PARTICIPATORY MONITORING OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY: PERSPECTIVES OF INDEPENDENT MONITORS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

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Abstract

Participatory election monitoring involves independent monitors and civil society groups overseeing elections to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability. This process is crucial for preventing electoral fraud, including intimidation and vote-buying, while also promoting democracy. The involvement of independent monitors and civil society is critical to maintaining election integrity. Although their influence varies, these groups significantly improve transparency, deter fraud, and increase public trust in the electoral process. Their effectiveness depends on their ability to access information and influence public opinion and policymakers. Combining technology with traditional surveillance has introduced a new method for safeguarding election integrity. Therefore, this article examines the main challenges faced by independent monitors and civil society in protecting election integrity during participatory monitoring, explores policies to strengthen their involvement, and considers the role of international standards in shaping election monitoring policies.

Keywords: *Participatory, Electoral Integrity, Independent Monitors, Civil Society.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Delve into the crucial concept of participatory monitoring of electoral integrity, a critical factor in ensuring the fairness and transparency of elections. A functional democracy requires open and fair elections. The public's confidence in the integrity of the electoral process is essential for the government's legitimacy. Globally, errors in administration, fraud, or manipulation of the voting process undermine public confidence in democracy, emphasizing the need to maintain electoral integrity. Argues that integrity is vital in ensuring that elections follow internationally recognized standards regarding free and fair voting rights.[1] In recent decades, public participation in election monitoring, also known as *participatory monitoring*, has become one of the most crucial approaches to maintaining electoral integrity. This participatory monitoring involves non-state actors, such as civil society organizations, independent individuals, and even international institutions engaged in overseeing elections to

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[1] Pippa Norris, *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107280861.

ensure transparency and fairness. The presence of the community in this monitoring increases the accountability of election organizers and strengthens the necessary law enforcement mechanisms when violations occur. [2]

Public participation in election monitoring is also considered one of the keys to overcoming the challenges often faced in developing countries, such as corruption, political pressure, and a lack of effective law enforcement. In Indonesia, for example, this participatory role has become increasingly important since the reform period, when the involvement of civil society and independent institutions in overseeing elections continued to grow. A previous study shows that participatory monitoring in Indonesia has improved the electoral process. However, many challenges are still faced, especially regarding technical and logistics.[3]

In addition, participatory monitoring is an effective tool for identifying and reporting potential fraud and recommending future improvements. For example, election organizing agencies can immediately respond to reports of violations or irregularities in the distribution of votes, inaccurate recording, or voter intimidation. This is important in ensuring that every vote is counted fairly and that the entire election process reflects the people's will. Thus, participatory monitoring of electoral integrity is critical to strengthening democracy. The active participation of civil society, independent institutions, and international watchdogs is essential to ensure fair and transparent elections, ultimately increasing the legitimacy of election results and public trust in the democratic system. This concept helps one understand the importance of electoral integrity and uncovers the key factors ensuring fairness in the electoral process.

Independent monitors and civil society play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of elections, although challenges such as a lack of funding, access, and capacity remain. They significantly help prevent democratic regression and increase election transparency. Previous studies have demonstrated the vital role that impartial observers, including election watchdogs, play in spotting and disclosing election integrity standards violations. Election monitoring reports, however, can also show that a nation cannot live up to international norms, which might strengthen authoritarian impulses within the country. This is particularly true in Africa, where fraud has risen in the second election following the establishment election.[4] Civil

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[2] Lyubomyr Skochylyas, *Elections and Democracy: From Theory to Practice*, October 3, 2022.

[3] Marcus Mietzner, *"Indonesia's Democratic Stagnation: Anti-Reformist Elites and Resilient Civil Society,"* Democratization 19, no. 2 (2012): 209–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2011.572620.

[4] Taku Yukawa, *"Why Election Monitoring Does Not Always Lead to Democratization: From the Perspective of Information on the International Standards of Electoral Integrity,"* Japanese Journal of Political Science 19, no. 2 (2018): 293–312, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1468109918000087.

society, through organizations such as civil society organizations (CSOs), also plays a vital role in increasing the legitimacy of election results. In Nigeria, for example, civil society monitors the movement of sensitive electoral materials and provides voter education. However, their role is constrained by a lack of funding and limited access.[5]

Participatory monitoring initiatives positively impact strengthening the electoral process's transparency and credibility and the empowerment of local communities. However, their effectiveness is greatly influenced by the availability of resources and the proper implementation strategy. A study in Indramayu Regency, Indonesia, evaluated the *Participatory Supervision Village* program as a pilot project to prevent election violations. The results show that this program is suboptimal because it does not consider data on previous election violations. It is hoped that better mapping of villages with low knowledge about elections will improve the effectiveness of this program in the future.[6] In Botswana, local pastoral communities work closely with development researchers to reduce desertification through participatory monitoring. This process results in important environmental sustainability indicators and empowers local communities with their active involvement in environmental decision-making.[7] A study in Kerala, India, shows that participatory initiatives in planning and managing tourism destinations can improve the development of local communities, create jobs, and promote sustainable development. Community participation in this process helps ensure that decisions consider local needs and the surrounding environment.[8]

Participatory monitoring of electoral integrity faces various challenges and limitations, especially from the perspective of independent monitors and civil society. Many participatory monitoring initiatives need more funding, access, and operational capacity. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are essential in monitoring elections in Nigeria. Still, their role is often hampered by resource constraints, including a lack of funding and limited access to monitor the distribution of sensitive electoral materials.[9] One of the challenges usually faced by participatory election monitors is the threat to

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[5] Paul Ani Onuh and Chinedu Cyril Ike, "*Civil Society Organizations and Electoral Credibility in Nigeria,*" *Africa Review* 13, no. 2 (2021): 233–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/09744053.2021.1941694.

[6] Dede Irawan, "*Kampung Pengawasan Partisipatif dan Road Map Indeks Kerawanan Pemilu di Kabupaten Indramayu,*" Jurnal Adhyasta Pemilu 5, no. 1 (2022): 1, https://doi.org/10.55108/jap.v5i1.85.

[7] Evan D.G. Fraser et al., "*Bottom up and Top down: Analysis of Participatory Processes for Sustainability Indicator Identification as a Pathway to Community Empowerment and Sustainable Environmental Management,*" Journal of Environmental Management 78, no. 2 (2006): 114–27, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2005.04.009.

[8] Anu Treesa George et al., "*A Case Study on Impacts of Community Participation in Tourism Planning and Destination Management in Kerala, India.,*" in Tourism Planning and Development in South Asia, ed. Dimitrios Stylidis and Boopen Seetanah (CABI, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1079/9781789246698.0001.

[9] Onuh and Ike, "*Civil Society Organizations and Electoral Credibility in Nigeria.*"

their security. For example, in Uganda, users of crowdsourced election monitoring platforms such as UgandaWatch experience safety concerns, which reduces their participation rates.[10] Lack of education and public awareness is often a barrier to effective participation in election monitoring. Case studies from Tanzania show that although technology is being used to mobilize voters and increase participation, there are still gaps in voter education, particularly in rural areas. Election observation can also lead to conflict if the surveillance results are questioned. Studies show that international monitoring criticism of election integrity can trigger post-election violence, especially in countries with weak democratic systems. Monitoring criticism often encourages losers to reject the election results in.[11]

Participatory monitoring is also often limited in the face of fraud involving local solid political forces. For example, in Russia, although there are many independent observers, the impact on the election results has proven to be minimal due to the high involvement of more vital political forces in the fraudulent process.[12] Independent monitors offer international legitimacy and trust in the electoral process but are often limited in scope. Meanwhile, civil society can build vital local participation but needs more resources and access from policymakers. Meanwhile, technology and social media have empowered independent monitors and civil society organizations by increasing community involvement in participatory monitoring, enabling real-time reporting, and increasing transparency and accuracy in election monitoring. Collaboration between technology and traditional surveillance resulted in a new approach to maintaining the integrity of elections. For this reason, this article focuses on the following problem: What are the main challenges independent monitors and civil society face in maintaining the integrity of elections during participatory monitoring? What policies can enhance civil society's involvement in monitoring elections? What is the Role of International Standards in Shaping Election Monitoring Policies for Civil Society?

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach to examine the role and challenges of independent monitors and civil society in electoral integrity monitoring. Data were collected from secondary sources, including academic

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[10] Johan Hellström, "*Crowdsourcing as a Tool for Political Participation? - The Case of Ugandawatch,*" International Journal of Public Information Systems 11, no. 1 (2015): 1.

[11] Inken Von Borzyskowski, "*The Risks of Election Observation: International Condemnation and Post-Election Violence,*" International Studies Quarterly 63, no. 3 (2019): 654–67, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz024.

[12] National Research University "Higher School of Economics" and A. S. Vaysberg, "*The Influence Of Election Observation On Incumbent's Electoral Results: The Case Of Gubernatorial Elections In St. Petersburg,*" Вестник Пермского Университета. Политология 15, no. 1 (2021): 57–65, https://doi.org/10.17072/2218-1067-2021-1-57-65.

literature, legal frameworks, policy reports, and international election monitoring standards. A statutory and conceptual framework was used to assess institutional roles, technological innovation, and the impact of international standards on domestic monitoring practices. Comparative analysis highlights common challenges such as limited resources, security threats, and restricted policy influence, while also identifying policy solutions and global best practices for strengthening civil society engagement in election oversight.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Main Challenges Independent Monitors And Civil Society Face In Maintaining The Integrity Of Elections During Participatory Monitoring

Civil society and independent observers are essential for preserving election integrity through inquiry, lobbying, and voter education. In many countries, it helps reduce fraud, boost transparency, and increase confidence in election results. Independent monitors, both domestic and international, play an essential role in monitoring elections to ensure that the process is conducted by democratic standards. Meanwhile, civil society, through civil society organizations (CSOs), often mobilizes participatory monitoring to maintain the integrity of elections. Through voter education and strict supervision, they contribute to preventing fraud and increasing the credibility of election results.[13] The main challenges independent monitors and civil society face in maintaining the integrity of elections during participatory monitoring are explained as follows:

1. Limited Resources and Operational Capacity

    Limitations in funding, human resources, and access to technology severely limit the effectiveness of election monitoring by independent monitors and civil society organizations. With sufficient resources, monitoring can be carried out evenly and promptly, ultimately affecting the integrity and transparency of the electoral process. Many civil society organizations and independent observers face significant financial challenges in implementing election observation programs.[14] A shortage of experts and qualified staff limits the scope of monitoring, especially in countries with large geographic areas and populations.[15] Limited access to modern technology is also a significant barrier to effective monitoring. Many observer organizations need access to

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    [13] Thomas Prehi Botchway, "*Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy in Ghana's Fourth Republic,*" Cogent Social Sciences 4, no. 1 (2018): 1452840, https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2018.1452840; Ruben Enikolopov et al., "Field Experiment Estimate of Electoral Fraud in Russian Parliamentary Elections," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110, no. 2 (2013): 448–52, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1206770110; Godwin Ihemeje, *Election, International Election Monitoring Groups and Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Appraisal*, 08, no. 11 (2019).

    [14] Babayo Sule* and Bakri Mat, "*Civil Society Organisations And Election Monitoring In Nigeria: The 2015 General Election,*" May 17, 2019, 405–12, https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2019.05.02.40.

    [15] Botchway, "Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy in Ghana's Fourth Republic."

sophisticated real-time communication devices for collecting and disseminating information. In many developing countries, limited telecommunications infrastructure and low adoption of digital technologies slow down data collection and reporting. This reduces the efficiency and accuracy of monitoring, which relies heavily on technology to ensure that election violations are promptly reported and acted upon(Jorrit de Jong, 2008). [16]

2. Security Threats to Monitors

Monitors often come under pressure from governments or political groups to hide findings detrimental to a particular candidate or party. This situation makes it difficult and dangerous for independent monitors to work effectively. In addition to physical risks, monitors often experience significant psychological stress, primarily when they work in an unsupportive or hostile environment. They face social stigma, threats to their families, and exclusion from local communities, particularly when they are seen as supporting or opposing specific political forces. This social pressure often comes from communities that fear negative consequences if monitors report abuses committed by political elites or militias. Independent monitors and civil society need better legal protection in many countries. They are vulnerable to physical violence and face unfair legal threats, such as arbitrary arrests or false lawsuits. The lack of press freedom and a repressive legal system also make it increasingly difficult for monitors to operate safely. In some countries with weak legal systems, monitors can be charged with false accusations designed to prevent them from effectively carrying out their surveillance duties.[17]

3. Lack of Access and Influence in Public Policy

In many developing countries, policymakers often have close relationships with dominant political actors. This prevents the voice of civil society from influencing a fair policy-making process. Domestic monitoring organizations frequently face isolation from the policy process due to a lack of political influence and support from the government.[18] Civil society organizations find it challenging to compete with stronger interest groups in collecting accurate data or disseminating information that could influence policy without access to adequate technological resources. In countries with limited press freedom, the voice of civil society is often silenced or suppressed by policymakers who fear uncovering injustices or

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[16] Jorrit De Jong, "*Trends and Challenges in Election Monitoring (Innovations Case Discussion: National Democratic Institute),*" Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization 3, no. 2 (2008): 159–64, https://doi.org/10.1162/itgg.2008.3.2.159.

[17] Norris, *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*.

[18] Max Grömping, "*Domestic Election Monitoring and Advocacy: An Emerging Research Agenda,*" Nordic Journal of Human Rights 35, no. 4 (2017): 407–23, https://doi.org/10.1080/18918131.2017.1401776.

abuses in the electoral process. Political decisions are made through an untransparent process, making it difficult for independent monitors to engage effectively in policy dialogue. Political lobbying requires access to policymakers, strong relationships with the media, and clear communication strategies, all of which require resources that civil society organizations often don't have. In some countries, regulations restricting advocacy activities hinder civil society from pushing for more inclusive policy change.[19] Independent monitors and civil society usually operate in unsupportive environments regarding political access, resources, and threats from dominant political actors. This limits their ability to influence political decision-making and oversee a transparent and fair policy process.

4. Manipulation and Transfer of Cheating

Despite strict scrutiny in some stages of elections, manipulation still occurs because election supervisors can only reach some stages or regions of elections equally. This suggests that fraud could become a systemic problem that requires more effective monitoring, greater transparency in the electoral process, and stronger sanctions for violations. This manipulation involves taking advantage of weaknesses in the surveillance system and legal or administrative loopholes, first, by Transferring Fraud to Under-Supervised Areas. In many cases, cheating is transferred to remote areas or areas with less strict supervision. This is because more infrastructure and long distances make monitoring easier. For example, voter intimidation or vote manipulation is more common in these areas, where the presence of supervisors is limited.[20] Second, Stage Manipulation That Is Not Closely Supervised. Some election violations were committed at stages that did not receive full attention from supervisors, such as during vote counting or managing election logistics. There are instances where ballot papers have already been voted on before voting, indicating fraud at the logistical stage before the election.[21] Third, Using Technical and Technological Loopholes: Technology used in elections can also be manipulated. For example, there are concerns regarding electronic voice recapitulation systems (such as Sirekap), where data discrepancies can occur between the results obtained at the polling station and the data uploaded to the system. This indicates the existence of potential digital manipulation that the supervisor does not detect.[22]

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[19] Justin Pottle, "*What Can Voting Do for Democracy?,*" Political Science Quarterly 139, no. 4 (2024): 621–33, https://doi.org/10.1093/psquar/qqad110.

[20] "Berita Terkini, Berita Hari Ini Indonesia Dan Dunia | Tempo.Co," accessed August 5, 2025, https://www.tempo.co/.

[21] "Hasil Pengawasan Tahapan Verfak, Bawaslu Temukan Lima Masalah | Badan Pengawas Pemilihan Umum," accessed August 5, 2025, https://www.bawaslu.go.id/id/berita/hasil-pengawasan-tahapan-verfak-bawaslu-temukan-lima-masalah.

[22] "Berita Terkini, Berita Hari Ini Indonesia Dan Dunia | Tempo.Co."

5. Difficulties in Managing and Verifying Data

When managing the information collected through participatory monitoring, verifying reports and coordinating between field monitors and technology is essential. One of the main challenges in participatory monitoring is ensuring the accuracy of information collected from different sources in the field. Many reports come from volunteer observers who may not have professional training, posing a risk of inaccurate or biased reports. Therefore, a reliable system is needed to verify each report before considering it legitimate data. In the Indonesian elections, verifying observer reports involving thousands of volunteers often faces difficulties related to data consistency. For example, the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) revealed that personal data was illegally used to verify political party membership. In this case, the initial data inaccuracy requires stricter verification, and the supervisor must identify and re-verify the inconsistent data.[23]

Policies can enhance civil society's involvement in monitoring elections.

The involvement of civil society in election monitoring is not merely a matter of public desire; it also relies on policies that promote such participation. By fostering a transparent, inclusive, and safe environment, the government can enhance the role of civil society as a strategic partner in upholding democracy. Honest, fair, and free elections form the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy. Enhancing civil society's role in the monitoring process is one effective way to uphold electoral integrity. By involving the community, we establish oversight and foster citizens' understanding of democracy. Thus, it is essential to implement suitable public policies that cultivate an engaging environment, motivating the public to participate actively in election monitoring.

Transparency is a prerequisite for effective engagement. When governments and election organizers provide open data such as voter lists, campaign funds, and vote results in real-time, civil society has a strong basis for surveillance. Transparency is a crucial factor in the implementation of elections within a country. Elections that ensure transparency will feature election supervision conducted freely and fairly. This policy will be reflected in the selection of media, academics, and civil society to actively supervise and evaluate political actors who compete in elections to foster public trust. Transparency enhances public satisfaction with democracy and minimizes the risk of democratic collapse and the arbitrary removal of leaders. Transparency in elections

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[23] "Hasil Pengawasan Tahapan Verfak, Bawaslu Temukan Lima Masalah | Badan Pengawas Pemilihan Umum."

fosters accountability, which is achieved through openly available data, allowing the public to verify election results and evaluate the quality of elections.[24]

Policies based on transparency in the election process are undoubtedly helpful in legitimizing election results and increasing public trust in the political system. Transparency has become one of the most valuable aspirations politicians seek to demonstrate to the public, as it signifies legitimacy, progress, and the fight against corruption. The image of a political party with a low reputation is impacted by information disclosure, motivating political parties to uphold transparency in their campaigns. Elections with active community participation empower the public to engage more deeply in the electoral process and provide valuable input at each stage. Real-time supervision is one policy that can promote transparency by utilizing technology such as social media and applications that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of each election stage, ultimately producing a real-time publication of election results that boosts transparency and credibility.[25] The challenges that will be faced in implementing transparency in elections are:

1. Data quality

   While transparency is essential, data quality must be high for the community to use it effectively. Disclosing information or data alone is insufficient if it does not meet quality standards. Transparency refers to the availability of data or information that is accessible to the public. This is crucial for encouraging accountability from governments or institutions, fostering community participation, promoting innovation, and facilitating data utilization by third parties, such as researchers or app developers.[26]

2. Privacy

   A balance between transparency and privacy is essential when reporting election results. Privacy in elections refers to safeguarding voters' choices, ensuring that it is impossible to trace who voted for whom, protecting the personal information of election officials and witnesses, and securing digital data to prevent manipulation

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[24] Lonna Rae Atkeson, "Election Data Transparency," in *The Measure of American Elections*, 1st ed., ed. Barry C. Burden and Charles Stewart, Iii (Cambridge University Press, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107589117.011; James R. Hollyer et al., "Transparency, Protest and Democratic Stability," *British Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 4 (2019): 1251–77, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123417000308; Fraser et al., "Bottom up and Top Down."

[25] Hollyer et al., *"Transparency, Protest and Democratic Stability"*; Sam Power et al., "Public Understanding of Electoral Spending: Evaluating UK Transparency Mechanisms," *Representation* 60, no. 2 (2024): 345–65, https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2023.2207170.

[26] Arie Purwanto et al., *"Citizen Engagement With Open Government Data: A Systematic Literature Review of Drivers and Inhibitors,"* in Research Anthology on Citizen Engagement and Activism for Social Change, ed. Information Resources Management Association (IGI Global, 2022), https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-3706-3.ch081.

or misuse.[27]

3. Reporting Standards

There is no uniform standard for reporting election data, which can impede transparency. This inconsistency can limit the public's ability to access and comprehend accurate information, thereby diminishing trust in the integrity of the electoral process. Moreover, it will obstruct the early detection of fraud or irregularities.[28]

Transparency in elections is essential for fostering effective citizen engagement and political accountability. By providing open and accessible data, governments can enhance public trust and ensure that elections are conducted fairly and free from corruption. However, addressing data quality and privacy is crucial to realizing the benefits of transparency's openness.

The following policy, which promotes community participation, is the existence of Technological Innovation for Participatory Monitoring. Technologies such as whistleblowing apps, election data portals, and transparent e-voting systems can broaden the scope of civil society engagement. Utilizing technology in participatory election monitoring has proven effective in increasing citizen involvement, enhancing election integrity, and boosting voter turnout. However, significant challenges and ethical considerations must be addressed to ensure the trustworthiness and effectiveness of these technological innovations.[29] While technological innovation plays a crucial role in the election process, its implementation faces several challenges, including:

1. Legislative and Regulatory Review

Appropriate and responsive regulations must support Technological innovation in elections to function effectively and legally. In the absence of comprehensive and adaptive legislative reviews, technology could lead to legal ambiguities, create openings for fraud, or even jeopardize the credibility of election outcomes. The issue of election technology is very sensitive because it concerns access to power, potential disputes over results, and the interests of certain parties or candidates.[30]

2. Feasibility Analysis and Strategic Development

The Election Organizing Body must conduct adequate feasibility studies and proper

27 Annabelle McIver et al., "*Privacy in Elections: How Small Is 'Small'?*," Journal of Information Security and Applications 36 (October 2017): 112–26, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jisa.2017.08.003.

28 Yannis Charalabidis et al., "*Organizational Issues: How to Open Up Government Data?*," in The World of Open Data, by Yannis Charalabidis et al., vol. 28, Public Administration and Information Technology (Springer International Publishing, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90850-2_4.

29 Deodatus Patrick Shayo and Norbert Kersting, "*Crowdmonitoring of Elections through ICT: The Case of Uchaguzi Wetu 2015 Crowdsourcing Platform in Tanzania*," 2017 Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government (CeDEM), IEEE, May 2017, 36–45, https://doi.org/10.1109/CeDEM.2017.13.

30 Nic Cheeseman et al., "*Digital Dilemmas: The Unintended Consequences of Election Technology*," Democratization 25, no. 8 (2018): 1397–418, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2018.1470165.

strategic planning to ensure that the introduction of new technologies is well planned. Feasibility studies and strategic planning are absolute requirements for technological innovation in elections to be successful and maintain public trust. Strategic planning ensures that technology implementation runs smoothly and efficiently and is accepted by the public.[31]

3. Ethical Considerations and Potential Risks

Technology raises ethical issues like data privacy, digital inequality, and misinformation, necessitating careful oversight to uphold public trust.

4. Security and Trust

Trust is a primary obstacle to implementing Internet and electronic voting (e-voting). This distrust stems from various technical, social, and political factors.

The Potential Impact of Civil Society Involvement in Election Monitoring on Policy Making and Governance. First, it will affect the election results, meaning that the supervising organization will significantly influence them. For example, the presence of election monitors is linked to lower voter turnout for specific incumbent candidates. This suggests that civil society's monitoring of elections can impact the election outcome.[32] Secondly, the impact of civil society on government policies can significantly affect government actions and behaviors. Historical instances illustrate how organizations within civil society have influenced government policy, emphasizing the significant role of civil society involvement in election monitoring and policymaking.[33]

Role of International Standards in Shaping Election Monitoring Policies for Civil Society

International standards significantly influence election monitoring policies among civil society by offering frameworks and guidelines that shape domestic and international practices. These global standards are designed to enhance legitimacy, tackle challenges, and substantially affect domestic policies. They enable civil society organizations to champion fair and transparent elections despite the complexities and risks involved.

The influence of international standards on civil society's election monitoring policies is intricate and layered. Numerous organizations and NGOs deploy Election

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[31] Cheeseman et al., "Digital Dilemmas."

[32] Jan Fałkowski and Przemysław J. Kurek, "*The Power of Social Mobilisation: The Impact of Monitoring the 2015 Presidential Elections in Poland,*" Journal of Comparative Economics 49, no. 1 (2021): 38–58, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2020.07.002.

[33] Jakobus M. Vorster, "*The Possible Contribution of Civil Society in the Moral Edification of South African Society: The Example of the 'United Democratic Front' and the 'Treatment Action Campaign'* (1983–2014)," HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies 71, no. 3 (2015): 8 pages, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2754.

Monitoring Missions (EOMs) to evaluate democratic and electoral processes in various nations, overseeing international elections. The legal frameworks that regulate EOMs are analyzed to assess their independence and accountability, following the approaches described in international law studies. International monitors aim to enhance election integrity by implementing preventive measures, suggesting future reforms, sharing best practices, and offering recommendations for improving election laws and administrative processes.[34]

Additionally, the influence of international standards on election monitoring policies for civil society organizations within a country is significant. Primarily, the variety of organizations with differing visions and missions can impact a nation's political opposition. Conversely, the agreement among various international election monitoring bodies regarding the legitimacy of the norms they uphold can significantly shape domestic politics. Second, high-quality election monitoring can inadvertently prompt incumbents to resort to more harmful manipulation tactics, including court rigging and media suppression, which may adversely affect the rule of law, administrative efficiency, and media freedom.[35]

Countries conducting elections encounter challenges when implementing international standards in monitoring policies for civil society. These standards are typically crafted within a framework of liberal democracy, which might not align with the political and cultural realities of certain nations. Sometimes, governments perceive civil society monitoring as a threat or foreign interference. Additionally, many civil society organizations lack the technical expertise, trained personnel, and sufficient funding to perform monitoring in compliance with international standards. This challenge is exacerbated by the growing complexity of the current international election monitoring system, characterized by an increase in low-quality or biased monitors, which jeopardizes democracy by legitimizing flawed elections and compromising the credibility of the international monitoring regime.

Disagreements among voters, politicians, and civil society groups regarding the

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[34] Ferran Martínez I Coma, *Electoral Reform*, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190677800.003.0004; Anne Van Aaken and Richard Chambers, "Accountability and Independence of International Election Observers," *International Organizations Law Review* 6, no. 2 (2009): 541–80, https://doi.org/10.1163/157237409X477699.

[35] Judith Kelley, "*The More the Merrier? The Effects of Having Multiple International Election Monitoring Organizations,*" Perspectives on Politics 7, no. 1 (2009): 59–64, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592709090094; Alberto Simpser and Daniela Donno, "Can International Election Monitoring Harm Governance?," *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 2 (2012): 501–13, https://doi.org/10.1017/S002238161100168X.

impartiality of election observation reports, alongside differing conclusions drawn by various international observers about the same elections. Additionally, some countries have rules that conflict with or outright contradict international standards, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and NGO guidelines like the Carter Center or OSCE regarding election observation.[36] International standards play a crucial role in shaping election monitoring policies for civil society by influencing the independence, accountability, and effectiveness of monitoring organizations. However, challenges such as the prevalence of low-quality observers and mixed perceptions regarding the objectivity of observation reports create barriers to implementing these standards.

IV. CONCLUSION

The main challenges that independent monitors and civil society face in maintaining the integrity of elections during participatory monitoring are explained by limited resources and operational capacity, security threats to monitors, lack of access and influence in public policy, manipulation and transfer of cheating, and difficulties in managing and verifying data. The engagement of civil society in election monitoring goes beyond public interest; it relies on policies that support this participation. By creating a transparent, inclusive, and secure environment, the government can bolster civil society's role as a vital ally in promoting democracy. Such policies can improve civil society's engagement in monitoring elections. International standards play a crucial role in shaping election monitoring policies for civil society by influencing the independence, accountability, and effectiveness of monitoring organizations.

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Fridawati, Titit, Muhammad Isan, Iswandi Abdinur, Fauzan Sugawa, Muhammad

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