The Emergence of a Transnational Advocacy Network: International Election Monitoring in the Philippines, Chile, Nicaragua, and Mexico

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Introduction

It is commonplace nowadays to hear claims about how the associational life traditionally confined to states has reached a global scale. Thus, for instance, Michael Walzer asserts that 'There is today an international civil society, the very existence of which raises questions about the usefulness of the state' (Walzer 1998, 3). Similarly, Jackie Smith, Charles Chatfield, and Ron Pagnucco (Smith, Pagnucco et al. 1997) edited a volume on *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics*, and Paul Wapner (Wapner 1995) talks about 'politics beyond the state.' Nonstate actors have certainly become relevant and ubiquitous in the international arena.

I think the 'global civil society' argument, however, is not warranted. Instead, I would argue that what we have witnessed in recent years is the emergence of a myriad of transnational advocacy networks (TANs) working intermittently on innumerable issues, ranging from the environment, to land mines, to female genital mutilation. Although similar in some respects, TANs and global social movements (GSMs) are not quite the same thing. In this paper, I elaborate on this distinction and illustrate the emergence and development of a TAN, one concerned with international election monitoring (IEM).

This paper takes form in the following manner: in the first section I elaborate on the distinction between GSMs and TANs, and suggest an unexplored way in which emergent norms might be adopted internationally. In the next four sections I follow the evolution of the IEM TAN. Thus, the second section deals with the foundational 1986 Philippine case; the third section with the 1988 Chilean plebiscite; the fourth with the 1990 Nicaraguan elections, and the fifth with the 1994 Mexican electoral process. I conclude in the sixth section by evaluating the usefulness of the path of norm-diffusion which I suggest, and by discussing how the practice of nonstate actors has contributed to the redefinition of both state sovereignty and the international system.

What's in a Name?

What does the concept 'global civil society' imply? For starters, a denser social cohesion than the real existing one among nonstate actors at the international level—unless, of course, one adopts a minimalist understanding of civil society. Paul Wapner, for instance, defines global civil society as 'as a transnational domain in which people form relationships and develop elements of identity outside their role as a citizen of a particular state' (Wapner 2000, 261). I contend, however, that definitions of this sort do not take us very far, not only because they are too broad, but also because they are misleading. By transposing to the global realm a concept firmly established at the national-state level, they incur conceptual stretching. As Giovani Sartori warned over thirty years ago, when concepts are applied too broadly they cease being useful (Sartori 1970). Global civil society is not a subtype of civil society, like bureaucratic authoritarianism is a subtype of authoritarianism. Global civil society is supposed to be civil society writ large. Instead of moving up the ladder of abstraction in order to avoid conceptual stretching, as Sartori suggests, many analysts simply extrapolate the civil society concept to the global level. But this poses serious problems. Take, for instance, the question of the state. State and civil society are mutually constitutive; if one takes away the former, the latter vanishes (Migdal 1994). Thus, national social movements have been a fact on the ground since the eighteenth century, in large part because it was at that time that the national-state became the dominant form of political organization (Tarrow 1996, 7). The existence of global social movements, without a global counterpart, would therefore stand as a major anomaly—an anomaly that, I would argue, has not yet taken place.[1]

So what do we mean when we talk about 'social movements'? And what is the larger context in which they develop? David Meyer and Sidney Tarrow argue that social movements 'are best defined as *collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarity, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities*'(Meyer & Tarrow 1998, 4; italics original). Similarly, Friedhelm Neidhardt and Dieter Rucht define a social movement as 'an

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[1] Claims about 'The transnational phenomenon [being] older than the state itself' (Ghils 1992, 417) are, of course, anachronistic.

organized and sustained effort of a collectivity of interrelated individuals, groups, and organizations, to promote or to resist social change with the use of public protest activities' (cited in della Porta & Diani 1999, 3). The larger context in which this composite of sustained interaction and protest thrive is the state—as Marchini's paper in this issue illustrates. And it is precisely the state-society symbiosis that produces what the resource mobilization approach calls 'political opportunity structure' (POS).

Although POS is thus an eminently domestic concept it has been extrapolated to the international level. Thus, for instance, Jackie Smith has written that 'transnational political opportunity structures influence movements' capacities for mobilization as well as their strategic alternatives' (cited in della Porta & Kriesi 1999, 18). In her argument, the existence of 'supranational arenas' seems to warrant talk about a transnational POS. This is because, as Donatella della Porta and Hanspeter Kriesi have put it, 'in the globalizing world, issues emerge which transcend national frontiers: the internationalisation of markets, nuclear fallout, the greenhouse effect, the destruction of the ozone layer, famine, poverty, international migration on a worldwide scale, women's and minorities' rights' (della Porta & Kriesi 1999, 21). A (rather weak) POS might indeed exist in those issue areas, if we grant that they constitute an instance of international governance (i.e., authority), although it is clear that they are not quite the functional equivalent of the national state.

But what about the social movement requirement of sustained collective mobilization and protest? If we take the first item out of the equation, we end up with nothing more than sporadic 'contentious politics'—certainly not an international social movement.[2] Lasting collective mobilization is not a feature of most groups working on some of the most salient transnational campaigns, such as the ones having to do with the environment or free trade. And if we get rid of the second requirement, protest, we would then have just some sort of sustained campaign. But public protest, as Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani have pointed out, is a 'characteristic aspect' of social movements (della Porta & Diani 1999, 14-5). Many, although perhaps not the most visible, international campaigns do not involve open protest. The bulk of the activities carried out by Amnesty International, for instance,

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[2] Cf. Doug Imig and Sidney Tarrow 1999. For them, 'Contentious politics' is 'not as consistent as a social movement (112).'

involve working through institutional channels in a manner that can hardly be characterized as protest.[3] Similarly, as Alfaro's article in this issue shows, Mexico's Zapatista movement, at least in its international dimension, might best be conceived of as a 'virtual movement.'

So it seems to me that we can better refer to these and other nonstate actors as TANs. According to Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, TANs include 'those relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services' (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 2). Interestingly, TANs are not formed exclusively by nonstate actors, such as NGOs and religious groups; they might also include some state agencies, and even intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). This means: 1) that TANs are not necessarily in an external position vis-à-vis the state (or the state system), and; 2) that they do not constitute an 'international social movement.' As Keck and Sikkink put it, 'Because part of states and international organizations also participate in these networks, the process of negotiation within the emergent cosmopolitan community is not "outside" the state' (216).

Furthermore, unlike social movements, the focal points of TANs are events, not mobilizations (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 236). That is, TAN activists do not seek to maintain collective mobilization. The 'emergent cosmopolitan community' is seen as an alternative to mass mobilization. Activists focus on communication and information exchange. TANs can thus be thought of as 'communicative structures' (3). As such, they create discourses which frame issues in novel ways, thus bringing them to the international agenda. Take the case of 'female circumcision.' It was only after a network of women activists framed the issue in terms of 'genital mutilation,' which highlighted its aspect of castration, that it acquired new salience, which placed it into the international agenda (with the UN, for instance, emitting a series of recommendations) (20).

A TAN is thus both a structure and agent. As the former, it patterns the interaction of its members, and infuses them with identity; as the latter, it puts forward specific policy proposals in the international arena. The key to its dual character lies both in its decentralized and horizontal organizational arrangement, and in the kind of strategies it

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[3] This is not to suggest, of course, that any act of protest is coterminous with social movements. These

employs. The core of the network is not a bureaucratic apparatus of a continuously mobilized membership, but a small group of political entrepreneurs and, more fundamentally, the information its members exchange. The social nature of the information gathered (and constructed) becomes the raw material for a new discourse. This social structure is then enacted by concrete actors who employ a strategy Keck and Sikkink call the 'boomerang pattern.' As they put it, 'When channels between the state and its domestic actors are blocked, the boomerang pattern of influence characteristic of transnational networks may occur: domestic NGOs bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside' (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 12). Thus, for instance, the mothers of the *Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina enhanced their cause and put pressure on the Argentinean state by resorting to human rights activists outside their county.

By 'throwing' the boomerang, network activists thus become players on the international scene. The practice of TANs as agents helps redefine not only the role of nonstate actors in the international arena, but also the structure of the interstate system. As authors from the English School noted decades ago, and constructivists more recently, the interstate system is not solely characterized by a Hobbesian state of nature in which only material capabilities, as such, matter (Bull 1977; Wendt 1999). At bottom, the modern state system is constituted by institutions and norms which infuse both anarchy and material factors with meaning. That is, a normative structure underlies the basic components of the state system.

Although TANs are not state actors, their actions affect interstate politics. States are, after all, shot through and through with societal elements. Take the issue of sovereignty: from being a 'principle' for appropriate behaviour among states in the eighteen century, by the twentieth century, it had become a 'territorial ideal,' in which the focus is on the relationship between territory, power, and accepted forms of political organization (Murphy 1996, 87, 91). This transformation had profound consequences both for the way states related to one another, and for the way states related to their population. In a similar vein, as Sikkink has noted regarding the effects of TANs activity in the human rights realm, 'When the state recognizes the legitimacy of international interventions on the topic of

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sporadic acts might be better regarded as instances of contentious politics.

human rights and changes its domestic human rights in response to these international pressures, it reconstitutes the relationship between the states, its citizens, and international actors' (Sikkink 1993, 414-5). It is then through the practice of state and nonstate actors that the state system is reproduced and transformed.

That is why it is important to trace the 'life history' of international norms, and not just to postulate their existence. How is it that norms that we now take for granted in the international arena came to be what they are? Furthermore, what is the origin of norms? It is usually assumed that norms are internalised by states. That is, that norms originate at the international system, and then trickle down, permeating states. Jeffrey Legro, Andrew Cortell and James Davis, have provided us with valuable insights about the mechanisms of norm-diffusion from the international to the domestic level (Legro 2000; Cortell & Davis 1996; Cortell & Davis 2000). But how do norms make it into the international realm in the first place? Many might just originate at that level; but I suspect that at least some 'international' norms have their genesis in specific countries. That is, some norms might require a successful instantiation in a particular state before they can successfully diffuse to other latitudes—and to the international system at large. The issue, though, cannot be reduced to a 'demonstration effect' in which in order for the norm to spread all that matters is that the state where it was first instantiated be a powerful one—although of course that is oftentimes relevant. But my point is that some norms travel and others do not, depending on their 'fit' to the international normative structure. In the TAN I trace below, for instance, the 1986 Philippine experience became foundational because its main motivation (the right to have one's voice heard in the electoral process) resonated with the liberal aims of the Western world. A TAN pushing for the adoption of slavery, for instance, most likely wouldn't have fared very well—because it wouldn't have resonated with the wider international discourse.

Taking this structural element into consideration, Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink (Risse-Kappen & Sikkink 1999) have recently argued that the process by which international norms are internalised by states can be thought of as a process of 'socialization.' They develop a five-phase 'spiral model' of norm socialization: 1) repression and activation of network; 2) denial; 3) tactical concessions; 4) 'prescriptive

status'; 5) rule-consistent behaviour (22ff). Risse and Sikkink's model is useful in tracing the process by which international institutions encourage the spread of norms around the world. As they put it, 'the 'spiral model' accounts for the variation in the *domestic effects* of international norms (6; my italics). Furthermore, the model is based on the prior existence of international institutions (19). Thus, the 'spiral model' reproduces the previous bias of taking an outside-in approach, in which the focus is the impact of the external environment on specific states.[4] A remaining task is then to 1) identify those norms whose early phase was closely associated to a specific country, and 2) trace their diffusion to the international arena. That is, in order to complement the prevailing outside-in approach, we need to reverse the inquiry: inside-out.

Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink have developed an approach that points in this direction (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998). They refer to it as the norm 'life cycle.' Finnemore and Sikkink's life cycle model has three phases: emergence, cascade, and internalisation. In the first phase, norm entrepreneurs 'create' issues by 'framing' them. This process might take place at the domestic level. The crucial link comes in the second phase, for it is necessary for the emergent norm to reach a threshold, and then 'become institutionalised in specific sets of international rules and organizations' (900). Without institutionalisation, norm diffusion from the bottom-up becomes more difficult. Finnemore and Sikkink pose two ways norms might reach a tipping point. The first is when the emergent norm reaches a critical mass. That is, as more states adopt the norm, there comes a moment when 'norm cascade' begins (they suggest this usually happens only after one-third of the total states have adopted the norm). The second way an emergent norm can reach a tipping point is when critical states adopt it (critical states are 'those without which the achievement of the substantive norm goal is compromised' (901)). Finally, in the third, 'internalization' phase, norms work down from the international to the domestic level.

Finnemore and Sikkink's approach moves us forward by effectively tracing the origins of international norms. Its only shortcoming, for my purposes here, is that it leaves out a third

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[4] Although at least two chapters in the edited volume (the one by Stephen Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International Norms and Domestic Politics in Chile and Guatemala,' and the one by Anja Jetschke, 'Linking the unlinkable? International norms and nationalism in Indonesia and the Philippines') might be considered an exception to the outside-in approach.

way in which norms might reach a tipping point. This third way is a constitutive one, in which neither sheer numbers or the consent of 'critical' states is essential. In this path, norms cascade simply by 'expressing' a foundational element of the international *cum* domestic system. Since the element in question, for instance, popular sovereignty, is so deeply embedded into our understanding of what a polity ought to be (from a domestic and international point of view), it is very difficult for state leaders to ignore it. As R. B. J. Walker has observed, 'sovereignty expresses and works to reproduce a specific relation between claims to difference and claims about the forms of commonality and structure that permit claims to monopoly [to legitimate authority] to have any meaning at all' (Walker 2000, 28).

Hence, state leaders, willingly or not, talk-the-talk of the norm at stake. It might then be possible for a few, not necessarily 'critical' states to instantiate and thus catapult the emergent norm—making it reach a tipping point. In a sense, then, it can be said that the emergent norm was always there: both in the outside (the international system) and in the inside (the domestic structure) in a latent state. It is thus the *nature* of the emergent norm, more than the number or the type of states which adopt it, that is critical in this path. The constitutive way does not negate the other two; it subsumes them. Once a norm is realized in this path, it spreads out quickly—with or without any the other paths being present. My probe of the IEM TAN is intended to illustrate this third way, and to test its usefulness.

The Philippines 1986

The 1986 Philippine electoral process is the cornerstone of the IEM TAN.[5] As Eva-Lotta Hedman has noted, the 1986 effort is 'the most effectively mobilized and widely celebrated of election-watch campaigns to date in the Philippines (or anywhere else)' (Hedman 2001, 156). The network that emerged in the late 1980s stood on the shoulders of Philippines' 'People Power'—and the muscle of that power was the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL).

Tellingly, the story of NAMFREL had little to do with processes of globalisation and regionalisation, or with the end of the Cold War. In fact, the origins of NAMFREL go back

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[5] Not that this was the first instance, but for practical purposes it became foundational; cf. Carothers 1999.

to the dawn of the Cold War. Thus, after its debut in the 1951 senatorial elections, NAMFREL launched a wide-ranging campaign, which included election watching, for the 1953 presidential elections. This early incarnation of NAMFREL relied heavily on the Philippine Veterans Legion, and to a lesser extent on civic and religious associations such as the Jaycees, the Lions, and Catholic Action of the Philippines (Hedman 2001, 66). On 10 November 1953, with about 5000 members at polling places across the Philippines, NAMFREL not only obtained a high profile on the media, but also lend credibility to the electoral triumph of the opposition candidate (110). Two things are worth pointing out here: one, that the organization of a monitoring effort of this magnitude points to the existence of a solid civil society in the Philippines, only a few years after it had obtained its independence; two, that the civic efforts that crystallized on election day did not develop into a sustained organization or movement. Thus, elections were not monitored in the Philippines again until the late 1960s. And this was done by another organization, the Citizens National Electoral Assembly (67). Furthermore, this effort again relapsed until the modern NAMFREL emerged in 1983.

The political scene in the Philippines of this time was substantially different from that of the previous two electoral processes. The regime of Ferdinand Marcos had become truly authoritarian, as was made crystal-clear with the declaration of martial law in 1972. Dressed in strong anti-Communist, cold war rhetoric, the measure came as a big shock to a country that had lived with more or less democratic institutions since the 1930s. Marcos's 'constitutional authoritarianism' (Jetschke 1999, 139), as he used to refer to his regime, thus gave diverse civil and political factions to unite against a common adversary: Ferdinand Marcos.

Opposition to Marcos became so widespread that even his key international ally, the United States, began to put pressure on him by the mid 1980s. This was no small setback for the Philippine government, and certainly not an easy step for a U.S. administration concerned with its global battle with the still existing 'evil empire.' The (in)famous history of U.S. support for the authoritarian Philippine government is well known. For my purposes in this paper, it suffices to state that the United States began to abandon its traditional wholehearted support of Marcos in 1985.

But the role played both by foreign governments and foreign activists was secondary in the eventual downfall of Marcos. This was a domestically-crafted feat—one in which NAMFREL played a crucial role, as made patent by the legions of volunteers that participated on the 1986 electoral process. Ironically, the Marcos regime provided the key incentive for NAMFREL's re-emergence. Two months after the assassination of opposition candidate Benigno Aquino in 1983, a diverse group of business, civic, professional, and religious leaders got together and organized what, one more time, came to be known as NAMFREL. The new organization was an ad hoc one, with no further aims than the civic effort to work for free and fair elections. It was also a merely civic (in the sense of not overtly political, and certainly not radical) effort. As Kaa Byington notes, referring to the 1983 initiators: 'What these founders had in common was a long-time interest in civic, rather than political, organizing, and some organizations that they jointly belonged to' (Byington 1988, 37). But the backbone of NAMFREL was undoubtedly the Philippine Bishops-Businessmen's Conference, an uncommon association of organizations dealing with matters as diverse as the bottom-line and the salvation of souls, which proved tremendously successful, however. Co-chaired by a Bishop, Antonio Y. Forthic, and entrepreneur, Jose S. Concepcion, the new NAMFREL first got involved in the 1984 Assembly elections. On that occasion, approximately 250,000 volunteers participated.

As the domestic situation deteriorated and international pressure increased, Marcos was forced to make some concessions. Thus, although presidential elections were not scheduled until 1987, in November 1985 he announced on an ABC news program that they would be held one year early. This otherwise welcome announcement took the opposition by surprise. At first, it was reluctant to participate, but within a month it had agreed on a presidential candidate: Corazón Aquino, the widow of the slain leader.

In this critical context, NAMFREL would become a key actor in the electoral process. The 1984 experience lent NAMFREL credibility and widespread recognition. It is telling in this respect that the 'General Instructions for the Board of Election Inspectors' for the 1986 presidential elections had a section on 'watchers' (Republic of the Philippines, Commission of Elections, 1986; Republic of the Philippines, Commission of Elections, 'General Instructions' section III). Furthermore, NAMFREL was accredited as the citizen arm of the

Commission of Elections on 24 December 1985. Thus, with 500,000 volunteers on election day, as Gretchen Casper has put it, 'Marcos's modus operandi was constrained' by NAMFREL (Casper 1995, 116).

During both the 1984 and 1986 campaigns, as Hedman notes, 'the rank and file of NAMFREL volunteers was filled in large measure by corporate employees and professional affiliates in many localities around the country' (Hedman 2001, 117). The engine of this success was one of the co-chairmen, 'Joe Con'—as the charismatic and hyperactive entrepreneur who became the symbol of NAMFREL was known. 'Joe Con's theory of organization,' according to Kaa Byington, '[was] simple: network'(Byington 1988, 38).

This is not to suggest that NAMFREL was a one-man show. Instead, what I want to emphasize is both the reformist agenda of the organization, and the important role played by groups not usually identified with social activism. This dual character gives a hint to the kind of specimen the monitoring of elections would evolve into at the international level. And it is precisely when international actors entered the scene in the Philippines that both the domestic effort was potentiated, through boomerang effect, and that an IEM TAN was born.

The support foreign actors, mainly U.S. actors, gave to the opposition forces and NAMFREL was crucial. To begin with, as noted, the United States changed its position vis-à-vis the Philippine government by the mid-1980s. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's chairman, Senator Richard G. Lugar, led an unprecedented election monitoring mission to the Philippines. Right from the start, his assessment of the electoral context was far from complacent. Lugar accused Marcos of attempting to manipulate the electoral process (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 117). In parallel, the U.S Embassy in Manila maintained close contact with NAMFREL throughout the period leading to the snap elections (Hedman 2001, 183). As Thomas Carothers has noted regarding the change in US foreign policy that took place in the mid 1980s: 'The Philippines was the crucial first case' (Carothers 1999, 37).

But official U.S support for the democratic forces came late, and was wavering. Right after the rigged electoral process, for instance, Reagan declared that fraud had taken place on both sides. Consequently, as Anja Jetschke notes, 'until late 1985 the US administration largely followed events in the Philippines, rather than actively shaping them' (Jetschke 1999, 153). However, at the request of Senators Lugar and Clairbone Pell, the Center for Democracy sent a preliminary delegation to the Philippines. In its report, the Center established a set of requirements they considered critical in evaluating the 7 February electoral process. Among these, was the accreditation of NAMFREL as a pollwatching organization (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 8).

More decisive, although equally late, was the support provided by other organizations, especially that of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). Founded in 1983, it is one of the four core grantees of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), established the same year. Although the NED is mostly funded from congressional appropriations, it operates autonomously from the executive branch of the U.S. government (Diamond 1992, 39). NDI receives most of its resources from the NED as does its counterpart the National Republican Institute for International Affairs (NRIIA). Thus, both can be thought of as quasi-governmental organizations. NDI began its activities in the Philippines in January 1986.[6] It is worth noting that Marcos himself, at the same time he went on U.S. TV to announce the snap elections, had noted that international observers would be welcome. This was undoubtedly a strategic move by Marcos, who calculated that he could win the election, and that foreign observers, given the short interval before the elections, would not be able to denounce eventual irregularities. Nevertheless, as the delegation's final report consigns, during their first meeting with members of the Commission of Elections 'several commissioners explicitly warned against 'foreign interference'' (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 9). Furthermore, before the delegation left Manila on 11 January, the Commission passed a resolution, *Rules and Regulations against Foreign Intervention*, which established that foreign observers could not be within 50 meters of the voting tables (10).

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[6] The mission was organized jointly with the NDI/NRIIA, but the final report was written by a NDI staff-member (Larry Garber), and published by NDI.

COMELEC's hostility did not reflect the general mood toward observers, though. Both presidential candidates and NAMFREL welcomed them. Thus, a 44-member NDI-NRIIA delegation, headed by British parliamentarian John Hume and Colombian former President Misael Pastrana, arrived in Philippines 12 days before the election (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 11). In their short stay, delegation members were able to witness plenty of irregularities. The delegation issued its highly critical preliminary findings on February 9, two days after the election. The official U.S. observer delegation was also highly critical, and eventually even the Reagan administration openly chastised the Marcos regime for the handling of the electoral process (13). All the negative foreign publicity, Steven Rood noted, prevented the election from serving one of its purposes, that of ensuring foreign support for the Marcos regime (Rood 1987, 9).

But the determining factor in Marcos's failure was home grown. The day before the Batasang Pambansa (Philippine Congress) declared Marcos the winner, the Catholic Bishops Conference denounced the elections as 'the most fraudulent in Philippine history,' while NAMFREL's Joe Con declared that 'Never has a more vigilant populace witnessed a more pervasive travesty upon the sanctity of the ballot box in our history' (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 14). As the civic group would put it in its report: 'NAMFREL believes that the overall outcome as officially proclaimed by the Batasang Pambansa is a complete mockery of the right of suffrage and does not reflect the true will of the Filipino people' (4).

The reformist movement would have quite a momentous ending. After Marcos's refusal to accept his defeat, an aborted military coup and counter coup took place, prompting hundred of thousands of Philippines to the street to form a human shield to protect the reformist soldiers (Hedman 2001, 185). Finally, on 25 February, after an arrangement worked out with U.S. Senator Paul Laxalt, Marcos left the Philippines for exile in Hawaii (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 15-6).

As the previous narrative suggests, the bulk of the monitoring effort in the 1986 electoral process in the Philippines was carried out by domestic actors. Without NAMFREL, foreign observers would have probably just been used by the Marcos regime. Not because they would have wanted to be its accomplices, but because if to the short period they spent in the

country, we add the absence of a well-organized domestic counterpart, their effectiveness would have certainly decreased. This is not to suggest that international observers were superfluous. Far from it. NAMFREL enthusiastically supported their presence, and eventually got 800 of them accredited (Byington 1988, 189). NAMFREL also received financial support, approximately $1 million, from foreign donors. Among them were the United States Agency for International Development, and the NED (Hedman 2001, 183).

The defining feature of the Philippine experience was then the interaction between domestic and international actors in a novel arena; election watching. It was this extremely successful interaction that made the international monitoring of elections acquire certain modularity (Hedman 2001, 29). As the NDI-NRII report notes, 'As a result of the Philippine experience, there has been increased attention on the role of the international community in supporting democratic development in different countries (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 2).' The Philippines would then become a foundational experience for IEM in general and for the NDI in particular. Thus, as a result of its involvement in the Asian archipelago, D. Stoelting has noted, 'the National Democratic Institute has emerged as the most prominent NGO in the election observation field (Stoelting 1992, 423).' For NDI, 'NAMFREL [has served] as a model for organizing individuals who are not politically active and sensitizing them to political issues in a manner that will not arouse their fears' (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 75).

One might thus argue that the origins of the IEM TAN might be found in the Philippines. At the time the snap election took place, actors working internationally had not yet established a 'dense exchange of information and services' (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 217), that would allow us to refer to it as an international network. A still not fully articulated international norm, the right to free and fair elections, materialized for the first time in the Philippines, and became then a more concrete referent for state and nonstate actors. There was certainly a critical mass of people, mainly in the Philippines and the United States, that allowed the boomerang pattern to take place. But it was only because a well-organized domestic network of activists threw the boomerang in the first place, that it picked up strength from the Americas before coming back to the Philippines.

Chile 1988

The Philippine election monitoring effort was an important referent for the 5 October 1988 Chilean plebiscite. Heraldo Muñoz, a Chilean who participated in an NDI's IEM mission to the Philippines summarized it well in the title of an article he wrote in 1987: 'Lesson From the Philippines: Organization and Participation in Free Elections' (cited in National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1991, 81).

The 1988 plebiscite in Chile was held in accordance with the 1980 Constitution approved by the junta (whose members had overthrown the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende in 1973). According to the new legislation, General Pinochet was named President of the Republic for an eight-year term, but sometime before the end of that term, the government was required to conduct a plebiscite in which the electorate would be asked to accept or reject the government's presidential candidate. A 'Yes' victory would then mean the government's candidate serving another eight-year term, after which multi-candidate elections would be held. A 'No' victory, on the other hand, would mean that Pinochet would remain in office for one more year, and would be required to hold multi-candidate elections ninety days before his term came to an end. The plebiscite was thus *not* an election. This protracted and controlled mechanism was one of the pillars of what Pinochet claimed his regime was creating for the well-being of his fellow citizens, a system of 'protected democracy.'

Thus, on 30 August, when the junta announced both the date for the plebiscite and that General Pinochet would be the name people would cast their ballot for or against, the opposition had already gone a long way in negotiating a common front: the *Concertación de Partidos por el NO* (Association of Parties for the NO). The *Concertación* represented the coming together of 15 (eventually 16) political parties of diverse political orientations with one objective: 'to defeat Pinochet and the regime in the plebiscite' (Aylwin Azócar 1998, 341).

Paralleling the mobilization of the political class, civic, religious, and human rights activists also joined forces. The aim of such a convergence was twofold: first, to organize a drive for voter registration, and, second, to monitor the electoral process. As in the Philippine experience, this effort was substantially home grown. But also as in the case across the

Pacific, the synergy created by the coming together of domestic and external activists potentiated the effectiveness of the endeavour. Furthermore, their mere association with foreign actors became a sort of 'insurance' for Chilean activists, since it made it more onerous for the government to retaliate against them.

Thus, the *Cruzada por la Participación Ciudadana* (Crusade for Civic Participation, also known as CIVITAS), was formed in March 1988 to encourage voters to participate in the plebiscite. CIVITAS also cooperated with another civic organization in conducting a quick count on election day (Nevitte 1997, 52). Likewise, the Catholic Church's *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* (Vicariate of Solidarity) was very active not only in human rights issues but also on those related to the transition process. It became a focal point for foreign observers of the plebiscite. Similarly, Chilean intellectuals played a very important role in the months leading to the plebiscite, both in the political campaign against the regime properly, and in the monitoring of the plebiscite itself. As Jeffrey Puryear has amply documented, the financial and technical support these intellectuals received from foreign donors became instrumental in the successful transition to democracy in Chile (Puryear, 1994).

But it wasn't only the intellectuals who received external assistance. During 1988, NDI administered a $1 million fund to support the democratic transition in Chile (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1988, 7). Thus, it provided grants for civic education and monitoring to civic organizations, such as CIVITAS. Furthermore, this time multiple international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), such as the International Human Rights Law Group, the Washington Office on Latin America, the Latin American Studies Association, America's Watch, NRIIA, and NDI sent delegations to monitor the plebiscite. Of these, the most conspicuous, both for the resources at its disposal, and for the profile of its members, was the last one. With two former presidents among its leaders, Adolfo Suárez of Spain, and Misael Pastrana of Colombia, NDI's delegation consisted of 55 members (iii). In the time between the Philippine snap election and the Chilean plebiscite, NDI had been actively involved building bridges between civic organizations of the two countries. Thus, for instance, two NAMFREL members took part in a November 1987 workshop in Santiago, sponsored by NDI, dealing with issues of voter registration and mobilization. Similarly, a month and a half before the plebiscite, NAMFREL specialists

went to Chile to oversee the monitoring efforts of civic the Command for the NO and of the Committee for Free Elections (83).

The presence of foreign observers in Chile elicited contradictory responses. On the one hand, the opposition forces and civil groups openly welcomed their presence. The Committee for Free Elections, for instance, sent a letter to NDI welcoming the presence of its delegation because it demonstrated 'international support for a free and fair plebiscite' (reproduced in National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1988, 70). The Chilean government on the other hand, had a rather ambivalent position vis-à-vis the presence of observers. Some senior officials, including Pinochet himself, several times complained that the presence of foreign observers was an intervention in domestic affairs. Thus, in a diplomatic note sent by the Foreign Ministry to foreign diplomats accredited in Chile in May 1988 the Chilean government stated that it would 'not recognize for any foreign citizen the attributes of "inspector", "comptroller" or "examining observer."' But the Chilean authorities also made clear in the same dispatch that 'foreign citizens may witness the development of the election acts in which voters recognized by the political constitution and legislation are participating' (20). In the end, the government did not raise obstacles to international observers. This, of course, was not just a gratuitous concession by the military regime. What Darren Hawkins has noted about human rights applies as well to the right to democratic government in Chile:

> In countries where human rights norms are more firmly established, either by historical precedent or by a growing diffusion throughout civil society, authoritarian elites have greater difficulty evading international pressures. To demonstrate their legitimacy, they must adopt the language of human rights and claim some adherence to human rights standards rather than simply arguing, as do many Asian regimes, that Westernized international norms do not apply (Hawkins 1997, 409).

The Pinochet regime did indeed embrace the democracy discourse, beginning with its already noted self-characterization as a 'protected democracy.'

In any case, by this time two things were clear: first, that national elections were in the process of becoming international affairs. As former Adolfo Suárez put it in the foreword to the NDI's report on the Chilean plebiscite, 'The recent Chilean plebiscite, although formally an internal matter falling within the sovereign rights of Chile, also had an international dimension of major relevance' (National Democratic Institute for International

Affairs 1988, v); second, that an IEM TAN was in the process of consolidation. As Paul Drake has observed, 'The Chilean democratic forces tapped into a global network of activists in factor of democracy and human rights' (Drake 1994, 28).

One more element in the international environment played in favour of the democratic (partisan and non-partisan) forces in Chile: the change in United States policy toward the Pinochet regime. The open support of the United States to the military government since its inception had been a general rule (with the partial exception of the Carter years). The change in policy that began to take place in 1985 was all the more surprising given the zealous support the Reagan administration was bent on providing to anti-Communist regimes, such as Pinochet's—regardless of their democratic credentials or human rights record. Nevertheless, in March 1986 Secretary of State George Shultz referred to Chile as one of the Western hemisphere's 'odd men out' (along with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Paraguay), and the US ambassador to Chile, Harry G. Barnes, prepared a draft resolution for the UN Human Rights Commission condemning Pinochet's human rights record (Dogget 1988, 29, 31). As time went by, the bilateral relationship deteriorated, and the issue of the plebiscite acquired unprecedented salience. The U.S Congress established the Committee to Support Free Elections in Chile, under the joint presidency of Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy and Republican Senator Richard Lugar. The Committee also included former presidents James Carter and Gerald Ford (Muñoz and Portales 1991, 97).

Thus, drawing on a rich associational life tradition, and with the decided support of foreign actors, Chileans working against the Pinochet regime were able to build an impressive organization for plebiscite day.[7] They achieved voter registration of 92 percent. On 5 October, all 22,131 polling places were monitored (Valenzuela 1989, 130), and a turnout of registered voters of 97 percent occurred (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1988, 1). The 'No' option won with 55 percent of the votes. Whether or nor the Pinochet regime had contemplated stealing the election in case of adverse results, it is clear

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[7] Interestingly, the traditionally well-organized popular sectors played only a marginal role during the transition. As Philip Oxhorn has noted, 'as the possibility of an actual transition to democracy became increasingly imminent in 1987 and 1988, political parties joined together to dismantle the [popular social] movement as part of the collective effort to secure the transition (Oxhorn 1995, 280).'

that the vast network of domestic and international monitors contributed to making that possibility extremely remote.

Nicaragua 1990

By the time the 25 February 1990 Nicaraguan elections took place, the IEM TAN was already established. Paradoxically, though, in this case nonstate actors played a secondary role in monitoring the electoral process. The main role fell to two IGOs: the Organization of American States (OAS), and the United Nations (UN). Since overthrowing the Somoza regime in 1979, the Sandinistas had had a difficult relationship with the United States. At first, under the Carter administration, which promoted a less interventionist foreign policy, and placed more emphasis on the promotion of human rights, the bilateral relationship seemed manageable. But the arrival of Ronald Reagan at the White House changed everything. Convinced that the Sandinistas were communists who represented a direct threat not only to the isthmus but also to the United States, the Reagan administration did not hesitate to fight a proxy-war against the revolutionary regime. The United States government thus began funding the 'Contras,' putting pressure on the Honduran government so its territory could serve as a base for what Reagan used to call 'freedom fighters.'

By the second half of the 1980s, it became evident that neither the Sandinistas nor the U.S. government was going to prevail. For the Sandinistas, the situation was of course particularly delicate, since the political and economic conditions of their country were going from bad to worse. But the problem was not limited to the bilateral relationship, or to Nicaragua. It had become a problem for the whole Central American region. Thus, in the framework of the regional peace plan known as Esquipulas II Agreement, the five Central American presidents committed themselves in 1987 to 'promote an authentic democratic process that is pluralistic and participatory, which entails the promotion of social justice and respect for human rights.' Furthermore, the presidents also committed themselves 'to invite the Organization of American States (and) the United Nations... to send observers to verify that the electoral process is fair and free' (Beigbeder 1994,165). As Jennifer McCoy, Larry Garber, and Robert Pastor have pointed out, Esquipulas Agreement 'represented a conceptual breakthrough in international relations, slicing through the cord connecting

internal strife and external intervention by dealing with both dimensions of the conflict at the same time' (McCoy, Garber et al. 1991, 103).

On March 1989 Nicaragua made an official request to the Secretary-General of the UN to send a mission of observers to its February 1990 elections. Four months later, the Secretary-General made public his decision to establish the UN Observer Mission to verify the electoral process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN). In communicating it to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General was careful to stress that although the UN had supervised elections in the context of decolonisation, it had not been its practice to do so in sovereign states. Furthermore, he pointed out that 'on a number of occasions over the years, we have declined invitations from Member States to that effect' (cited in Franck 1992, 80).

This was in fact the first time that the UN would observe a national election in a sovereign country, since the isolated 1977 observing mission to Panama had dealt with a referendum on an international treaty. Thus, the Secretary-General justified acceding to the Nicaraguan request in terms of it being part of the Central American peace plan (Franck 1992, 80). Similarly, in approving the creation of ONUVEN the General Assembly noted that this was an 'extraordinary measure,' one that was justified only by its relation to the maintenance of international peace and security in the region. Furthermore, the General Assembly stated explicitly that no precedent was being created with this operation (Beigbeder 1994, 166).

The UN and the OAS thus established the largest and most comprehensive electoral observation mission ever in a sovereign country. The OAS team alone consisted of 433 observers. This amounted to an impressive quantitative and qualitative difference compared to previous OAS observation efforts, in which only a few distinguished persons were sent to provide what was symbolic support for democratic reform. Although cooperation between the UN and the OAS teams was not always easy (Pastor 1990, 18), the extent to which both organizations got involved in lending credibility to the February 1990 electoral process in Nicaragua was unprecedented. The UN and the OAS became central actors in the electoral process.

Alongside these highly visible teams, there were a myriad of INGOs monitoring the electoral process. There were nearly 2000 accredited foreign observers from over 200

NGOs present in Nicaragua on election day (Pastor 1990). Among the organizations which sent missions were: Hemispheres Initiatives, Center for Democracy, International Human Rights Law Group, Washington Office for Latin America, and the Carter Center.[8] Interestingly, NDI did not send a delegation to Nicaragua (although that same year it sent missions to Bulgaria, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Haiti). Nevertheless, several of its leaders provided advice to the Carter Center's delegation, and a NDI staff member took a temporary leave to join the Center's mission (Carter Center 1990, 10). With a permanent representative in Nicaragua since late 1989, the Carter Center's mission eventually came to have 34 members. Among them was Genaro Arriagada, the former spokesman of Chile's *Concertación de Partidos por el NO*. The presence of Arriagada underscores the permanence of the TAN born in the Philippines four years before.

But undoubtedly the most important member of the delegation was the person after whom the Center was named; James Carter. As a widely respected former U.S. president, Carter was in a privileged position. He was able to act as a mediator not only between his country's government and Nicaragua's, but also between the Sandinistas and the opposition, whose bulk coalesced around the candidacy of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (the widow of the slain journalist Joaquín Chamorro). And Carter did indeed act as a mediator between the government and the opposition—but not only during the electoral campaign. During the transition period, from the moment when Ortega recognized his defeat at the polls, and until Chamorro took power on 25 April, both leaders looked to the former president to guarantee a smooth transfer of power (Pastor 1990).

Four points are worth highlighting about the Nicaraguan experience:

- The fact that IGOs played the most visible role in monitoring the electoral process is significant for what it says about the institutionalisation of a practice largely initiated by a TAN. It was precisely the Nicaragua precedent that encouraged the OAS to create in 1991 the Democratic Promotion Unit. Since its establishment, the Unit has undertaken 37 electoral monitoring missions in over half of the OAS member states (OAS).

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[8] The Carter Center's mission was organized under the umbrella of the 'Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government,' but since the staff, resources, and even the idea for the Council itself came from the Carter

Following the steps of the regional organization, the United Nations (UN) created in 1992 the Electoral Assistance Unit, which since that time has been involved in more that 100 electoral processes world-wide;[9]

- A single NGO, the Carter Center, played an exceptionally important role during the electoral process and afterwards. This was in large part due to its unique nature (i.e., that it was founded and directed by a former U.S. president), but also to the fact that the Carter Center built on NDI's 'model' for observing elections (Carter Center 1990, 10). This fact underscores the evolution of the IEM TAN, one that had started only a few years earlier in the Philippines;

- The copious presence of foreign observers (over 2000) drives home the point that an IEM TAN was perfectly well established by 1990. That is, at this time Sikkink's requirement 'to speak meaningfully of a network,' that 'enough actors must exist and be connected' (Sikkink 1993,416), was met;

- The monitoring effort relied entirely on foreign actors: the elections were not monitored by domestic groups. This rather paradoxical feature of the Nicaraguan case underscores the international bias of the network literature. This bias, I would argue, is concomitant with the tendency to focus on the impact of international norms on domestic politics. The Nicaraguan peculiarity, I suggest, might be explained by two factors. First, in contrast to Chile, where the democratic tradition had accompanied (or built upon) a rich associational life, Nicaragua's history was certainly not notable for either of those features. No democratic tradition or rich associational life existed in Nicaragua. Second, the polarization of political life in Nicaragua was such that it made the emergence of a civic, non-partisan monitoring group very difficult. It would not be until 1996 that a Nicaraguan organization, *Ética y Transparencia*, first monitored domestic elections. Tellingly, NDI, and through it the IEM TAN, was instrumental in the emergence of this organization.[10]

Center, I refer to the mission as the Center's and not the Council's. By doing this, I want to point out, I do not intend to belittle the valuable contribution of the Council's members.

[9] The Unit was upgraded to Division in 1994. The data come form the Division's web page.

[10] Interview with Melvin Estrada, Executive Secretary of *Ética y Transparencia*, Managua, 8 October 2001.

Mexico 1994

It was not until 1994, with the 21 August Presidential elections in Mexico, that the convergence of the three vectors—international actors, domestic civil society, and IGOs—took place. In a way, the story comes full circle in this case. On the international front, it is worth noting that Mexico had traditionally been (at least until 1993) one of the staunchest supporters in the international arena of the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs. For instance, when in 1992 the OAS General Assembly voted to amend the charter so that a government which overthrows a democratic regime can be suspended from the organization, Mexico cast the only dissenting vote (Millet 1994, 14). As late as December 1993, in UN resolution 48/124, Mexico expressed its opposition to foreign election monitors (Benitez Manaut 1996, 541).

The Mexican government's concern with foreign observation was a sign of the times. Significantly, it was a non-issue only a decade before. Thus, for instance, in 1988, when election monitoring was not yet a prominent issue in the international arena, it was not an issue in Mexico's presidential election that year either. But after the uproar caused by the fraudulent elections of that year, which was an implicit endorsement of the electoral path, involvement in electoral issues entered the agenda of domestic NGOs. Significantly, though, it was only after the head of the non-governmental Mexican Human Rights Commission, Sergio Aguayo, was invited by the Carter Center to observe the 1990 Haitian elections, that the idea of domestically monitoring Mexican elections emerged. As Aguayo puts it: 'monitoring by outside observers seemed to me an effective way to promote fair elections, but I found that exercise expensive, and not enough in any case to consolidate a culture of democracy. The logical alternative for Mexico was electoral observation by the country's own citizens (Aguayo Quezada 1995, 158).

Although Aguayo's preference for domestic observers was more a pragmatic than principled issue, the mere possibility of external monitoring aroused suspicion in the Mexican government. In October 1990, Mexico's Foreign Minister declared that the country's problems regarding democracy would need to be solved by Mexicans 'and not by importing specialized observers from Atlanta or Milwaukee who tell us how to do things' (quoted in Chabat 1991, 14). As Jorge Chabat put it at the time, 'it would seem as though

the Mexican states's [sic] traditional concept of sovereignty has found its last refuge in the ballot box' (17).

With a grant from Canada's International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, the Mexican Academy for Human Rights was able to put a 300-observer team for the 18 August 1991 elections in San Luis Potosí. This was the first case of election monitoring in Mexico. Between then and 1993, the Academy and other NGOs monitored 15 local elections. As the practice of domestic monitoring began to spread, the issues of inviting foreign observers reappeared more forcefully. Some NGOs invited observers to watch local elections without government consent. This was the case of some Canadian legislators who observed the 1992 elections in the states of Michoacán and Morelos. The pressure on the Salinas administration to reconsider its position on foreign monitors began to increase.

But the Mexican government remained firm. Although the 1993 electoral reform for the first time legislated on the issue of domestic observers, recognizing them as legitimate actors in the electoral process, foreign observers remained explicitly banned from it. In October 1993, on the eve of the formal start of the 1994 presidential race, Foreign Minister Fernando Solana declared: 'the Mexican government will not allow foreign observers in the electoral processes, only Mexican observers. The most fundamental exercise of sovereignty are the elections, which should always be in the hands of the citizens of Mexico' (quoted n Benitez Manaut 1996, 539). Nevertheless, once again foreign observers defied the government's policy. The Carter Center, for instance, sent a mission when the presidential campaigns started.

It was in this context of increased domestic and international pressure that the Mexican government, at the UN General Assembly, in December 1993, reiterated its opposition to the participation of foreigners in the electoral processes of other countries. But a few weeks later, when the peasant uprising in Chiapas broke out, the political environment in Mexico changed so dramatically that the government was forced to make concessions on several fronts. The government of Carlos Salinas consequently changed its position on election monitoring.

In March 1994, Mexico's ambassador to the UN declared that accepting foreign observers 'does not mean abandonment of sovereignty, but declaring that there is nothing to hide and that electoral processes in Mexico can be observed freely (quoted in Benitez Manaut 1996, 547).' By that time, in stark contrast to the Nicaraguan case, the work of domestic NGOs to mount a massive observation campaign was well under way. Civic Alliance/Observation 1994, an umbrella organization that came to unite more than 300 NGOs, was legally constituted in April 1994. Earlier that month, several of its founding organizations had approached the National Endowment for Democracy to request funds. In the months leading to elections, the Mexican Academy for Human Rights and the Washington Office on Latin America elaborated a report on the forthcoming elections, calling their joint effort 'one symbol of the growing desire of civil society in Mexico and the United States to promote more democratic and humane societies' (Dresser 1995, 330).

At that point the Salinas administration was aware that there was nothing it could do to prevent the presence of foreign observers. As a former adviser to the then Interior Minister put it:

> it soon became clear that contrary to the Mexican government's sentiments, international observers would be in Mexico, despite the absence of supervision by Mexican electoral authorities or rules governing their behaviour. The risk of diplomatic incidents resulting from the activities of international observers could not be ignored. For example, what would happen if the Carter Center decided to send an observation mission and it was expelled from Mexico under Article 33 of the Constitution? (Alcocer 1997,699).[11]

Thus, in April the Mexican government informally invited the UN to provide assistance for the forthcoming elections. Significantly, the Mexican request to the UN omitted the issue of foreign observers. The Mexican government wanted the UN to play an indirect role in the monitoring of the elections. Its task was confined to two areas; to elaborate an analysis of the political and legal conditions of the electoral process, and to provide technical assistance to national NGOs engaged in election monitoring. The UN provided technical and financial assistance (between 2.5 and 3 million dollars) to 16 organizations, of which the most conspicuous was Civic Alliance. Although both kinds of assistance proved valuable, its significance was of a different order. As Sergio Aguayo, one of the most prominent leaders of Civic Alliance put it, 'the greatest contribution of the outside world was the recognition that it granted to the Civic Alliance as a legitimate representative of the

Mexican society' (Aguayo Quezada 1995, 162). This is reminiscent of NAMFREL's status as COMELEC's 'citizen arm.' But UN recognition went not only to Civic Alliance, but also, as I noted above, to 15 other election-watching organizations. Thus, with their function recognized in the amended electoral laws, and with the support of the UN, 81,620 domestic observers registered at the IFE for the presidential elections.

Finally, facing increasing external pressure from several NGOs, the Mexican government decided to allow the presence of 'foreign visitors' (the euphemism used to refer to foreign observers). According to Aguayo, the Salinas administration 'came to realize that it needed a certificate of "good democratic conduct" from the outside world' (Aguayo Quezada 1995: 162). Thus, on 23 June 1994 the IFE issued the guidelines for international visitors. Significantly, a former advisor to the Minister of the Interior has recognized that the existence of the UN Electoral Assistance Division played an instrumental role in the government's acceptance of 'international visitors' (Alcocer 1997,702). In the absence of an UN institution, whose establishment was in part made possible by the existence of an IEM TAN, the Mexican government would have been unlikely to accept international monitors. Among the organizations that sent missions to the 1994 Mexican elections were the Washington Office on Latin America, Equal Exchange, the Carter Center (in association with NDI and IRI), and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. Ultimately, 777 foreign observers registered with the IFE attended the electoral process. Significantly, more than half of them were affiliated with Civic Alliance.

As in the Philippines eight years earlier, domestic actors were at the forefront of the monitoring effort; but as in Chile six years earlier, the input of foreign nonstate actors was vital to the domestic monitoring effort; and as in Nicaragua four years before, the involvement of IGOs gave the involvement of external nonstate actors an aura of legitimacy. Beyond being the first instance when all these factors converged, the distinguishing feature of the Mexican case was the reluctance of the Mexican state to be engaged in this kind of practice—a reluctance that, without the presence of the IEM TAN, would have most likely not been overcome.

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[11] Article 33 states that 'Foreigners will not be allowed, in any way, to interfere in domestic political matters.'

Concluding Remarks

As the trajectory of the IEM TAN shows, the right to free and fair elections had become an issue of international concern by the late 1980s. This concern, however, was primarily manifested by nonstate actors working internationally. By rescuing from the domestic *cum* international system a basic element that had lain dormant at least since the bipolar world was inaugurated, these nonstate actors foreshadowed the changes to come with the end of the Cold War.

It was precisely the synergy created by domestic and transnational actors that made the rapid consolidation of the IEM TAN possible. But what is more remarkable about this network is the way it contributed to the redefinition of the issue it implies: sovereignty. By making explicit that the people's right to free and fair elections (and more fundamentally, to democratic governance) transcends state boundaries, the IEM TAN promoted an understanding of sovereignty in international relations that, while not novel, had fallen into oblivion. IEM activists were thus recuperating the social nature of sovereignty—even at the international level. The international system has been partially altered by the practice of nonstate actors. But this has not been an anti-state quarrel. On the contrary, the activities of the IEM TAN can be seen as state affirming; their aim is to make the world be constituted by the right kind of states, not by organization other than states, or a world government. The IEM TAN directly engages the state.

This feature makes the IEM TAN unique. It differentiates it, for instance, from what Paul Wapner has called 'world civil politics.' In this practice, 'NGOs turn their gaze *away from the state system* and concentrate on other entities within global civil society to win support and the instantiation of their goals' (Wapner 2000, 272; my italics). It is clear that the IEM TAN did not look away, even for a moment, from the state system. This TAN is also different from what Sidney Tarrow considers would be the effect of potential transnational movements: to 'challenge the continued autonomy, sovereignty and control by the national state over its own territory' (Tarrow 1996, 6). The IEM TAN was not challenging state sovereignty. This issue brings me back to my initial discussion about social movements.

Oftentimes the effect of thinking of TANs as GSMs is to put them in an inherently adversarial position vis-à-vis the states and the state system. But this disposition is not

intrinsic to most kinds of transnational activism; it is, in any case, an empirical matter of the issue in question. Yet more fundamental is the fact that a functional equivalent of the domestic POS is absent at the international level. Without a POS to host it, a global social movement remains an abstraction. Thus, what most international campaigns concentrate on are specific domestic structures. This is not to deny the importance of international regimes, but the fact remains that as the constitutive elements and ultimate enforces of those regimes, states remain the central actors—and the focal point for transnational action. It could perhaps be argued that the current GSMs are simply a decentralized version of their traditional homologues. Since most nonstate transnational activity, that of the IEM TAN included, does indeed confront a domestic POS, it would seem that the 'decentralized GSM' idea is well founded. There is some validity to this argument. But again, *international interaction* is generally episodic (and generally it does not involve public protest), thus making its conception as a GSM misleading. One thing is clear: there is no global POS for GSMs to hold on to.

What the international system does embody, though, are constitutive elements whose seed can be brought into life globally. That is what the path of norm-diffusion I suggested above is all about. Had the popular *cum* territorial notion of sovereignty been absent from the international system, the IEM TAN would not have thrived in the way it did. In this particular case, the number of states supporting the emergent norm (IEM), or the fact that its main players were not 'critical' states, was secondary. The gist of the emergent norm was so fundamental that it was difficult for both states and IGOs to reject it. The Mexican experience of 1994 is a clear illustration of this.

But the case of the IEM TAN might, after all, be over determined. Many factors, among them the end of the Cold War and the acquiescence of the remaining superpower, undoubtedly contributed to its rapid institutionalisation at the international level. The third way of norm diffusion I suggested might, therefore, be of more theoretical than of empirical relevance. It is still important, I would like to think, to keep it in mind when pondering how norms that we now take for granted came to be what they are.

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