

**Conference Draft**

**Prepared for the Stanford Conference on Electoral and Legislative Politics in Japan**

**June 11 and 12, 2007**

**Stanford University**

*Co-sponsored by the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford's Center for East Asian Studies, and the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies.*

Stealing Elections: A Comparison of Election Night Corruption in Japan,  
Canada, and the United States

Prepared for delivery at the Stanford Conference on Electoral and Legislative Politics in  
Japan, June 11-12, 2007

Ray Christensen and Kyle Colvin  
Department of Political Science  
745 SWKT  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, Utah 84602  
ray\_christensen@byu.edu

## 1. Introduction

Despite its occurrence more than forty years ago, I grew up hearing stories of the disputed 1964 Senate election in Nevada. Lieutenant Governor Paul Laxalt challenged the incumbent Howard Cannon in a race that went down to the wire. With 90 percent of the vote counted and a 6,000 vote lead, Cannon declared victory late in the evening. Laxalt, however, refused to concede because most of the uncounted precincts were located in rural counties that strongly favored Laxalt. By the next morning, the nearly complete returns gave Laxalt an 18 vote lead. Later that morning two county clerks revised their vote tallies, correcting what they claimed were errors in their previously announced tally for their county.<sup>1</sup> In a strange coincidence, the only counties to revise their tallies were the home counties of Cannon and Laxalt, and both revisions favored the hometown politician. Cannon won the race, in part, because the number of new Cannon votes “found” the morning after the election in populous Clark County (Las Vegas) swamped the additional Laxalt votes “found” in his much smaller base of Ormsby County (Carson City). I still remember my father joking as he pantomimed how he thought the votes had been “found” the morning after the election: he would act out the counting of hundred dollar bills in payment to a local election official.

Several decades later we came across the notorious story of Lyndon Johnson’s 1941 loss and 1948 victory in Democratic primary races for Texas Senate seats. Johnson lost in 1941 because he urged his supporters to release the returns from heavily pro-Johnson precincts early on election night to build up a large margin and discourage his opponent. In contrast, his opponent held back the precincts he controlled, saw how many votes were needed for victory, and allegedly manufactured enough votes on election

night to defeat Johnson by a slim margin. President Roosevelt later teased Johnson for his mistake in 1941 saying, “Lyndon, up in New York the first thing they taught us was to sit on the ballot boxes.” (Dallek 1991, p. 224)

In 1948, in contrast, Johnson had learned his lesson and was better prepared to ensure his own victory over fellow Democrat Coke Stevenson. After Johnson’s supporters knew how many votes would be needed to turn a narrow Johnson loss into a narrow Johnson victory, Johnson allies created enough bogus ballots to provide this margin of victory. Unfortunately for Johnson, the bogus ballots in Precinct 13 in Alice, Texas were recorded in alphabetical order. These 200 additional voters somehow managed to vote in alphabetical order, and they were just the amount needed to win the Senate seat for Johnson. The original and all copies of this suspect voting list were lost or stolen before they could be examined by a court, so the legend of the alphabetical voting list in Alice lives on in the statements by those who saw the list in the first few days after the election (Dallek, 1991, p. 340; Caro, 1991, p. 375-76).

More recently, John Fund (2004, pp. 78-79) has raised questions about Senator Tim Johnson’s narrow victory over John Thune in the 2002 South Dakota senate race. Thune held a narrow lead over Johnson until the last returns came in from Shannon County. Those returns gave Johnson just enough votes to win the election. Fund points out that turnout and the Johnson vote in Shannon County were both disproportionately higher than other similarly situated pro-Johnson counties. This anomaly opens the door to questions that perhaps the Johnson vote was altered in Shannon County to give Johnson just enough votes to squeak out a victory over Thune.

Are these stories exaggerations? Are they the embellished lore of campaign veterans? Are they simply the fabricated tales of disgruntled losers? Or, is the corrupt adjustment of vote totals on election night an occasional or even frequent occurrence in close elections? Is the well-documented Lyndon Johnson story that earned him the humorous nickname “Landslide Lyndon” just the tip of the iceberg of election night corruption? Johnson’s story has come to light because he became president, focusing the attention of biographers on his past, and the methods that he used to win in 1948 were extreme, even by the standards of corrupt political systems. Are there other cases of stolen elections whose stories never saw the light of day because the politicians were less famous or the methods used were less egregious and therefore harder to detect?

We make a clear distinction in this paper between generic electoral corruption which can occur at any point before the votes are counted and election night corruption, which is the tampering with vote totals once it is known how many votes are needed to ensure a victory. Both types of corruption are difficult to identify with certainty because the participants will not admit their acts to the police. There is no victim’s body or cache of stolen goods to prompt a police investigation. Hence both generic electoral corruption and the more specific act of stealing the election on election night typically go undetected and unpunished. However, in contrast to generic electoral corruption, election night corruption (the adjustment of the last returns to ensure a candidate has a narrow margin of victory) does leave a distinct evidentiary trail. This evidentiary trail makes it possible to detect the likely occurrence of election night corruption, even without the aid of eyewitnesses.

## **2. Theoretical Explanations of Electoral Corruption**

We look for this distinct evidentiary trail in the electoral records of three different democracies in an attempt to measure the existence and frequency of election night corruption. We test the hypothesis that election night corruption will be more common in countries in which the electoral bureaucracy is more susceptible to political penetration and manipulation. Analyzing election results for Japan, Canada, and the United States, we hypothesize that election night corruption will be most likely to appear in the United States where the election bureaucracy is decentralized and often politicized, and less common in Japan and Canada. Both Gerring and Thacker (2004) and Treisman (2000) support parts of this hypothesis with their arguments that federal systems tend to have higher levels of corruption.

An alternative hypothesis, however, exists. Japan consistently rates higher than the United States or Canada in measures of perceptions of corruption (Gerring and Thacker, 2005; Anderson and Tverdova, 2003). Thus, looking only at perceptions of corruption generally, one might expect Japan to have more frequent occurrences of election night corruption. We weigh both factors and argue that despite the presence of other forms of political and electoral corruption, election night corruption should be uncommon in Japan because of the strength, unity, and independence of the electoral bureaucracy. Japan also has a parliamentary system that Gerring and Thacker (2004) argue tends towards less corruption.

Canada presents an interesting contrast to the Japanese case, having a reputation for significantly less corruption than either Japan or the United States (Gerring and Thacker, 2005; Anderson and Tverdova, 2003). Like Japan, it also has a parliamentary

system. However, Canada's federal nature, specifically the decentralization of election bureaucracy to the provinces, opens the door for the possibility of election night corruption. Nevertheless, given the strong anticorruption reputation of Canada, we predict that election night corruption should be less common in Canada than in the United States.

### **3. The Difference between Election Night Corruption and General Electoral Corruption**

We test our hypotheses using the distinct evidentiary trail that only election night corruption creates. When an election is stolen on election night—after the ballots are counted, the corrupt efforts are targeted and informed by the knowledge of exactly how many additional votes are needed to secure a victory. Candidates hold back precincts that they control (colluding with local electoral officials) until they know how many votes are needed to ensure victory. If the candidate is facing sure defeat or sure victory, then no adjustments are made, and the results from those precincts are simply released. If however, the candidate is facing a narrow loss, local electoral officials make last minute adjustments to ballot totals to create a slim margin of victory for their preferred candidate. These actions are fraught with peril because the corruption of a local electoral official is necessary to circumvent the procedures in place to ensure the integrity of the electoral process. In addition, if too many votes are created in a precinct or a candidate's margin of victory in a precinct seems anomalous, then an investigation of the election results may occur. Thus, typically only a bare margin of victory is created in election night corruption, just enough to ensure victory, but not so big as to run afoul of monitoring processes or raise suspicions.

In contrast, other forms of general electoral corruption are less targeted and relatively uninformed. Ballot boxes may be stuffed or votes may be bought, but these actions occur before anyone knows how many votes will be needed to assure victory. In the absence of such clear information, more bogus votes are better than fewer bogus votes. Operatives try to create as many votes as they can for their candidate without being caught. These additional votes are obtained even though, ultimately, the votes might simply add to a candidate's already ample margin of victory or be wasted in a losing effort that no amount of corruption is able to reverse.

This targeted, informed, and extremely marginal nature of election night corruption sets it apart from generic forms of electoral corruption. Only election night corruption stops producing votes once the bare margin of victory has been achieved. Going beyond that bare margin of victory increases the risk of being caught.<sup>2</sup> Thus, election night corruption can be identified, at least in the aggregate, by an anomalous number of ultra close races. Recent political history in Nevada illustrates this point. Senate races in 1964, 1974, and 1998 were won with 48, 624, and 401 vote margins respectively. Is it just a coincidence that Nevada has had three nail-biter US senate elections in 34 years? Or, were vote totals adjusted in one or two of these races to provide a bare margin of victory for a candidate who was otherwise headed for defeat? Unlike other forms of electoral corruption, it should be possible to trace the existence and frequency of election night corruption by measuring the number of ultra-close races to see if any or all of the following are present in the data:

1. A disproportionate number of ultra close races compared to very close races
2. One political party winning a disproportionate number of ultra close races compared to very close races

3. A correlation between the winners of ultra close races and their party's control of the local electoral machinery.

In contrast, all other campaign activities—corrupt or legitimate—are not able to affect final vote totals with the precision that is only available to those who manipulate vote totals after the votes have been counted. For example, a candidate might redouble her efforts in the final days of a campaign because all reports indicate that the race will be very close. She might try to buy more votes, run more advertisements, or enhance her get out the vote effort. Any of these activities should raise her share of the vote over what she would have won if she had not made that last minute, additional effort. If, for example, her efforts increased her vote share by two percent, how would her efforts affect the outcome of the election? The candidate and her advisors only knew that the race was going to be very close. Perhaps her additional efforts turned what would have been a 49% loss into a 51% victory. Perhaps the efforts turned what would have been a 51% victory into a 53% victory or a 47% loss into a 49% loss. All electoral efforts (other than election night corruption) reverse the outcomes of some races (a 49% loss becomes a 51% victory), make some races closer (a 47% loss becomes a 49% loss), and make some races less close (a 51% victory becomes a 53% victory). The candidates only know that the race is likely to be close and that additional efforts (legal or illegal) may be needed to secure a victory.

#### **4. Contribution to Political Science**

Our analysis adds to the growing corruption literature in Political Science by importing important insights from the study of corruption outside of this discipline. With few exceptions, the study of corruption in Political Science has followed one of two common paths: studies of corruption based on perceptions of corruption (Gerring and

Thacker, 2005; Anderson and Tverdova, 2003; Alesina and Weder 2002; Davis, Camp, and Coleman, 2004; Xin and Rudel, 2004) or studies based on actual prosecutions of corrupt politicians (Meier and Holbrook, 1992; Golden and Chang, 2001). These excellent studies, though, have their limitations. In contrast, there is a growing literature outside of Political Science that analyzes, similar to this study, the telling path left by certain corrupt activities. Thus, Duggan and Levitt (2002) describe how incongruities in the patterns of victories by some sumo wrestlers suggest the existence of deals to throw matches. Similar methods have been used to detect favoritism by soccer referees (Garicano, Palacios-Huerta, and Prendergast 2005), Medicare abuse (Becker, Kessler, and McClellan 2005), and teachers giving illegal help to students taking standards exams (Jacob and Levitt, 2003). Duggan and Levitt (2002) also describe the historical example of how there were suspiciously fewer French military conscripts whose height was just above the minimum height and disproportionately large numbers of those who avoided conscription because their height was just below the minimum. In each of these cases, corruption can not be confirmed in the case of a specific conscript, a specific exam, or a specific sumo match, but the existence of multiple incidents of corruption can be confirmed. This confirmation comes by comparing the actual distribution of results to a hypothetical distribution of results that should have existed if there had been no corruption.

Some recent Political Science work has used related methods to assess the voting preferences of a subset of absentee voters in Florida (Imai and King, 2004). Others have similarly applied statistical methods in the study of electoral corruption (Simpser 2005; Mebane 2006), but other than these studies, the comparison of actual results against what

the distribution of outcomes should have been without corrupt activities has rarely been used in the study of political corruption. This paper seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the difference between actual election results and a hypothetical distribution of election results if no election night corruption occurred.

## **5. Findings and Overview of Evidence**

We test our hypotheses about the prevalence of election night corruption through three separate methods, each of the methods testing a part of the causal chain of events that we argue is necessary for the occurrence of election night corruption. The first test is the most obvious and compares the number of ultra close races (those with a victory margin of less than a one half of one percent) against the number of very close races (similar half percent categories with victory margins of between a half of one percent and two percent). By comparing these categories which are all very close races, we control for the many factors, legal or illegal, that can affect the closeness of a race generally. Because factors other than election night corruption can not distinguish between a very close race (victory margin of less than two percent) and an ultra close race (victory margin of less than one half of a percent), if a distinction occurs between ultra close races and very close races, then electoral night corruption must be occurring.

One potential flaw, however, exists with this method. Election night corruption is more likely to occur the closer the initial vote tally shows that a race is. Thus, we would expect to see the most cases of election night corruption occurring when the vote total, without any election night adjustments, would have been a narrow margin of loss for a candidate. If that candidate converts what would have been a narrow loss into an equally

narrow victory using election night corruption, then those actions will not show up as a disproportionate number of ultra close races in contrast to very close races.

Thus, in order to better test for the occurrence of election night corruption, we also test for other elements of the causal chain of events: (1) whether one party has an advantage in ultra close races in contrast to very close races and (2) whether partisan control of the state, province, or prefecture is correlated with a party's advantage in winning disproportionate numbers of ultra close races. We argue that the collusion of some local electoral officials is necessary for election night corruption to occur, and we test for the existence of that important causal link.

We use a variety of statistical tests and case studies in our analysis. Though it is tedious to describe and report all three methods (case studies and two types of statistical tests) used in this study, it is informative to compare the results obtained across all three types of methods. Specifically our results across all three methods support the following conclusions:

1. Election night corruption is more than an isolated occurrence in both Canada and the United States. In contrast, the Japanese election bureaucracy seems to be free of this type of corruption.
2. The frequency of election night corruption is correlated with Democratic and Liberal Party membership in the US and Canada respectively.
3. In Canada, control of the provincial government affects the occurrence of election night corruption; in the United States, partisan control of state government does not appear to affect the occurrence of election night corruption. In contrast, case studies in the United States suggest that incumbency, rather than partisan control of statehouses, is closely correlated with the occurrence of election night corruption.

## **6. Measuring Election Night Corruption**

Any form of corruption shares the difficulty with other illegal or socially undesirable behavior as being difficult to measure with any semblance of accuracy (Duggan and Levitt, 2002, p. 1594; Kallina, 1988 pp. 182-193). Unfortunately for the prosecution of both generic electoral corruption and election night corruption, the evidence that might be used to prove corruption is protected by ballot anonymity laws. This assurance of anonymity serves an important public purpose, but it also makes it difficult to track specific cases of corruption. For example, if the unadulterated vote in a precinct was 600 votes for Howell and 400 votes for Carson, it would be very difficult to prove fraud if the ratio were adjusted to 700 votes for Howell and 300 votes for Carson. At a minimum, Carson supporters would have to produce affidavits from more than 300 Carson voters to even begin to have a credible claim of fraud.

On the other hand, there is also much relevant data that surrounds elections, in contrast to many other illegal activities. There are voter registration lists, lists of voters who voted, ballot tabulations for simultaneous races, and the actual ballots that have been cast. This evidence, coupled with procedures to ensure the integrity of the balloting process make it difficult to corrupt the process without the active participation of a local election official. This data also provides a trail by which suspected corruption can be investigated, even if the trail is muddied by the fact that ballots are anonymous and there are usually no witnesses to the actual crime.

Election night corruption, however, can be identified in the aggregate because its actions are informed by completed (or nearly completed) vote tallies. It leaves an evidentiary trail of ultra close margins of victory for its beneficiaries. In contrast, many

other factors can generally affect how close a race is. Popularity of parties and party platforms, the physical attractiveness of a candidate, campaign funding collected and spent, incumbency status, shifting attitudes of voters, endorsements, effectiveness of campaigns, among others all affect the closeness of races. However, each of these factors is a blunt factor; it affects closeness generally, but it does not discriminate between races that have a half of one percent margin of victory (ultra close races) and races, for example, that were lost by one percent or won by only two percent (very close races). For example, a candidate's decision to pour money into a race in the last three days of a campaign will likely help improve that candidate's electoral performance, but even with the knowledge that the race is very close, the extra effort may turn what would have been a one percent victory for that candidate into a three percent victory, actually increasing the margin of victory rather than making the race closer. The only factor that consistently distinguishes between ultra close and very close races is the factor that is informed by actual vote totals, election night corruption.

Thus, in jurisdictions in which there is no election night corruption, the distribution of the margins of victory, plotted according to half percent increments should produce a distribution of only incremental changes between half percent intervals. These incremental changes would reflect the impact of all of the factors that generally affect the closeness of races. There might be twice as many one percent victories as there are ten percent victories because races in that jurisdiction are quite competitive. On the other hand, there might be twice as many ten percent victories as there are one percent victories because one party dominates races in that jurisdiction or because bipartisan gerrymandering has eliminated all of the competitive districts. Under either scenario,

however, the changes in half percent categories moving from one percent to ten percent should be incremental. None of the factors (other than election night corruption) that affect the closeness of races generally are able to distinguish between victories of half of one percent and victories of one or two percent. Thus, if election night corruption is not occurring, the difference between the number of races won by .5 percent and races won by 1 percent should be consistent with the trendline of incremental differences between, for example, races with a 1.5 percent and 2 percent margin of victory.

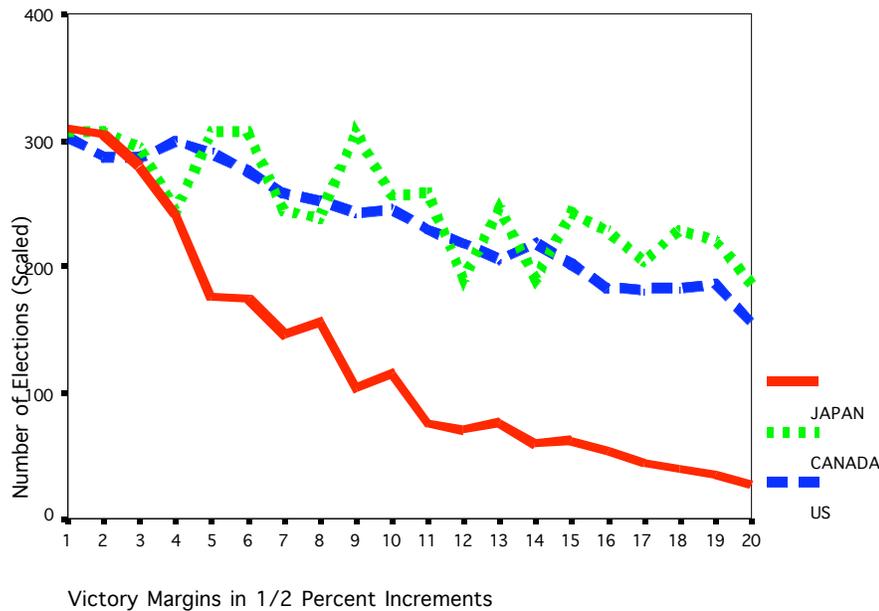
In contrast, if election night corruption is common there will be a sharp break between the number of ultra close races and the number of very close races, rather than an incremental change between these two categories. Similarly, regressions will show that factors related to election night corruption will exert a different and distinct influence on ultra close races in contrast to their influence on very close races, if election night corruption is common. If election night corruption does not occur, then the factors that affect ultra close races should have a similar impact on very close races.

## **7. Evidence from Aggregated Margins of Victory**

Our first and most obvious task in measuring whether election night corruption occurs is to view the total numbers of ultra close races in Japan, Canada, and the United States to see whether these totals differ significantly from the numbers of very close races. To create these distributions we categorized the victory margins (calculated between the top two candidates) in units of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of one percent. The resulting distributions show generally whether a nation tends to have more close or competitive races. Of greatest interest for this study, however, is not the overall distribution of the number of close races, but whether or not there are a disproportionate number of ultra-close races, a result

that would suggest a significant number of instances of election night corruption. The results for all three countries (Figures 1), however, show consistent trends with no disproportionate numbers of ultra close races.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1: Distribution of Margins of Victory  
Japan, United States, and Canada



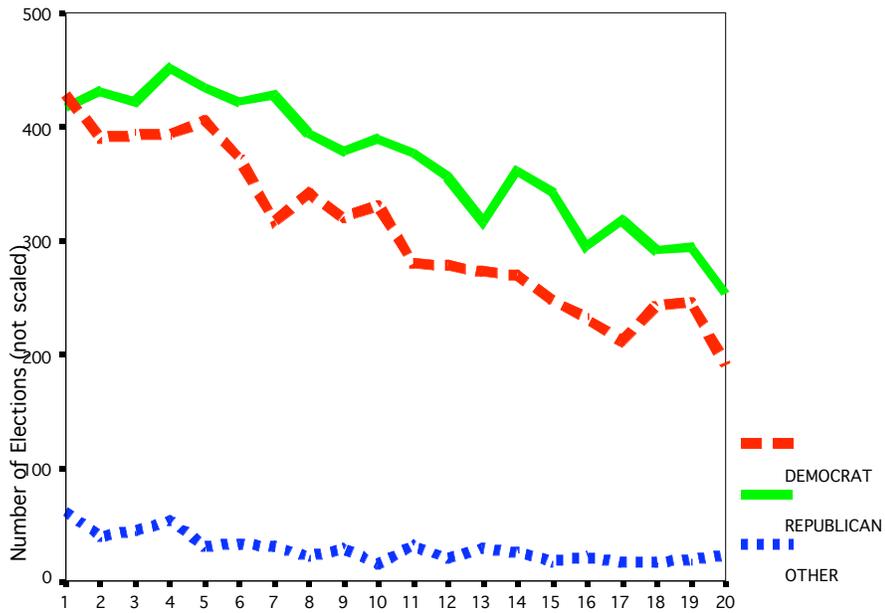
In Figure 1 I have scaled the results so that all three countries can be placed in the same graph, and I have truncated the distribution, showing only the results for the first 20 categories of half percent increments (all races with a 0-10 percent margin of victory). There is no sharp or disproportionate increase for the ultra-close races (category 1). The overall distribution of Japanese races is skewed in favor of close races, but the biggest increase in the number of races is between 2.5 and 1.5 percent victories, not in the ultra close races. Japan has a distribution of races skewed towards closer races because most of the Japanese races included in this data set occurred in multi-seat districts in which the

last place winner and first place loser will be much closer to each other in their share of the vote in contrast to races in single seat districts used in Canada and the United States.

### **8. Evidence from Margins of Victory Disaggregated by Political Party**

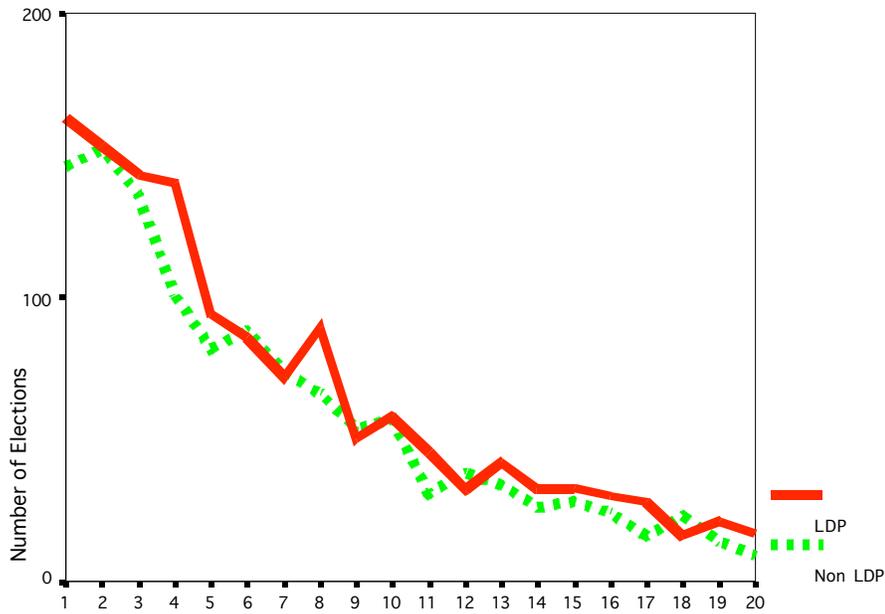
This first cut of the data suggests that election night corruption is not occurring in Japan, the United States, or Canada. However, it is possible for significant election night corruption to occur without altering the overall distribution of margins of victory. This can occur if one party disproportionately benefits from election night corruption. For example, election night corruption might be disproportionately used by one party to convert what would have been ultra close victories for their opponents into ultra close victories for their candidates. Thus, the total number of close and even ultra-close races would remain relatively unchanged, but the party distribution would reflect a skewing in favor of the party that had greater control over the electoral machinery of the nation or subnational unit. Figures 2-4 present the margin of victory distributions for each of the three nations being studied, disaggregated by major political parties.

Figure 2: US Margins of Victory, by Party



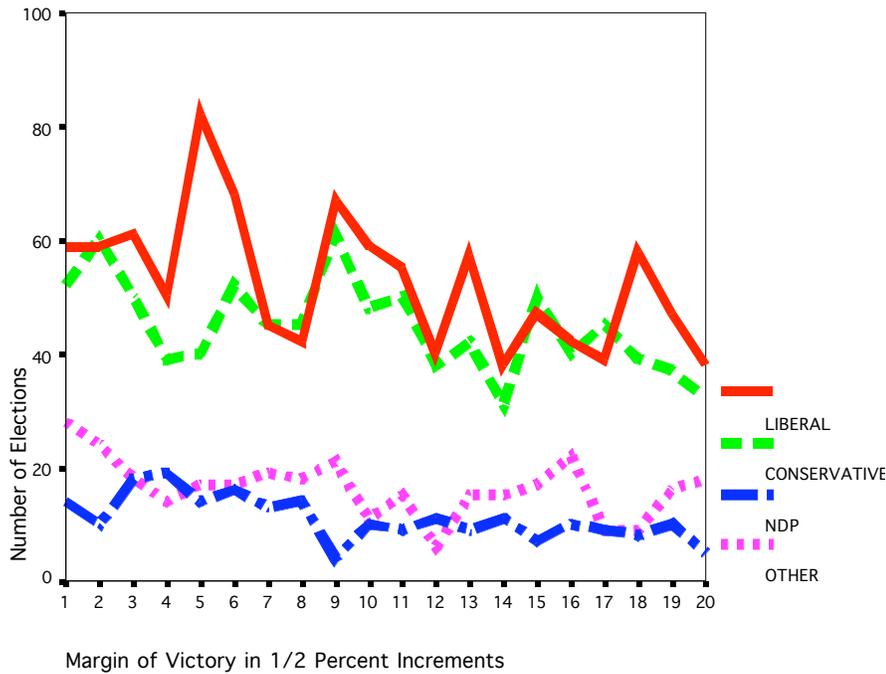
Victory Margins in 1/2 Percent Increments

Figure 3: Japan Margins of Victory, by Party



Margin of Victory in 1/2 Percent Increments

Figure 4: Canada Margins of Victory, by Party



Of the various political parties examined in the three nations covered in Figures 2-4, the most significant deviation is the increase in Democratic Party victories in the United States and the corresponding slump in the Republican trend line that begins at victories of less than 2 percent. Both the Canadian and Japanese data sets have fewer cases and greater volatility, but even so, the incremental change from close races to ultra close races is entirely consistent with previous patterns. Only in the United States do the Democrats, who never once have as many close races as the Republicans, suddenly equal the Republicans in the number of ultra close races.

### 9. Comparing the Predicted to the Actual Number of Ultra Close Races

A more precise analysis of this same comparative data can be accomplished by extrapolating the trendline for very close races to calculate a predicted number of ultra close races. This method is similar to using the previous year's budget figures as a baseline to predict the following year's budget allocations. There should be a close

correlation between both year's numbers, and by using the previous year's figures as a control variable, one can hold constant the many factors that affect budgetary allocations generally and focus on only the factors that incrementally affected the budget in that specific year. Similarly, predicting the number of ultra close races by using the number of very close races controls for all of the factors that affect the closeness of races generally, allowing an isolated analysis of election night corruption, the only factor that can distinguish between ultra close races and very close races. We calculate the predicted number of ultra close races by extrapolating the trends in the number of very close races—estimating what the number of ultra close races would have been if the trend line continued incrementally.<sup>4</sup> We then compare this extrapolated value with the actual number of cases in the ultra close (Category 1) races. The results are reported in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Predicted and Actual Number of Ultra-Close Elections (less than half of 1 percent victory margin)

Party and Country	Predicted Number	Actual Number	Difference
Canada, Liberal	46.7	59	+12.3
Canada, Conservative	55.7	52	-3.7
Canada, NDP	15	14	-1
Canada, Other	21.3	28	+6.7
Japan, LDP	184	163	-21
Japan, Non-LDP	169	146	-23
US, Democrat	393.3	428	+34.7
US, Republican	434.3	417	-17.3
US, Other	52	61	+9

The results reported in Table 1 again show a distinct advantage for the Democrats in the United States and disadvantage for the Republicans. However, proportionally, the advantage is even greater for the Canadian Liberals and Other Party categories. In contrast, there appears to be no partisan advantage in the Japanese electoral system. In

addition, these net figures could possibly understate the true number of stolen elections on election night because they report the net advantage or disadvantage for each party. If the Republicans stole victories in 40 elections and the Democrats stole victories in 70 elections, the net advantage for the Democrats would show up as only +30, and it would appear that the Republicans were not stealing any elections.

As an additional test of these comparative figures, we have run several regression analyses for each country in which the number of ultra close races is calculated by region, party, and decade. We then calculate, using the method described above, a predicted value for the ultra close races in each category based on the values for very close races in that category. We compute a difference between the predicted value and the actual number of ultra close races. We use this difference as the dependent variable and regress variables such as decade, region, and party on that dependent variable to see if party identification emerges with either statistical or substantive significance.<sup>5</sup> However, we expect that statistical significance will be difficult to obtain given the small number of observations in each of the data sets (n represents the number of subdivisions of the data by decade, party, and region).

Table 2: Regressing Decade, Party, and Region on the Difference between the Predicted and the Actual Number of Cases of Ultra Close Victory Margins

	Model 1 Canada	Model 2 Japan	Model 3 US	Model 4 US
Party	-5.3 (4.5) Cons. compared to Liberals	.2 (2.8) LDP compared to Non LDP	-10.4 (7.4) Rep compared to Democrat	-4.4 (3.7) Rep compared to Democrat
Party	-6.1 (5.1) NDP compared to Liberals	-	-5.1 (7.4) Other compared to Democrat	-2.3 (3.7) Other compared to Democrat
Region	-4.6 (4.3) Quebec compared to Ontario	5.3 (2.8) urban compared to rural	15.0 (9.5) Mayhew 5 to Mayhew 1 state	-

Region	-8 (3.9) all but Quebec compared to Ontario	-	18.6 (9.5) Mayhew 4 to Mayhew 1 state	-
Decade	-	.3 (3.7) former to new electoral system	-	11 dummy variables for each decade
	N=11 Adj R2 -.229	N= 24 Adj r2 .02	N= 15 Adj r2 .04	N=36 Adj r2 -.106

The first number is an unstandardized OLS coefficient, the second number, in parentheses, is the standard error.

In all of the four regressions reported in Table 4, the only variable close to statistical significance ( $p = .07$ ) was a regional variable in Japan that separated largely urban prefectures from predominantly rural prefectures. Though not statistically significant, the party variables for Canada and the United States were of a direction and size consistent with evidence of partisan bias in the winning of ultra close elections presented earlier. The Democrats in the United States and the Liberals in Canada show a distinct advantage over their opponents. For the Republicans, in Model 3, being Republican cost the party about 10.4 seats out of a predicted average of 87 seats; in Model 4, being Republican cost about 4.4 seats out of a predicted average of 37 seats. In both models, the Republicans actually won about 1/8 fewer seats in the ultra close category than what is predicted given that party's performance in other close races. It is also significant that though the regression for Canada does not produce statistically significant results, the negative signs for the Conservative and NDP parties compared to the Liberal Party are consistent with earlier findings of an advantage for the Liberal Party. The Conservatives lost about 5.3 seats out of a predicted average of 19 seats. Both of these results comport with some theoretical speculations about a greater tendency

towards corruption in left of center political parties, at least in the United States (Sabato and Simpson, 1996, p. 299; Fund, 2004, pp. 6-7 )

## **10. Regression Analyses of Factors that Affect Only Ultra Close Races**

We now turn to a second set of statistical tests that uses each candidate in each election as the unit of analysis. The dependent variable is now whether or not a specific race ended up in the ultra close margin of victory category. This method has the advantage of a larger number of observations for the data set which allows for the addition of many more control variables into the regression. This method has a disadvantage because the actual variables that affect the closeness of the race must be directly controlled for by including variables in the regression that capture those effects. It is difficult to identify and control for all possible factors that affect the closeness of a race. In contrast, the comparative method used in Tables 1-2 and Figures 1-4 had the advantage of capturing the impact of all of these factors, identified or unidentified, by using the data for the very close races to calculate the predicted values for the ultra close races.

To help control for these other factors, we have included in the regression for the United States a long list of fixed effects variables: dummy variables for every state, dummy variables for every decade, and dummy variables for every type of office included in the data set. There are a total of 27,929 cases in the data set, of which only 906 are ultra close races. Only some of the 66 separate independent variables included in the regression are reported below:<sup>6</sup>

Binary Logistic Regression of Fixed Effects and Party Variables on whether or not an Election is an Ultra Close Race

Gubernatorial race     .32     (.187)

HR race	-.13	(.16)
Senate race	.56	(.21)**
Democrat	.17	(.08)*
Other party	.77	(.15)***
1900s	.63	(.16)***
1910s	.46	(.15)**
1920s	.10	(.17)
Connecticut	1.12	(.22)***
Alabama	-1.43	(.52)**
Alaska	-.09	(1.02)

N =27,929

Excluded categories are: presidential races, New York and Pennsylvania, 1970s and 1980s, and the Republican Party. \* indicates statistical significance with a p value <.05, \*\* indicates a p value < .01, \*\*\* indicates a p value <.001

A variety of the fixed effects variables are, not surprisingly, statistically significant. Races were closer in the earlier decades than in the comparison period of the 1970s and 1980s (every decade except for the 1960s has a positive sign and six of the ten decades in the regression are statistically significant). Senate races are more likely to be ultra close than presidential races, and this result is statistically significant. In contrast, House races and gubernatorial races are not statistically distinguishable from presidential races. Of the states, 17 have statistically distinguishable results from the baseline category of New York and Pennsylvania combined. Of the 17, 10 states have more ultra close races (Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Missouri, Maryland, West Virginia, and Utah), and 7 states have fewer ultra close races (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Tennessee).<sup>7</sup> The Democratic Party as well as third party candidates also have statistically significant advantages in having more races be in the ultra close category. For example, holding the other variables constant, a Democrat running for President has a 2.55 percent chance of being in the ultra close category in contrast to a Republican who has only a 2.17 percent

chance. For House of Representatives races, the Democrats have a 2.03 percent chance in contrast to the Republicans 1.72 percent chance.

This simple regression, however, does not distinguish between factors that affect the closeness of races generally and factors related to election night corruption that would only affect or have a differential impact on ultra close races. In order to distinguish between factors that affect the closeness of races generally and factors that affect only ultra close races, we ran 19 additional regressions changing the dependent variable to each of the other half percent victory margin categories between a half of one percent victory margin and a ten percent victory margin. Factors that affect the closeness of elections generally should have a similar impact on both ultra close and very close races. If a result that is obtained in the regression using ultra close races as the dependent variable also shows up in regressions for very close or close races, then that effect is likely the result of generic factors that affect the closeness of races generally but can not distinguish between ultra close and very close races. In contrast, election night corruption should affect only ultra close races and should not affect very close races. Thus, if there is a difference between the regression with ultra close races as the dependent variable and the other 19 regressions that have very close or close races as the dependent variable, then that difference is likely caused by election night corruption. The abbreviated results of all twenty regressions follow.<sup>8</sup>

Dependent Variable	Percent likelihood Of a Democrat HR Candidate being in Victory Margin	Percent Likelihood Of a Republican HR candidate in Victory Margin	Net Democrat Advantage or disadvantage	Statistically Significant? (Dem. vs. Rep. variable)
Ultra close (0 to .5%)	2.03 %	1.72 %	+ .31	Yes
.5 to 1%	1.77 %	1.77 %	0	No
1 to 1.5%	2.43 %	2.29 %	+ .14	No

1.5 to 2%	1.60 %	1.70 %	- .10	No
2 to 2.5%	2.24 %	2.12 %	+ .12	No
2.5 to 3%	1.87 %	1.91 %	- .04	No
3 to 3.5 %	1.61 %	2.15 %	- .54	Yes
3.5 to 4 %	1.92 %	1.97 %	- .05	No
4 to 4.5 %	1.61 %	1.83 %	- .22	No
4.5 to 5 %	1.75 %	1.97 %	- .22	No
5 to 5.5 %	1.56 %	1.93 %	- .37	Yes
5.5 to 6 %	1.84 %	2.28 %	- .44	Yes
6 to 6.5 %	1.86 %	1.93 %	- .07	No
6.5 to 7 %	2.01 %	2.55 %	- .54	Yes
7 to 7.5 %	1.58 %	2.04 %	- .46	Yes
7.5 to 8 %	1.56 %	1.90 %	- .34	Yes
8 to 8.5 %	1.60 %	2.25 %	- .65	Yes
8.5 to 9 %	1.94 %	2.27 %	- .33	No
9 to 9.5 %	1.94 %	2.16 %	- .22	No
9.5 to 10 %	1.31 %	1.78 %	- .47	Yes

The Democratic Party had a statistically significant advantage only in the first category of ultra close races. The next closest category with a statistically significant result for the party variable was a Republican advantage for races with a 3-3.5 percent margin of victory. The Republicans have an advantage in most races with victory margins greater than 3.5 percent. In close races, (races with margins of .5 to 3.5 percent) neither party has a strong or consistent advantage. However, in ultra close races, the Democrats have a statistically significant advantage. These results are consistent with election night corruption and not with general explanations of factors that explain the closeness of races generally. The Republican advantage begins to decrease in the closest races that would be the targets of election night corruption. It is very difficult to manufacture enough bogus votes on election night to steal an election that your opponent is winning by 10 percent of the vote, but a 2 or 3 percent victory for your opponent can be converted into a bare majority for your candidate with election night corruption. Thus, the Republican advantage decreases in close races because some of those races that

would have been Republican victories have been changed into extremely narrow democratic victories. This trend culminates in the results for ultra close races in which the Democrats have an anomalous, statistically significant advantage over the Republicans, the only such advantage for the Democrats in all 20 separate regressions.

In contrast, we ran the same series of regressions in Japan, and the party variable is not statistically significant in the category of ultra close races. In fact, the party variable is not significant in any of the 20 regressions representing each half percent category for all victory margins between 0 and 10 percent, a finding that is consistent with earlier analyses that also showed there was no significant difference between the numbers of ultra close races won by Japanese parties. Other variables that generally affected the closeness of races were significant across all or many of the twenty separate regressions. For example, the electoral system was a significant variable in both ultra close and very close races. The multi-seat district system used in Japan until 1993 consistently produced closer margins between the lowest ranked winner and the highest ranked loser than the similar margin between the top two candidates in single member districts. Multi-seat districts created closer races, but for races with margins greater than four percent, the difference between electoral systems disappears. Thus, the type of electoral system generally affects the closeness of races (creating disproportionate numbers of races with margins of victory of four percent or less), but it, like other variables that impact the closeness of elections generally, has a similar influence on both ultra close races and very close races.

The same set of regressions run for Canada produces less obvious results. For ultra close races, the Conservative Party is indistinguishable from the Liberal Party, but

the smaller NDP and “Other Party” category are both statistically significant and positive in comparison to the Liberal Party. However, the NDP and the Other Party category also best the Liberals in a number of the other percentage categories, not just in the ultra close races of less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of one percent, suggesting that their advantage is consistent across all or most close races and not unique to ultra close races. Candidates from the NDP and Other Parties have a 4.7-4.9 percent chance of being in the ultra close category in contrast to Liberal candidates who only have a 2.4 percent chance of being in the same category. These results suggest a bias in favor of these two smaller parties, but it is not surprising that a smaller party would win a greater proportion of its races by narrower margins than a major party.

A second problem with concluding that electoral corruption must be favoring the NDP or other small parties is the fact that a plausible causal path must exist for the corruption to occur. The next set of tests will address this concern: whether or not there is a correlation between specific parties that win more ultra close races and the political jurisdictions that those parties control. If the NDP wins more ultra close races but its victories are in jurisdictions in which the Liberals control the electoral machinery of the government, then it is unlikely that election night tampering with ballots is the explanation for NDP victories. Similarly, if the Democrats in the US are stealing more races than the Republicans, then we should see a disproportionate number of ultra close Democratic victories in those states in which the Democrats control the electoral machinery and the electoral machinery is more prone to corruption.

To analyze this link, we have run a series of regressions in which the dependent variable is the number of ultra close victories won by a specific party. In Japan and

Canada where we have no prior assumptions as to variations in the corruptibility of different provincial or prefectural governments, we have only distinguished between the party that was in control of the subnational government at the time that a national election was held in that province or prefecture. In the United States we have created an interactive term that combines a measure of which party controls the state governments and a measure of the degree to which the party machinery in the state is more “traditional” or more susceptible to machine style or corrupt politics (Mayhew, 1986, p. 196).<sup>9</sup>

Once again, we also run twenty separate regressions for each half percent margin of victory between zero and ten percent in order to separate out factors that exert a different impact on ultra close races in contrast to very close races. In the Japanese regressions, no factor stands out with a distinct impact on ultra close races. In fact, a variable for opposition party control of the prefectural government is statistically significant and positive, showing that the LDP is more likely to have an ultra close race in a prefecture controlled by the opposition than in a prefecture controlled by the LDP. This result is counterintuitive from the standpoint of an analysis of election night corruption, but it makes perfect sense in analyzing factors that generally affect the closeness of the race that are not picked up by the fixed effects model with control variables for decade, region, and the demographics of the election district. The LDP will have closer races in prefectures where the opposition is strong enough to elect a governor than in the prefectures controlled by the LDP machine. This conclusion is buttressed by the fact that opposition control of the prefectural government is correlated with larger numbers of LDP victors in not just ultra close races but also very close races.

The Canadian data, however, presents a clear and distinct impact of Liberal Party control of provincial governments. In regressions of Liberal Party candidates who had specific margins of victory, after controlling for province and decade, there are significantly greater numbers of Liberal Party candidates in ultra close races if the province is controlled by the Liberal Party than in provinces controlled by other parties. Such candidates have an 8.6 percent chance of being in that category compared to only a 2.8 percent chance if the provincial government is controlled by a party other than the Liberals. This result is statistically significant, and more importantly, when this regression is repeated with a different dependent variable for each half percent category between a 0 and 10 percent margin of victory, only in the first category is the variable for Liberal Party control of the provincial government statistically significant. Of the remaining 19 regressions, not only is the party control variable always not statistically significant, but the sign of the coefficient also seems to vary randomly. In 9 of the remaining 19 categories, Liberal Party candidates are less likely to be in that category if their party controls the provincial government. These results suggest that control of the provincial government is a crucial explanatory factor in explaining only ultra close races, a finding consistent with our theoretical descriptions of election night corruption, but surprising given the conventional wisdom that Canadian politics and the Canadian bureaucracy are less corrupt than their American counterparts.

The American data is inconclusive. We used Mayhew's categories of state party systems to identify states more prone to political penetration of the election bureaucracy, and this variable is statistically significant and of the expected sign for regressions for both Republican winner and Democratic winners. However, this variable is also often

statistically significant and of the expected sign for very close races, not just ultra close races. Unfortunately, when we use Mayhew's categorization as a variable, we can not enter in each state as fixed effects variables (we use regional groupings of states instead), so it appears that Mayhew's categorization is picking up a general relationship between states and the closeness of races, rather than election night corruption factors that would impact only the ultra close races.

Similarly, we used as our measure of bureaucratic control of the electoral machinery, the party which occupied the statehouse when the election occurred. This measure is consistently of a negative sign, suggesting that parties are more likely to have closer races when they do not control the governorship of a state. This result is consistent with the Japanese result that a party will have closer races (and hence more races in both the ultra close and very close categories) when it doesn't dominate the politics of the state, i.e. an opponent controls the governorship. Of course, it is questionable to assume that a governor controls local electoral bureaucracies in the United States. Indeed, the notorious stories of election night stealing cited earlier all involve local officials and not state level election officials. Perhaps this difference explains why it is much more difficult to get consistent results that distinguish between ultra close and very close races using a measure of party control of the state in the United States. In contrast, in Canada electoral bureaucracies might be less locally and more provincially controlled, supporting the conclusion that Liberal Party control of provincial governments was a statistically significant explanatory feature of ultra close races but not very close races.

The US data could be taken as evidence that there is no partisan bias in ultra close races, but the fixed effects regressions presented earlier, do show a consistent pattern of

bias in favor of the Democrats, a bias that only exists in the category of ultra close races. This evidence, coupled with the more muddled evidence of permeability of the state bureaucracy to corruption (the Mayhew measure) or control of the state bureaucracy (the governorship measure) suggests that perhaps a better measure is needed for these concepts in the US data, a problem that exists because of the more decentralized nature of the election bureaucracy in the US in contrast to Canada or Japan. A better interpretation of these inconclusive results for the United States is provided by the case study analyses which follow.

### **11. Case studies of Election Night Corruption in Nevada and Utah**

As a third set of tests of the presence of election night corruption, we have conducted a case study of two states to see if our statistical tests actually identify races in states that we can independently identify as potential cases of election night stealing. We simply predicted the number of ultra close cases for each US state based on the number of very close cases for that state and then identified the states that had anomalous numbers of ultra close elections. We have ranked the states by the ratio of excess cases to the predicted number of cases, and the top fourteen states are listed below:<sup>10</sup>

State	predicted number	actual number	% of actual above predicted
Nevada	-1.7	8	121 %
Louisiana	1	5	80 %
Utah	3.7	9	59 %
Kentucky	14.3	27	47 %
W. Virginia	17	29	41 %
New Jersey	19.3	31	38 %
Washington	5.7	9	37 %
Georgia	4.7	6	22 %
Iowa	22.7	29	22 %
North Dakota	4	5	20 %
Ohio	55	69	20 %
Vermont	3.3	4	17 %

California	28.3	34	17 %
Texas	8.3	10	17 %

We undertook an analysis of the ultra close races in Nevada and Utah to better understand the phenomenon and see if the pattern of reporting of returns was consistent with election night corruption. Specifically, if one candidate first led in the returns and then another candidate took the lead with the last returns to be counted, this would be a more likely scenario for election night corruption than the alternative of one candidate always being in the lead but the race being close.

We analyzed nine Utah races and ten Nevada races.<sup>11</sup> Six Utah races and seven Nevada races had elements consistent with election night corruption. In each of these thirteen races, the lead changed between contenders before one candidate took the lead towards the end of the vote count. Even more interesting was our finding that of the 15 races contested by an incumbent, 11 of them were won by the incumbent. In addition, of the four incumbents who lost ultra close races, two of them were not true incumbents, having been appointed or elected to office less than 6 months before the ultra close election. Though we might expect incumbents to be a disproportionate share of winners in races with a 10 percent margin for the victor, it is odd that in races so evenly matched (the winner with a margin of less than ½ of one percent), incumbents would disproportionately win so many of the races. Perhaps, in the United States, incumbents are more likely to successfully use the techniques of election night corruption. This could be explained by the fact that an incumbent has better ties to local electoral officials and can use those ties more effectively than a challenger. Perhaps this outcome helps explain why party control of the governorship does not emerge as a significant feature in ultra close elections in the United States. Rather, with the decentralization of the

administration of elections that is common in the United States, an incumbent is more likely to have strong ties to local bosses that are necessary to manipulate votes on election night.

## **12. Conclusion and Implications**

This work has raised more questions than it has answered, but the questions raised are intriguing and potentially fruitful. The purpose of this work was to test the simple idea that if there is significant election night corruption, it should show up by anomalies in the number and characteristics of ultra close elections. A hypothesis was put forward that such corruption should be rarer in Japan and Canada than in the United States. The Japanese data confirms that even in a country with widespread corruption, including generic electoral corruption, if there is a strong, unified, and impartial national bureaucracy, then election night corruption will be rare or nonexistent. This expected pattern was found in multiple tests of the Japanese data in which the distribution of margins of victory showed only incremental and expected changes as one moves from very close elections to ultra close elections, and regressions on the number of ultra close races showed no impact of partisan variables. In not one of the many tests conducted did any evidence appear that suggested that election night corruption occurs in Japan.

In contrast, the United States had disproportionately high numbers of ultra close races when these races are disaggregated by political party, and, additionally, in Canada, these races were correlated with Liberal Party control of provincial governments. In the United States, though, no correlation was found between control of statehouses and election night corruption. However, an examination of ultra close races in two states suggests that incumbency is perhaps a better conduit of the occurrence of election night

corruption in the United States rather than partisan control of the governorship. Further research on this topic needs to be done in two directions: seeing if election night corruption occurs in additional countries and examining the frequency and characteristics of election night corruption in Canada and the United States. This second task is best accomplished by electoral specialists of each of the respective countries, though the groundwork has been laid by this comparative study of whether or not election night corruption would create anomalies in the distribution of races that could be identified.

It is also significant that general perceptions of corruption were not the best predictors of corruption in the Japanese and Canadian cases. Rather, institutions served as better predictors of this specific form of corruption. Canada has one of the best reputations for the absence of corruption, and Japan is notorious among the advanced industrial democracies for its high levels of corruption. Yet the results for this specific type of corruption correlate better with the independence and centralization of the electoral bureaucracy than they do with general levels of corruption or perceptions of corruption. These results suggest a note of caution when using general perceptions of corruption to analyze a cause or effect of a specific form of corruption. The correlation between general perceptions of corruption and a specific form of corruption may not be reliable, especially among countries that are grouped towards a similar end of the corruption spectrum. The use of general perceptions of corruption, for example, may be of limited usefulness in analyzing differences among relatively similar countries with regard to a specific form of corruption.

## Works Cited

- Alesina, Alberto, and Beatrice Weder. 2002. "Do Corrupt Governments Receive Less Foreign Aid?" *The American Economic Review* 92 (September):1126-37.
- Anderson, Christopher J., and Yuliya V. Tverdova. 2003. "Corruption, Political Allegiances, and Attitudes Toward Government in Contemporary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(January):91-109.
- Becker, David, Kessler, Daniel, and Mark McClellan. 2005. "Detecting Medicare Abuse." *Journal of Health Economics* 24(January):189-210.
- Caro, Robert A. 1991. *The Years of Lyndon Johnson, Means of Ascent*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Dallek, Robert. 1991 *Lone Star Rising*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Charles L., Roderic Ai Camp, Kenneth M. Coleman. 2004. "The Influence of Party Systems on Citizens' Perceptions of Corruption and Electoral Response in Latin America." *Comparative Political Studies* 37(August):677-703.
- Duggan, Mark, and Steven D. Levitt. 2002. "Winning Isn't Everything: Corruption in Sumo Wrestling." *The American Economic Review*. 92(December):1594-1605.
- Elazar, Daniel J. 1972. *American Federalism: A View from the States*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
- Fund, John. 2004 *Stealing Elections, How Voter Fraud Threatens our Democracy*. San Francisco: Encounter Books.
- Garicano, Luis, Palacios-Huerta, Ignacio, and Canice J. Prendergast. 2005. "Favoritism under Social Pressure." *Review of Economics and Statistics*. 87(May):208-16.
- Gerring, John, and Strom C. Thacker. 2004. "Political Institutions and Corruption: The Role of Unitarism and Parliamentarism." *British Journal of Political Science* 34 (April):295-330.
- Gerring, John, and Strom C. Thacker. 2005. "Do Neoliberal Policies Deter Political Corruption" *International Organization* 59(Winter):233-54.
- Golden, Miriam A., Eric C. C. Chang. 2001 "Factional Conflict and Political Malfeasance in Postwar Italian Christian Democracy" *World Politics* 53(July):588-622.
- Imai, Kosuke, and Gary King. 2004. Did Illegal Overseas Absentee Ballots Decide the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election? *Perspectives on Politics* 2(September):535-50.

- Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). 1991. *Southern Primary Candidate Name and Constituency Totals, 1920-1972* [Computer file]. ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor].
- Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). 1994. *Candidate and Constituency Statistics of Elections in the United States, 1788-1990* [Computer file]. 5th ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor].
- Jacob Brian A., and Steven D. Levitt. 2003. "Rotten Apples: An Investigation of the Prevalence and Predictors of Teacher Cheating." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118 (August):843-77.
- Kallina, Edmund F. Jr., 1988. *Courthouse over White House, Chicago and the Presidential Election of 1960*. Orlando: University of Central Florida Press.
- Mayhew, David R. 1986. *Placing Parties in American Politics, Organization, Electoral Settings, and Government Activity in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mebane, Walter R. Jr. 2006. "Detecting Attempted Election Theft: Vote Counts, Voting Machines, and Benford's Law." Paper presented at the Midwest American Political Science Association annual convention, Chicago, Illinois.
- Meier, Kenneth J., and Thomas M. Holbrook. 1992. "'I Seen My Opportunities and I Took 'Em: Political corruption in the American States.'" *The Journal of Politics* 54(February):135-55.
- Parliament of Canada. 2005. Library of Parliament, History of the Federal Electoral Ridings Since 1867. at [www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/infer/infer.asp?Language=E](http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/infer/infer.asp?Language=E). accessed August 2, 2005.
- Sabato, Larry J. and Glenn R. Simpson. 1996. *Dirty Little Secrets: The Persistence of Corruption in American Politics*. New York: Times Books.
- Simpser, Alberto. 2005. "Strategic Incentives for Electoral Corruption." Paper presented at the American Political Science Association annual convention, Washington, D. C.
- Treisman, Daniel. 2000. "The Causes of Corruption: A Cross-national Study." *Journal of Public Economics*. 76(June):399-457.
- Xin, Xiaohui, and Thomas K. Rudel. 2004. "The Context for Political Corruption: A Cross-national Analysis." *Social Science Quarterly* 85(June):294-309.

---

<sup>1</sup> All of these announced tallies were unofficial. The official tally did not come until several days after the election.

<sup>2</sup> At first it might seem odd that those stealing elections on election night would stop manufacturing votes for their candidate when a small margin of victory is created. However, it is difficult to create bogus votes because the number of votes that can be created in any given precinct is limited by the numbers of registered voters, expectations of typical turnout in a given precinct, and expectations of typical ratios of partisanship in a specific precinct. A corrupt election official may be able to add 50 fraudulent votes to the totals for a precinct in which there were 400 registered voters and 300 actual votes cast, but adding 100 votes to that precinct would certainly call attention to that precinct. Similarly, if a candidate won 200 of the 300 votes cast in that precinct, those totals could be adjusted to 250 of the 300 votes without perhaps attracting attention, but any greater margin is likely to trigger an investigation of the voting returns. Each precinct can only produce a certain number of fraudulent votes without attracting unwanted attention, and the manipulation of each precincts' data requires the corruption of a local election official in that precinct. Given these constraints, it is not surprising that election night corruption rarely results in large margins of victory for the candidate stealing the election.

<sup>3</sup> The Canadian data is for House of Commons races from the 1945 to 2000 elections. The data is from the official parliament website (Parliament of Canada, 2005). The Japanese data covers House of Representatives elections from 1947 to 2003 and is based on a data set originally created by Steven R. Reed and supplemented with data from recent elections. The US data set is an ICPSR data set (1991) that includes all presidential, congressional, gubernatorial, and some state office races, and in some analyses we have included Southern primaries from the ICPSR (1994) data set.

<sup>4</sup> We take a running averaged of the second through the fourth categories (victory margins of 1/2 to 1 percent, 1 to 1.5 percent, and 1.5 to 2 percent). We also calculate an average for the third through fifth and fourth through sixth categories (1 to 2.5 percent and 1.5 to 3 percent). We calculate the increase or decrease between each of these averages and then add that increase or decrease to the first average calculated. We also add the trend number twice to the average of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> categories because we are predicting the 1<sup>st</sup> category and this first average is centered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> category and is therefore two units away from the ultra close category that we are trying to predict. We also used two other variants of the calculation (adding the trend only once to the first average and adding the trend to the second category) and obtained similar results to those reported.

<sup>5</sup> As a regional variable for the United States, we used David Mayhew's (1986, p. 196) classification of party systems in states, from traditional to modern, with the expectation that the more traditional party systems (categories 4 and 5) would be more prone to election night corruption than the more modern party systems (categories 1 and 2).

<sup>6</sup> The data set used for this regression includes data for Southern primaries. If the Southern primaries are excluded, some of the coefficients change slightly, but statistical significance, general size of the coefficients and signs of the coefficients do not change.

<sup>7</sup> It would be a mistake to conclude that these states listed are the most and least prone to election night corruption because there is no comparative element to this analysis. A state may have many ultra close races, but that might occur because the state is extremely competitive. It also has many very close races too. A better measure of which states are most prone to election night corruption is given in the case study section at the end of the paper. In that section the number of ultra close races in a state is explicitly compared to the number of very close races to determine in which states there are a disproportionate number of ultra close races.

<sup>8</sup> We ran 20 binary logistic regressions. It would have been perhaps simpler to run one multinomial logistic regression, but running 20 separate regressions is a more conservative estimator, so we chose this less efficient method. The results reported include primary races for Southern states, but if we run the same regressions for the data set without including Southern primaries, we obtain similar results.

<sup>9</sup> There are many other possible measures of the potential corruption of a state electoral bureaucracy. Elazar (1972) presents cultural explanations that Meier and Holbrook (1992) reject. Meier and Holbrook, among others, use numbers of prosecutions of public officials. Of these and other measures, Mayhew's measure had two distinct advantages. First, his measure seemed most relevant to election night corruption rather than general patterns of corruption and dishonesty. Second, his measure was specifically created to cover state politics in the 1960s and even earlier periods, an important fact for our data set which extends back to the 1870s.

---

<sup>10</sup> The results are calculated with Southern primary races included. If they are excluded, Southern states consistently show up as being the least corrupt because they have so few close races.

<sup>11</sup> We have two additional cases for Nevada than indicated in the table immediately above because we included a senate race that occurred after the compilation of the data set, and we included another senate election that was improperly coded in the original data set.