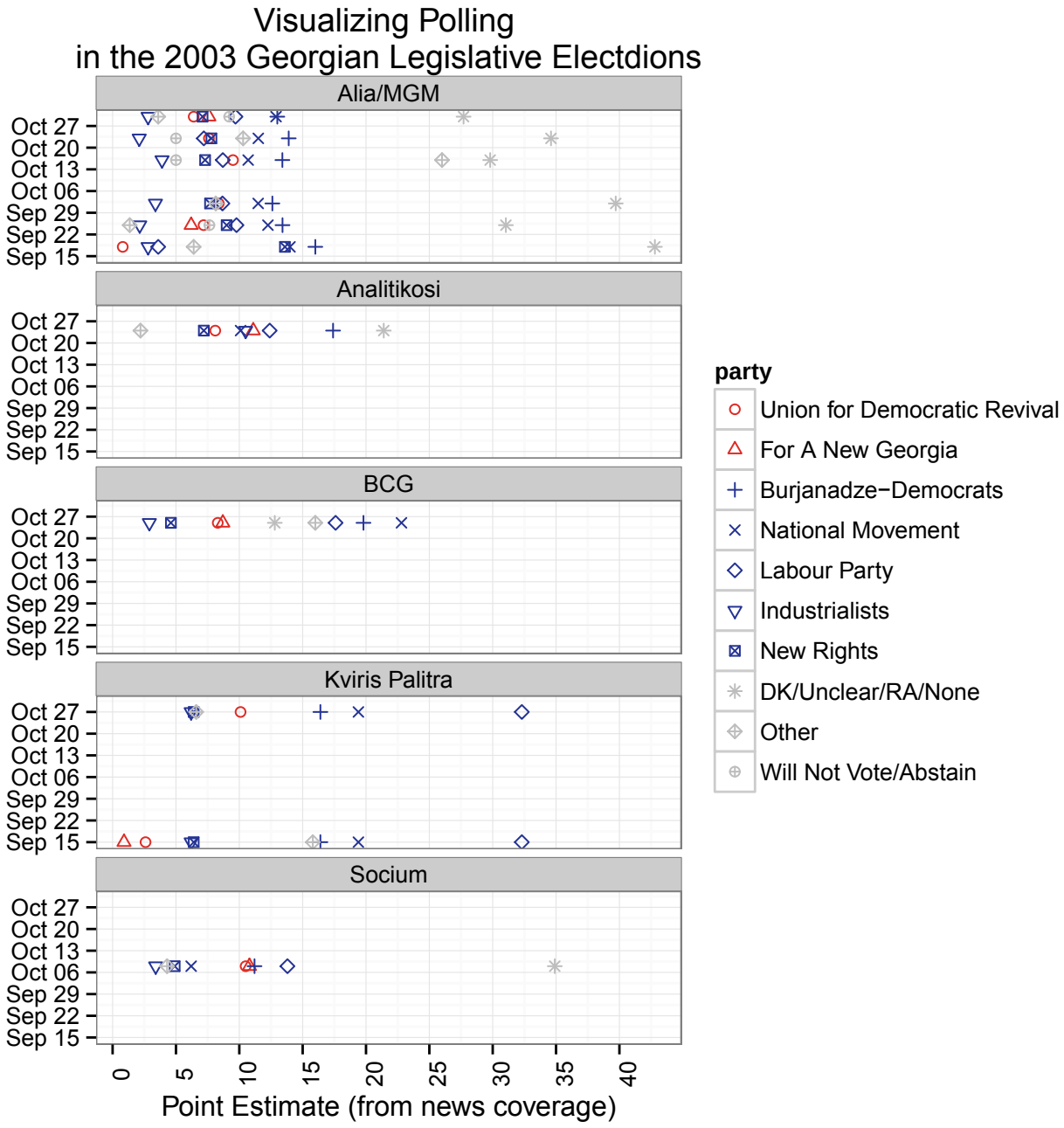

Figure 7.2: Each box shows all the polls carried out by any pollster in the 2003 Georgian elections, which was captured in the local press in the 60 days before the elections. Blue shapes are opposition parties, while red shapes are incumbent parties.

islative election, contrary to the theoretical prediction. The high level of polling is likely due to the fact that the legislative elections were held before the presidential ones. Because the ruling coalition had splintered, there was a lot of uncertainty, and a shift in power seemed possible. Winning or losing a legislative elections would send a very strong signal about who would win the presidential elections, which were scheduled for several months later. That is, if one party takes control in the legislative elections, given Georgia's history of dominant ruling parties, then it becomes very likely that this party will also win the presidency. This goes against the theoretical prior that there would be lower levels of polling in such a legislative election, because Georgia's MMP system renders polling on a national level not predictive of the allocation of parliamentary seats.[15]

Kenya

In Kenya, the stakes were high in the 2007 elections. Mwai Kibaki, who now flew the flag of the Party of National Unity (PNU), had won the presidency in the previous elections in 2002 under the banner of the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) party and was clearly the incumbent. Raila Odinga, Kibaki's main opponent, who hailed from a different ethnic group, had been in the NARC coalition with Kibaki in 2002. Before the 2007 elections, Kibaki then reneged on his agreement to support Odinga, who therefore ran against him.

Indeed, as the election neared, Kibaki was in a heated race with Odinga, who had founded the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) (after some party hopping). The race itself was dynamic, and opinion polling was carried out over the two years before the actual election date.[16]

[15]Georgia is an MMP system, with no replacement. Therefore, in order to control the parliament, it is necessary for a party to win a significant number of single mandate seats.

[16]In the very early polling, a third candidate, Kalonzo Musyoka, had also been in the lead, according to Steadman's polls (Wolf 2009).

Survey firm	**No. districts*/sample size**	**Kibaki**	**Odinga**	**Musyoka**	**Total for Top 3**
Steadman Group	71/6,111	43	45	10	98
Strategic Public Relations Infotrak-Harris	Unstated/2,405	36	46	17	99
Infotrak-Harris	Unstated/2,400	36	46	16	98
Consumer Insight	39/2,400	41	43	15	99
Gallup (USA)/Path Assocs.	Unstated/2,000	44	43	12	99
'Actual' (ECK) Results		***46***	***44***	***9***	***99***

Table 7.1: Results of 2007 pre-election public opinion polls adapted from Wolf (2009).

Were the polls in the lead up to the election favorable or unfavorable to Kibaki? The Nation News Group had agreed to hire three of Kenya's main polling agencies to carry out regular polls. Under The Nation New Groups's contract, the results of these polls were published in the newspaper on a regular basis. From an economic perspective, this was a fairly straightforward transaction. However, the incentives structures in reality were much murkier. The same firms that were contracting with the media were also working as private pollsters for the political parties. Most commonly, since parties could only fund a limited number of their own surveys, parties were buying subnational breakdowns of data from the pollsters. According to those I interviewed, this was in order to estimate turnout and vote support among their core ethnic supporters and among known swing ethnic groups, who were not strongly aligned with either ODM or PNU.

The poll results shortly before the elections are shown in Table 7.1. Despite their apparent interest in purchasing information, which ostensibly was gong to help them to win the elections, and regardless of what party they were working for, the pollsters were generally accused of supporting one side or another. The Steadman Group was seen as supporting PNU despite showing Kibaki as losing, albeit by a smaller margin than the other two pollsters in The Nation News Group consortium. These two pollsters, Infotrack and Strategic Research, were both perceived by the political elite as supporting ODM. These allegiance judgments were often made on the basis of the ethnic leadership of the firm.

Irrespective of whom politicians claimed they were supporting, all of the polls among

consortium members showed Raila Odinga in the lead. However, the size of this lead varied greatly from pollster to pollster. Finally, one poll, carried out by a company not in the consortium — Gallup/Path Associates — had given Kibaki a one-point lead. Again, *NELDA_26* records this election as "unfavorable" for the incumbent, Kibaki. Like in Georgia, being behind in the majority of pre-election polls does seem to suggest that the results were unfavorable for Kibaki, although the opinion polls disagreed about how close the elections were. Again, many other researchers may have made other decisions about the unfavorability of Kibaki's chances, and coded this data differently, as I suggested was the case in Georgia.

The presence of much more polling than in previous elections in Kenya, like in Georgia in 2003, shows that high level of polling may be endogenous to uncertainty. That is, because the environment was uncertain, there was more interest in polling. And, in return, the polling reflected back that the situation was dynamic, which led to more polling.

The above discussion highlights that while in some situations, a binary variable on whether a poll is unfavorable may suffice, without disaggregated data it is impossible to verify whether data was actually unfavorable. Indeed, different scholars could have potentially made different decisions about the coding of the *NELDA_26* in the context of the 2003 Georgian and 2007 Kenyan elections. For example, given that data from multiple polls was available, it would be possible to measure the unfavorability by using a weighted average of the existing polling data (variants of such an approach are carried out in the U.S. context).

Another thought provoking finding from both Kenya and Georgia is that, while polls may measure uncertainty, the very variation of the density of polling may itself me a measure of uncertainty.

7.1 Conclusion

In this section, I have presented an innovative, more granular data collection methodology and have compared this data collection method with NELDA's. I have argued that disaggregated data can allow us to discuss in more detail the coding decisions made in cross-national data sets like NELDA. I have also argued that adding several other variables to NELDA on polling bans and the presence of private and public polling will help scholars to analyze and understand the role of public opinion polling in more detail.

Chapter 8
CONCLUSION

Polls matter. I have argued that in order to understand the decision-making of political elites in developing democracies, we must take stock of their respective informational environments and the uncertainty that exists therein. Political public opinion polls are a key component of this landscape and thus of elite's decision-making process, especially in the context of elections.

In this project, I have argued that our analytical framework for examining public opinion polling in developing democracies must move beyond simply classifying public opinion polls to assess their impacts and must also consider key actors and their respective strategic incentives. I have presented such an expanded framework.

Against the backdrop of an overview of the main actors in the polling industry in emerging democracies, the various roles they play, and the incentives that motivate their actions, I have argued that public opinion polls in developing democracies indeed play a pivotal role in elites' election-related political decision making. This is both because politicians potentially update their beliefs about their electorate and electoral chances using the information they receive from these polls, and because of their beliefs about how citizens and other elites will react to publicly available opinion data.

To provide empirical data to back up my theories, I have probed how political public opinion polling operates in developing democracies by gathering vast quantities of information through first-hand interviews with politicians and stakeholders in opinion polling, as well as by systematically examining secondary sources, namely print-media coverage. I used

a post-Soviet democracy (Georgia) and, to a lesser extent, an East African example (Kenya) as case studies. While I have found variations both in the roles public opinion polling plays in different campaign environments and in the manner in which it is employed by politicians, I have demonstrated that the information from these polls and the manner in which it is collected has become a vital consideration for politicians in democratizing countries.

Lastly, I have also argued that a nuanced understanding of how polls impact elections in developing democracies is hindered by the data currently available. I have proposed that researchers can vastly improve their grasp of the impact of public opinion polls. Doing so requires both more fine-grained data and more measurements at the country-year level. Indeed, I have argued that collecting disaggregated polling data on publicly available public opinion polling allows for a much richer set of possible analysis than is currently possible, as well as for verification of the robustness of cross-national coding decisions. I have presented a new methodology for the collection of disaggregated information about public polling based on local newspaper coverage, and shown how this scheme was implemented in Georgia.

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Appendix A

ALL QUESTIONNAIRES USED IN GEORGIA

Table of Contents

Everyone background

1) To get to understand your background a little bit better. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself/ გთხოვთ მოგვახსენოთ ცოტა რამ თქვენს შესახებ
    a) Age //ასაკი
    b) Education // განათლება
    c) Where did you grow up? // სად იზრდებოდით?
    d) Who would you say were the most formative people in your life and in your political education? // ვინ არიან ის ადამიანები, რომლებმაც დიდი გავლენა მოახდინეს თქვენ ცხოვრებაზე და თქვენს პოლიტიკურ განათლებაზე?
    e) What events, do you think most shaped the type of person you are now? // როგორ ფიქრობთ, რომელმა მოვლენებმა ჩამოგაყალიბეს იმ პიროვნებად, რომელიც დღეს ხართ?
    f) What inspired to enter politics/polling/academia? // რამ შთაგაგონათ, რომ გამხდარიყავით პოლიტიკოსი
    g) Could you briefly tell us your political history. The parties you have been in since independence and the positions you have held in elected office or in the party?შეგიძლიათ, მოკლედ მოგვიყვეთ თქვენი პოლიტიკური კარიერის შესახებ, რომელ პარტიის წევრი ყოფილხართ და რა პოზიციები გეკავათ პარტიასა თუ ხელისუფლებაში?

Politicians' Questionnaire / კითხვარი პოლიტიკოსებისთვის

Competition Section

1) Thinking back to each (majoritarian) election you ran in, how did you gauge what your chances of winning were before the election?
   გადავხედოთ თითოეულ (მაჟორიტარულ) არჩევნებს, რომლებშიც თქვენ მიგიღიათ მონაწილეობა, როგორ აფასებდით თქვენი მოგების შანსებს არჩევნებამდე? ?
2) What signals did you use to measure how many voters supported your campaign?
   რა ნიშნები/სიგნალები/ინდიკატორები გამოიყენეთ რომ განგესაზღვრათ მოსახლეობის რა რაოდენობა გიჭერდათ მხარს?
3) What campaign acitivities did you engage in? / რომელ საკამპანიო აქტივობებში იყავით ჩართული?
4) What were your expectations about the the outcome of the election two weeks before election day? What percent of the vote did you think you were going to get?
   როგორი იყო თქვენი მოლოდინები შედეგთან დაკავშირებით არჩევნებამდე ორი კვირით ადრე? ხმების რამდენ პროცენტს ფიქრობდით რომ მიიღებდით?
5) Tell me about the other candidates? How did you judge their chances What did you think of their campaigns?
   გთხოვთ სხვა კანდიდატებზე გვითხრათ? როგორი იყო მათი შანსები. რას ფიქრობდით მათ კამპანიებზე?
6) Did you think there was any fraud in your election (district) [for majoritarians]?
   ფიქრობდით, რომ გაყალბებას ქონდა ადგილი? (თქვენს მაჟორიტარულ უბანზე)
7) How did you gauge if fraud was involved
   როგორ გამოარკვიეთ რომ გაყალბებას ქონდა ადგილი?

Past Experience with Polls

8) Let's talk about public opinion polling in different elections you ran in?
   მოდით, ვისაუბროთ საზოგადოებრივი აზრის გამოკითხვების შესახებ იმ არჩევნების დროს, რომელშიც მიგიღიათ მონაწილეობა?
9) What's your recollection about public opinion data during that election campaign?
   რა გახსენდებათ საზოგადოებრივი აზრის გამოკითხვის მაშინდელ მონაცემებზე (არჩევნებისათვის კამპანიის დროს)?

10) Was their any data on your majoritarian race or was it just national ror regional esults?
არსებობდა მონაცემები თქვენი ადგილობრივი მაჟორიტარული უბნისავის თუ მხოლოდ ეროვნულ ან რეგიონალურ დონეზე?
11) What was your reaction to that data?
რა რეაქცია გქონდათ ამ შედეგებზე
12) What impact do you think this public opinion data had on that election campaign
თქვენი აზრით, რა გავლენა ჰქონდა ამ შედეგებს ხსენებულ საარჩევნო კამპანიაზე?
13) Can remember a situation in which public opinion data influenced the position you took on a public issue? Could you explain how the data changed your position?
გახსენდებათ თუ არა შემთხვევა, როდსაც გამოკითხვის შედეგებმა გავლენა იქონია თქვენს პოზიციაზე საჯარო(საზოგადოებრივ) საკითხთან დაკავშირებით? შეგიძლიათ ახსნათ როგორ შეცვალა ამ მონაცემებმა თქვენი შეხედულება?

General Polling Questions

14) What is your understanding of how publicly available political public opinion polling works in countries like the United States or Germany? Who pays for it and why do they pay for it?
თქვენი აზრით, როგორ მუშაობს პოლიტიკური, (საჯარო) საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევები ისეთ ქვეყნებში როგორიც არის შეერთებული შტატები ან გერმანია? ვინ იხდის და რატომ იხდის?
    a) [PROBE] Why do those people pay for ratings of politicians, horse race numbers, support for various governt policy positions?
    რატომ იხდიან ისინი პოლიტიკოსების რეიტინგებში, წინასწარ შედეგებში და რატომ უჭერენ მხარს სხვადასხვა მთავრობის პოლიტიკას ამა თუ იმ საკითზე?
15) What is your understanding of how publicly available public opinion polling works in countries like Georgia? How does it differ from Europe and America? Who pays for it and why in Georgia?
თქვენი აზრით, როგორ მუშაობს (საჯაროდ ხელმისაწვდომი) საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევები ისეთ ქვეყნებში როგორიც არის საქართველო? რით განსხავდება ისინი ევროპისა და ამერიკისაგან?
16) Who in your understanding pays for political public opinion surveys in Georgia. Currently and in the past?
თქვენი აზრით, ვისი დაფინანსებით ტარდება საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევები საქართველოში, ამჟამად და წარსულში?
17) Why do you think the organization(s) you just mentioned support public opinion polling?

თქვენი აზრით, რატომ ატარებენ ორგანიზაცია(ები) საზოგადოებრივი აზრის გამოკითხვას?

a) [PROBE ALL ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED]

18) Why do yout think about the organizations that actually do the fieldwork in Georgia? Do you have any opinions? Feel free to mention as many as you like…
რას ფიქრობთ იმ ორგანიზაციებზე რომლებიც ატარებენ გამოკითხვებს? გაქვთ რაიმე მოსაზრება მათ შესახებ? შეგიძლიათ დასაახელოთ რამდენიც მოგესურვებათ.

Opinions

19) Overall, how do you think other politicians are affected by public opinion polling results?
თქვენი აზრით, ზოგადად, რა გავლენას ახდენს სხვა პოლიტიკოსებზე საზოგადოებრივი აზრის გამოკითხვის შედეგები?

20) Overall, what do you think about these public opinion polls currently?
საერთოდ რას ფიქრობთ ამ შედეგებზე ახლა?

a) [PROBE] Do you trust them? Why or why not?
ჩაეძიეთ: ენდობით თუ არა მათ? რატომ დიახ/არა?

21) In Georgia today, What do you think the benefits are of public opinion polls, if any?
თქვენი აზრით, ზოგადად საქართველოში დღესდღეობით რა სარგებელი მოაქვს საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევებს? ?

22) In Georgia today, What do you think the major flaws are of public opinion polls?
როგორ ფიქრობთ დღესდღეობით საქართველოში რა არის საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევის მთავარი ნაკლი?

23) How would you address the shortcomings of how public opinion polls are currently conducted in Georgia?
როგორ გამოასწორებდით საზოგადოებრივი კვლევის ჩატარების ხარვეზებს ამჟამად საქართველოში?

a) How would you address the shortcoming of how the polling data is read and utilized?
როგორ გამოასწორებდით საზოგადოებრივი კვლევის მონაცემთა ინტერპრეტაციასა და მოხმარებასთან დაკავშირებულ ხარვეზებს?

b) How can the data be utilized more effectively?
როგორ შეიძლება მონაცემების უფრო ეფექტურად გამოყენება?

24) Are there some types of public opinion questions you find more useful than others? Could you give me examples of questions?
არსებობს თუ არა ისეთი კითხვები საზოგადოებრივი აზრის გამოკითხვებში,

რომლებიც, თქვენი აზრით, უფრო სასარგებლოა? შეგიძლიათ (ამ კითხვების) მაგალითები მოიყვანოთ?

a) Why are these questions more useful?
რატომ არის ეს კითხვები უფრო სასარგებლო?

Final Questions

25) What do you understand by the term "random sample"
როგორ გესმით ტერმინი "შერჩევა" (ალბათური/შემთხვევითი შერჩევა)

26) What do you understand by the term "confidence interval"
როგორ გესმით ტერმინი "ცდომილება" (ცდომილების ინტერვალი)

Business and Development / ბიზნესი და განვითარება

Business Founding and Development

1) How did your political polling operations get started? What motivated you to start political polling? Why did you think it would be a good idea?
   როგორ დაიწყეთ საზოგადოებრივი აზრის გამოკითხვები? რამ გიბიძგათ, რომ დაგეწყოთ საზოგადოებრივი აზრის გამოკითხვების ჩატარება? თქვენი აზრით ეს კარგი იდეა იყო? რატომ კი/არა?

   a) [PROBE: Specific, date, time, location, type of business registration]
      ჩაეძიეთ: დრო, ადგილი და ბიზნესის რეგისტრაციის ტიპი.

   b) How did you find people to carry out the fieldwork?
      როგორ იპოვეთ ხალხი, რომელიც ატარებს საველე სამუშაოებს?

2) Who did you learn the business of opinion polling from?
   ვისგან ისწავლეთ საზოგადოებრივი აზრის გამოკითხვების ბიზნესის შესახებ?

   a) Were there foreigners involved? If so, how?
      იყვნენ თუ არა ჩართულები უცხოელები? თუ დიახ, როგორ?

3) What was the earliest business model?
   რა იყო პირველი ბიზნეს მოდელი?

   a) How did the business model develop?
      როგორ განვითარდა ბიზნეს მოდელი?

4) How did language barriers present problems for you in learning the trade of polling?
   წარმოადგენდა თუ არა ენობრივი ბარიერი პრობლემას საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევის ბაზრის შესწავლისას? თუ დიახ, როგორ?

Experiences

5) I am now going to ask about periods in Georgia's history. Pre-Reose revolution, the UNM period and the post-UNM period. Now can you tell me about the earliest period you worked on and move forward?
   ახლა დაგისვამთ კითხვას პერიოდებზე საქართველოს ისტორიაში. ვარდების

რეველოციამდე და შემდეგ ნაციონალური მოძრაობის სათავეში ყოფნის პერიოდზე. იქნებ მომიყევით ყველაზე პირველი არჩევნების შესახებ და შემდეგ მოვყვეთ მომდევნო არჩევნებზე?

a) What challenges did you face in the political polling during that period?
რა სირთულეებს წააწყდით საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევების დროს (კონრეტული არჩევნები)?

b) Did you believe your own results at first? Why or why not?
ენდეთ თუ არა თქვენი კვლევის შედეგებს თავდაპირველად? რატომ კი ან არა?

c) How did you disseminate the results? Who do you think listened to the results and who if any do you think acted upon the results?
როგორ გაავრცელეთ შედეგები ? როგორ ფიქრობთ ვინ გაითვალისწინა შედეგები?

   i) What were the challenges you faced in disseminating your results?
   რა სირთულეებს წააწყდით შედეგების გავრცელებისას?

   ii) How do you think actors understood the results? What were the responses?
   თქვენი აზრით, როგორ გაიგო კვლევით დაინტერესებულმა ხალხმა შედეგების გავრცელება?

   (1) Can you give any example of how you think these polls were used constructively in Georgia? შეგიძლიათ მოიყვანოთ მაგალითი თუ როგორ იქნა საქართველოში გამოყენებული ეს საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევები?

d) Who were the biggest critiques of your work? What were the earliest reactions you got from people when you presented results?
ვინ იყვნენ თქვენი საქმის ყველაზე დიდი კრიტიკოსები? როგორი იყო ხალხის პირველი რეაქცია, როდესაც წარმოადგინეთ თქვენი შედეგები?

GO TO OPINION SECTION

Scholar's Questionnaire / კითხვარი მეცნიერებისთვის/მკვლევარებისთვის

1) Thinking back, how do you think Georgian politicians understood competition?
   წარსულიდან გამომდინარე, რას ფიქრობთ როგორ ესმით ქართველ პოლიტიკოსებს კონკურენცია?
   a) How did they come to understand who was going to win and lose?
      როგორ ხვდებიან ისინი ვინ მოიგებს და ვინ წააგებს?
   b) What signs or signals do you think they employed?
      რა გამაფრთხილებელი ნიშნები გამოიყენეს მათ?
2) How did you decide to engage in quantitative polling or social sciene work in XX?
   როგორ გადაწყვიტეთ რაოდენობრივ კვლევებში ჩართვა XX წელს?
3) What made you think it was possible?
   რამ გაფიქრებინათ, რომ ეს შესაძლებელი იქნებოდა?
4) What did you learn from those early experiences?
   რა ისწავლეთ თქვენი ადრეული გამოცდილებიდან?
5) What were people's reactions to learning of the poll results?
   რა იყო ხალხის რეაქცია, როდესაც იგებდნენ საზოგადოებრივი აზრის კვლევის შედეგებს?
6) How do you think polling has changed over time?
   როგორ ფიქრობთ შეიცვალა საზოგადოებრივი აზრის შედეგები დროთა განმავლობაში?

GO TO OPINION SECTION

Appendix B

SAMPLE DESIGN AND SAMPLE IN GEORGIAN RESEARCH

B.0.1 District Selection

Georgia was originally divided into 85 districts. After the wars of the early 1990s, only 73 of these remained under Georgian control. When elections were organized in the one part of Abkhazia still under Georgian control after 2006, it was given the number 86 and called Zemo Apkhazeti. After the war of 2008, Georgia lost control of both Zemo Apkhazeti and a part of the Liakhvi district they had controlled. They also lost the Akhalgori district, which was fully taken by South Ossetia with the aid of Russian troops. I exclude these three districts from my study.

I choose to stratify the electoral district in the country in order to understand different types of competition that occurred in Georgia. I based the stratification off the The Caucasus Barometer, a major survey on the region stratifies the country into 5 quadrants, four cardinal direction and the capitaI city, which itself is composed of 10 administrative districts.

While the urbanity of Tbilisi makes it a unique strata, I modified this stratification outside Tbilisi, since such a sampling design makes less sense when talking about the electoral history of the country. First, Ach'ara (composed of 6 districts), was under *de facto* control of Aslan Abashidze until the Rose Revolution, and elections there exhibited Soviet rather than democratic competition (Allison, Kukhianidze, and Matsaberidze 1993; Allison 1996). Ach'ara also has autonomous status. Therefore, the dynamics of competition in Ach'ara should look significantly different. Second, there are six districts in the country where the majority of the population is not Georgian (predominantly Armenian or Azeri). These

regions should also have very different dynamics of competition as ethnicity will play a large role. I therefore change the regions from the Caucasus barometer slightly. In effect, I add two extra strata — one called "minority regions" and the other "Ach'ara." I then sampled two districts in each of the seven strata. I then attempted to contact all politicians who garnered more than two percent of the vote in all of the elections for that district.

Because I sample across four election cycles, if a candidate competed in more than one election cycle, can appear multiple times in the sample.

B.0.2 Issues in Sample Selection

Several other issues arose during the research. In 2003, while almost all of the majoritarians maintained their seats, several districts were annulled for fraud. In my sample, this includes the district of Bolnisi, where the former Governor Levan Mamaladze had won the seat. After the Rose revolution, the results for Bolinisi were annulled and the results are also not contained in the database of results from the Central Election Commission. Given that the results were annulled, I interviewed those candidates that ran in the annulled election. There were also several districts where the candidate had either been appointed to a governmental position or stepped down immediately after the election. This occurred in two cases. In one case, in Ozurgeti in 2008, the candidate who won stepped down almost immediately after the election. In the other, in Baghdati in 2012, the candidate who won assumed a high governmental position and stepped down. In both these cases, I continued to interview those who had competed the first time, rather than the second time, as I considered these second elections to be by-elections.

B.1 The Sampled Districts

B.1.1 Minority Sample

Ts'alk'a

Ts'alk'a lies high in the lesser Caucasus mountains. While only 130 kilometers from Tbilisi, for most of independence it was very isolated because the state of the mountainous road was in abysmal condition. Before 1918, the area was sparsely populated, a result of the severe weather. However, after WWI, many Orthodox Christian Turks (who are called Greeks, but did not speak Greek) were resettled in the area, along with an Armenian population.[1] They engaged in state sponsored agriculture, particularly in potato farming. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Greece opened its borders to the Greek population and the majority of the Greek population emigrated to Greece. Many Armenians also left to Russia as the subsidized agricultural economy collapsed. After several major landslides decimated villages in Ach'ara, Georgian speaking eco-migrants were relocated to the area. It is now one of the most ethnically diverse regions in Georgia. While Armenians comprise the largest ethnic group, ethnic Georgians, Azerbaijanis, and the remnants of the Greek population reside in the region. Though still very economically depressed, the situation has improved with the upgrading and paving of the road from Tbilisi as part of Millennium Challenge Corporation's investment in Georgia.

Bolnisi

Bolnisi lies in an agriculturally rich agricultural land near the border with Azerbaijan. It also has an important gold mine in the town of Kazreti. The city of Bolnisi itself is predominantly ethnically Georgian, with many eco-migrants from Svaneti, who were resettled in Soviet

[1]For a fascinating account of some of the politics see Wheatley (2006).

times. Almost all of the surrounding villages, with the exception of Kazreti, many of which are very large, are ethnically Azerbaijani, and Azerbaijanis make up the majority of the population. Despite its proximity to Tbilisi on a well-paved road, the Azerbaijani population remains isolated from Tbilisi, and historically has looked to Baku (the capital of Azerbaijan) rather than Tbilisi. In the last four election cycles, almost all of the politicians have been ethnically Georgian.

B.1.2 The Capital

Samgori

This part of Tbilisi has generally been known as a "workers" district. During Soviet times it was dominated by large industrial factories, including the 31st Factory, which figures heavily in its electoral history, since the director of the factory at the time ran for the Parliamentary seat in 2003. The 31st Factory was a large soviet aircraft factory, which is currently a joint stock company called Tbilavisheni. While Tbilaviasheni still operates, many of the other factories have closed down. The population remains relatively poor compared to many other parts of Tbilisi and unemployment remains high.

Vak'e

Vak'e is historically the wealthiest district in Tbilisi and home to many of Tbilisi's wealthy residents. Its relative wealth and levels of education have made it a bastion of opposition politics in Georgia, and it has often elected politicians not from the ruling party. However, the electoral district also includes several villages on the outskirts of Tbilisi where internally displaced persons (IDPs) were held. Several candidates for president and presidents have also run for office from Vak'e, including Levan Gachechiladze and Mikheil Saakashvili.

B.1.3 Northwest

Lentekhi

Lentekhi is the second smallest majoritarian district in Georgia. Its politics have been dominated by one politician, Giorgi Liparteliani, for the last three electoral cycles. Liparteliani is a wealthy businessman, has weathered changes of power, and is one of the few Georgian parliamentarians to be elected to three consecutive terms in office. Lentekhi historically makes up the region of Lower Svaneti, where they speak a separate language, Svan, which deviated from modern Georgia in 1500 BC.

Chkhorotsq'u

Chkorotsq'u is a rural Mingrelian district in the foothills of the Caucasus. The region is relatively well off compared to many other rural districts because of the quality of the agricultural land and the production of hazelnuts. Politics in the districts tends to be more clan-based than in many other districts, with the Izoria family playing an outsized role in politics.

B.1.4 Southeast

Borjomi

Rustavi

Developed in the Soviet area in the flat plains between Azerbaijan and Georgia, Rustavi was the seat of Georgian industrial production in Soviet times. It is a city dominated by Khrushchev era blocks of flats. Its politics have been particularly rough and tumble, which some have ascribed to its history as a working class town.

Borjomi

A former Soviet resort town nestled in the Trialet mountain range, the town is famous for its production of mineral water. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the loss of tourism and the downsizing of the factory created particular economic hardship in Borjomi, as the region is mountainous and does not have good agricultural land.

B.1.5 West

Baghdati

In a dead end valley, Baghdati was historically a rich agricultral and tourism region. It encompassed the resort-spa of Sairme. Given that it is not on the main east-west highway, it maintains a remote feeling.

Ozurgeti

In the region of Guria, which was home to Eduard Shevardnadze, the region was historically known for tea production, which collapsed after the Soviet Union because it had trouble competing on international markets. The region did not play a role in many of the UNM's regional development plans and remains remarkably undeveloped compared to many of the other regions.

B.1.6 Ach'ara

Batumi

Batumi is currently the most important Black sea port in Georgia. Batumi grew in importance as a coastal city and port in Georgia after the First Abkhaz War, which left Georgia without any other large coastal cities. While the population is ethnically Georgian, it was

historically Muslim (since the 18th century). However, immigration and conversion to Christianity have made Orthodox Christians a large percentage of the population (Pelkmans 2006). Recently, large fights have occurred over the Turkish government's sponsoring of mosques in Batumi and the immigration of Turkish traders.

Khelvachauri

A lowland agricultural region of Ach'ara known for it mandarin production. As Georgia was the only subtropical region of the former Soviet Union, mandarins were an important item for the internal Soviet market. It is also along the road to Georgian border with Turkey.

B.1.7 Northeast

Mtskheta

The district of Mtskheta was the ancient capital of Georgia. Nowadays, it lies on the main east-west highway leading out of Tbilisi. The ancient capital is often visited by Georgian and foreign tourists. The rest of the district, however, remains rural and agricultural with no substantial industry remaining.

Khashuri

Khashuri serves as an important crossroads in Georgia as the westernmost district in eastern Georgia. It is an important stop on the main highway before the highway gains elevation to climb over the Rok'i pass. The district includes the historic resort town of Surami, which suffered massive economic collapse with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Appendix C

GEORGIAN TRANSLITERATION

Georgian is a notoriously difficult language to translate and transliterate. In modern times, it has gone through at least 7 major different transliteration standards http://transliteration.eki.ee/pdf/Georgian.pdf. This is particularly confusing since some of the transliteration standards reverse the aspirated and unaspirated consonants. For instance, ტ is t' and თ is t in the ISO 9984 (1986) standard and reversed in the 2002 National Standard. It is also confusing because ჟ is sometimes rendered zh or ž, while ჯ is J. R's transliteration facilities use the 2002 National Standard, and I defer to this standard, since it is Georgia's own standard of transliteration and does not use any special diacritical marks. I make exceptions for names that are widely used in the Western press, but spelled differently using the 2002 standard. While Georgian has no capitalization, I do use the capitalization of names, following Western standards.