Electoral Integrity Project

Electoral Integrity & Campaign Media

The Electoral Integrity Project 2018 mid-year update

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Cover photo: An Afghan journalist signs an attendance roster during photojournalism training in Farah, Afghanistan, February 10, 2013. Flickr 130210-N-IE116-229

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I: Executive summary

Elections provide opportunities for citizens to participate in politics and hold leaders to account. When they work well, elections can deepen civic engagement, inform public debate, stimulate party competition, strengthen government responsiveness, and allow the peaceful resolution of political conflict.

The problem is that too often contests fail to achieve these objectives. There is widespread concern in many countries about low or falling turnout, public disaffection, party polarization, and the failure of elections to ensure legitimate outcomes. Electoral malpractices continue to undermine contests around the world, from overt cases of violence and intimidation to disinformation campaigns, cybersecurity threats, barriers to voting, and the under-representation of women and minority candidates. To assess global trends, the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey monitors elections worldwide and regionally, across all stages of the electoral cycle.

This mid-2018 report describes the latest update of the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity dataset (PEI-6.5). The release is drawn from a rolling survey of 3,524 expert assessments of electoral integrity across 310 elections in 165 countries around the world. The cumulative study covers all national presidential and parliamentary elections from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2018. This release (PEI-6.5) adds 26 presidential or parliamentary contests held from January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018.

Perceptions of electoral integrity are measured using a rolling survey completed by experts in each country one month after polls close. Experts are asked to assess the quality of national elections on eleven sub-dimensions: electoral laws; electoral procedures; district boundaries; voter registration; party registration; media coverage; campaign finance; voting process; vote count; results; and electoral authorities (see p18). These items sum to an overall Electoral Integrity Index scored from 0 to 100.

Additional rotating batteries are added annually to monitor specific problems each year. Given widespread concerns about the issue of fake news, online disinformation, and foreign meddling, the 2018 survey focused on issues of campaign media.

Plan of the report

Part I provides a snapshot of the results. Figure 1 presents the updated global map of electoral integrity, divided into five categories ranging from very low to very high levels of electoral integrity, as measured through the PEI Index. The overall results confirm a fairly familiar pattern documented from previous reports, with the most problems experienced in elections held in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and South East Asia. When compared over time, the PEI Index scores often prove fairly stable across successive equivalent contests in each country. But some countries showed greater variations across successive contests, for reasons often best explained by particular factors in

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each case. This report breakdowns the results by examining updated country election scores by global region, as well as across the subdimensions of the electoral cycle for the 26 contests contained in PEI-6.5.

Part II goes on to examine problems in the quality of campaign media. Part III looks at three cases in more detail – Italy, Russia and Venezuela. Part IV describes our methods, coverage, and research design. Subsequent parts acknowledge contributors, list some of the publications by the network of colleagues associated with the Electoral Integrity Project, and cites further readings.

The full report on all elections during 2018 will be published with more details in early-2019, including a more in-depth analysis of new rotating battery of items monitoring the vulnerability of elections to fake news and hacking. The PEI rolling survey will continue to monitor the quality of free and fair elections in contests worldwide and the next release (V7.0) will also include a special state-level survey of the US 2018 mid-term contests.

All electronic data can be downloaded, at the levels of experts, elections, and countries, from http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/PEI.

Figure 1: Electoral integrity worldwide, 2012 to mid-2018
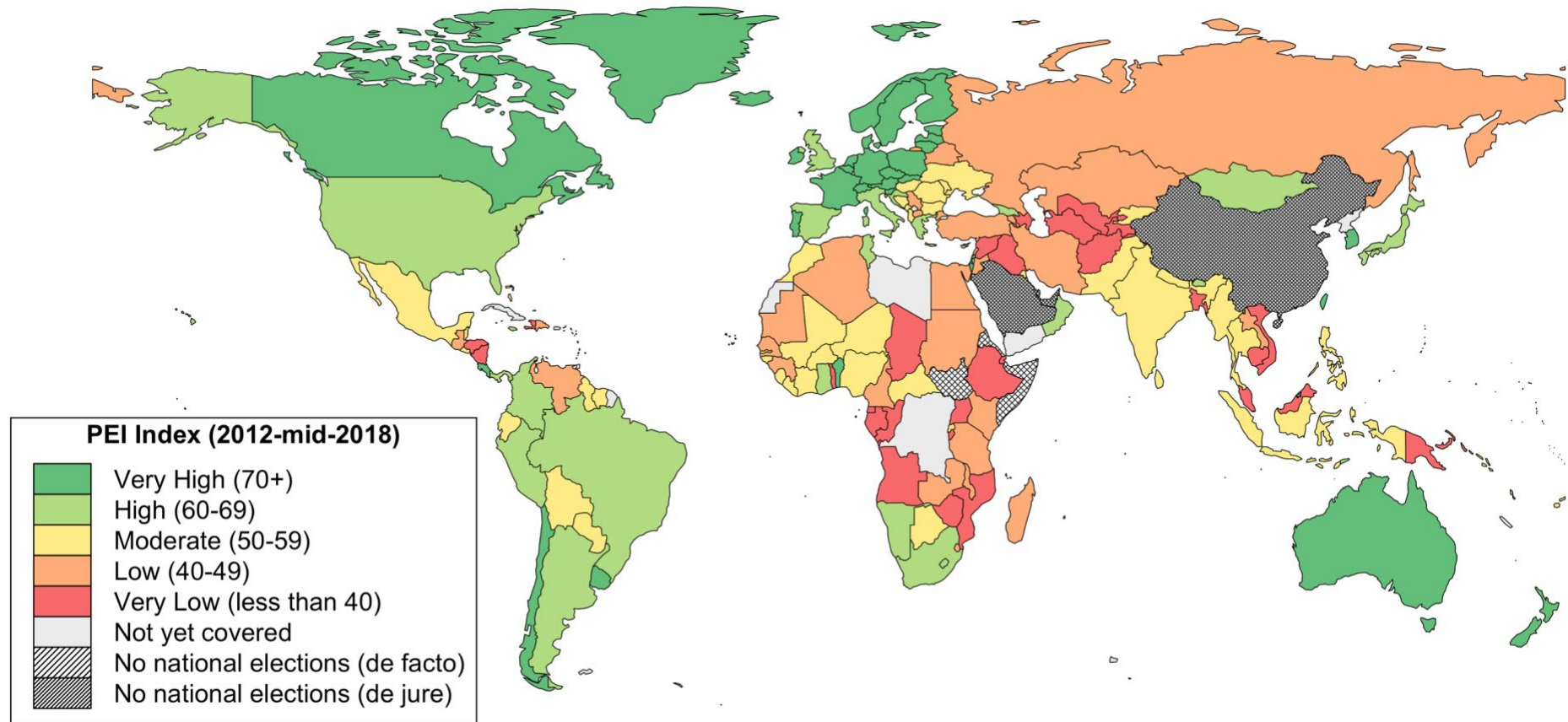
Source: *The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey (PEI 6.5), country-level www.electoralintegrityproject.com*

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Regional comparisons

Figure 2 shows the updated cumulative comparisons of countries ranked by the PEI Index in each global region. This provides an overview of the state of electoral integrity around the world. Countries with an asterisk include the results in the elections in PEI-6.5. According to the 100-point PEI scale, several elections which took place in the first half of 2018 had very high integrity (over 70), including contests in Finland, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia, all countries which have performed well in the past. High quality elections can occur outside of long-established Western democracies and affluent post-industrial societies, such as in Timor-Leste and Barbados. At the bottom of the rankings, however, were countries which experts rated with poor scores (below 40), including in Venezuela, Iraq, Malaysia, Djibouti, Egypt, and Azerbaijan.

Figure 2: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index by country, mean 2012 to mid-2018

N&W Europe	PEI Index	Americas	PEI Index	C&E Europe	PEI Index	Asia-Pacific	PEI Index	MENA	PEI Index	Africa	PEI Index
Denmark	86	Costa Rica*	79	Estonia	79	New Zealand	75	Israel	74	Cape Verde	71
Finland*	85	Uruguay	75	Lithuania	78	Taiwan	73	Tunisia	67	Benin	70
Norway	83	Canada	75	Slovenia*	77	South Korea	73	Oman	61	Ghana	65
Iceland	81	Chile	71	Czech Rep.*	75	Australia	70	Morocco	56	Mauritius	64
Germany	81	Brazil	68	Slovak Rep.	75	Japan	68	Kuwait	54	South Africa	63
Sweden	81	Jamaica	67	Poland	74	Tonga	65	Jordan	49	Lesotho	62
Netherlands	80	Argentina	65	Latvia	71	Mongolia	64	Iran	49	Namibia	60
Switzerland	78	Barbados*	64	Croatia	65	Timor-Leste*	64	Turkey	47	Botswana	58
Austria	77	Peru	62	Georgia	60	Vanuatu	62	Algeria	44	Rwanda	58
France	75	United States	61	Bulgaria	58	Bhutan	61	Lebanon*	42	Ivory Coast	57
Portugal	74	Panama	61	Moldova	55	Micronesia	59	Egypt*	40	Liberia	55
Belgium	71	Grenada*	61	Romania	55	India	59	Iraq*	38	Guinea-Bissau	55
Ireland	71	Colombia*	60	Hungary*	54	Maldives	57	Bahrain	38	Sierra Leone*	53
Cyprus*	69	Mexico	57	Albania	54	Indonesia	57			Burkina Faso	53
Spain	69	Bolivia	56	Kyrgyzstan	53	Solomon Is.	57			Nigeria	53
Italy*	68	El Salvador*	54	Bosnia	52	Nepal	56			Sao Tome & Prin	53
Greece	66	Belize	54	Montenegro*	52	Myanmar	54			Central Afr. Rep.	53
UK	66	Bahamas	54	Ukraine	51	Samoa	54			Mali	53
Malta	65	Guyana	53	Serbia	48	Fiji	53			Niger	52
		Paraguay*	50	Macedonia	48	Singapore	53			Gambia	50
		Suriname	50	Armenia	47	Sri Lanka	52			Malawi	48
		Ecuador	50	Russia*	47	Philippines	51			Cameroon	46
		Guatemala	48	Kazakhstan	45	Thailand	51			Comoros	46
		Antigua and I	47	Belarus	39	Pakistan	50			Swaziland	45
		Dom. Rep.	44	Uzbekistan	38	Laos	48			Zambia	44
		Venezuela*	41	Azerbaijan*	36	Bangladesh	38			Mauritania	44
		Honduras	37	Turkmenistan*	36	Papua NG	35			Tanzania	44
		Nicaragua	36	Tajikistan	35	Malaysia*	34			Sudan	43
		Haiti	32			Vietnam	34			Kenya	43
						Afghanistan	32			Senegal	43
						Cambodia	32			Guinea	42
										Madagascar	40
										Angola	39
										Togo	37
										Uganda	37
										Zimbabwe	35
										Mozambique	35
										Gabon	34
										Chad	32
										Djibouti*	31
										Congo, Rep.	29
										Burundi	25
										Eq. Guinea	24
										Ethiopia	24
Regional mean	75		56		56		55		51		47

* = election in 2018   Key:

= Very High / High (60+)   = Moderate (50-59)   = Low / Very Low (Less than 50)

Note: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity index summary scale ranges from 0-100.The PEI country-level mean scores cover national elections held during the last seven years (mid-2012-mid-2018). The asterisks indicate updated country scores following elections held in the first half of 2018.

Source: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey, country-level (PEI 6.5)

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Scores across the electoral cycle

Figure 3 shows a breakdown for scores across the eleven dimensions of the electoral cycle for all national contests covered in PEI 6.5. As observed in previous years, campaign finance arrangements and media coverage proved the weakest stages of the electoral cycle in many countries. But specific problems are evident in expert assessments of each contest, such as the introduction of more majoritarian electoral laws favoring the government in Hungary, problems of campaign finance in Antigua and Barbuda, and electoral boundaries in Lebanon. The cases of Russia, Italy and Venezuela are discussed in more detail in Part III.

Figure 3: Performance for elections across the electoral cycle

Country	Office	PEI Index	Electoral Laws	Electoral procedures	Electoral boundaries	Voter registration	Party registration	Campaign media	Campaign finance	Voting process	Vote count	Results	Electoral authorities
Finland	Presidential	84	85	95	72	96	88	66	69	79	96	95	94
Costa Rica	Presidential	77	85	93	80	86	72	59	61	62	92	88	92
Czech Republic	Presidential	74	83	82	74	82	81	54	54	71	88	78	84
Slovenia	Legislative	73	70	86	67	88	76	43	59	76	88	82	74
Italy	Legislative	69	65	79	71	81	59	52	58	63	80	84	78
Cyprus	Presidential	68	70	85	71	70	66	50	48	62	88	87	69
Timor-Leste	Legislative	67	67	87	59	56	62	56	44	61	92	72	88
Barbados	Legislative	66	74	73	74	45	82	49	35	63	74	92	72
Colombia	Legislative	61	72	67	68	58	58	56	45	44	81	74	68
Colombia	Presidential	57	53	74	58	60	53	47	36	50	68	79	64
Grenada	Legislative	56	47	68	56	46	68	42	24	57	75	77	58
Montenegro	Presidential	54	50	56	58	44	61	48	34	48	74	72	49
El Salvador	Legislative	54	69	61	57	42	55	48	38	43	64	68	61
Hungary	Legislative	52	36	61	34	65	66	28	35	63	65	51	50
Sierra Leone	Presidential	50	63	67	53	50	43	42	37	42	63	41	67
Russia	Presidential	50	36	61	49	59	50	37	39	55	52	63	47
Antigua and Barb.	Legislative	48	50	72	38	53	43	43	4	37	80	79	41
Paraguay	Presidential	44	36	47	59	47	49	43	20	46	56	45	41
Lebanon	Legislative	42	33	44	23	50	51	38	18	46	56	48	43
Turkmenistan	Legislative	41	19	49	49	50	22	34	30	43	46	85	24
Azerbaijan	Presidential	38	30	36	54	33	35	33	32	44	42	51	21
Egypt	Presidential	36	34	41	53	42	21	25	17	42	37	59	32
Djibouti	Legislative	34	17	41	33	33	33	30	20	36	46	44	34
Malaysia	Legislative	33	13	46	11	26	38	26	15	50	29	67	23
Iraq	Legislative	32	33	22	32	23	52	34	18	35	26	39	27
Venezuela	Presidential	27	12	16	34	22	29	28	17	33	28	45	19

Note: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity index summary scale and the subcomponent scales range from 0-100. The countries cover national elections from 1 Jan-30 June 2018.
**Source:** The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey (PEI 6.5), election-level

Electoral Integrity and Liberal democracy

Figure 4 compares the overall PEI Index for countries worldwide with the equivalent scores for Liberal Democracy from the Variety of Democracies project. This confirms a strong correlation across these measures, increasing confidence in the external validity of the dataset. Given the centrality of elections to liberal democracy, the strong correlation is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, there are several notable outliers, including the U.S. and Great Britain, where the quality of liberal democracy is rated more highly than their elections, and Oman, where the reverse pattern can be observed.

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Figure 4: Electoral integrity and liberal democracy
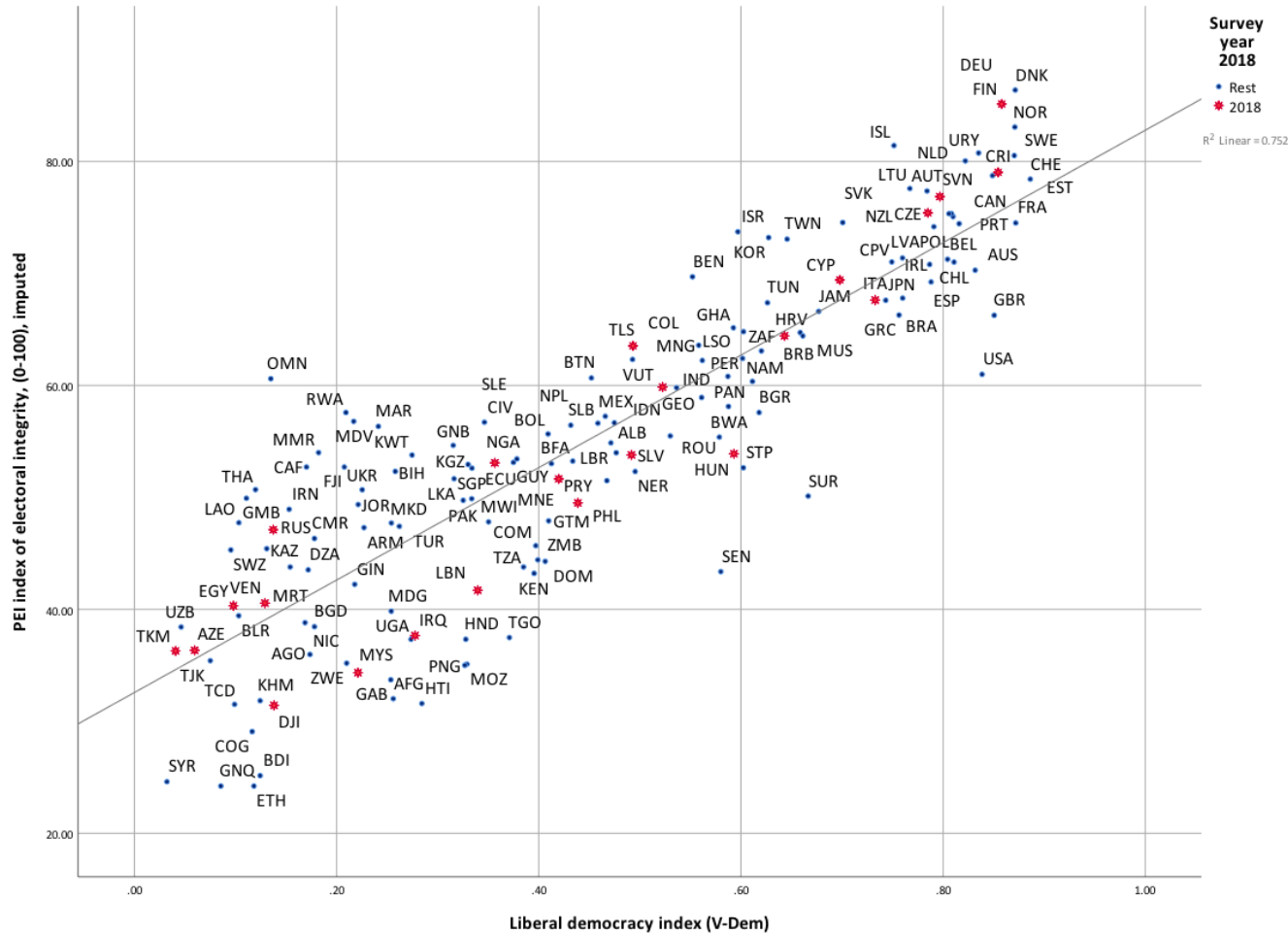
Source: The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) index of liberal democracy V8 (www.VDem.net). The PEI Index (PEI-6.5).

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II: Campaign media

There are many reasons for growing concern about the quality of the campaign media, including ways in which the integrity of elections has been challenged by both misinformation and disinformation campaigns[1] and by cybersecurity attacks on official electoral records and party email servers.[2] Much recent attention about these issues has been catalyzed by intelligence reports of Russian meddling in the 2016 US election.[3] The problem is not confined to America, however, as foreign interference has been reported in the Brexit referenda and in parliamentary elections in Germany, Spain and France.[4]

In the light of these concerns, the European Commission published a high level expert study looking into 'disinformation', defined to include all forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit.[5] Other issues of long-standing concern for the quality of campaign communications includes the desirability of balance and pluralistic diversity in media election reporting, avoiding highly polarized partisanship.[6] Other problems arise from the creation and dissemination online of illegal content, notably defamation, hate speech, and incitement to violence, as well as the spread of conspiracy theories online. The erosion of public confidence in the news media, fuelled by populist claims of 'fake news', are further challenges.

The fake news mantra fuels a 'post-truth' world, with populists denying the enlightenment idea that there can be such a thing as objective knowledge, scientific evidence, or impartial journalism.[7] Declining use of legacy news media, and the rise of social bubbles and echo chambers in online media, reinforce dogmatism fueled by ideology not fact.[8] Where news or social media provide repeated distortions impacting citizens' perceptions of events, these can give rise to deep-seated misinformed beliefs and cause significant harm. Attacks on journalistic elites as 'enemies of the people' are part and parcel of authoritarian populist rhetoric, with a crackdown on mainstream media by leaders such as the Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte, Hungary's Viktor Mihály Orbán and Turkey's Recep Erdoğan. At a joint press conference in Manila, when Duterte called the media 'spies', Trump laughed.[9]

But how extensive are each of these problems? Are some problems confined to a few well-known cases, including the US, or are they more widespread in contests around the world? Despite widespread concern, and regular annual indices concerning freedom of the press and the internet around the world, little systematic evidence has been gathered to monitor the integrity of campaign media in elections across countries and varied types of regimes.

To monitor the extent of the risks, the 6th wave of the PEI expert survey included several items from a new rotating annual battery designed to capture several of these issues, including "fake news", partisan media, foreign meddling, and media monitoring. Further analysis of these data will be forthcoming in the PEI 7.0 release with additional countries and elections, once the 2018 round of the survey is complete. Nevertheless we can look at an initial snapshot of the results for 26 elections held from January 1 to June 30, 2018.

Figure 5: Positive evaluations of the media campaign in elections 1 January - 30 June 2018

Category of electoral integrity	Country	Campaign media did not spread hate speech	Campaign media allowed informed voting choices	Foreign interests did not interfere in the campaign	Media watch groups monitored campaign news	Cyberattacks on official voting records did not occur during the election	Campaign news generally reflected a diversity of views and interests	Campaign news generally maintained high journalistic standards	Journalists were often not highly partisan in their campaign reporting	Social media often did not contain fake news	PEI index of electoral integrity, (0-100)
Very High	Finland	3.8	4.0	4.2	3.7	4.8	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.1	84
	Costa Rica	2.7	4.4	2.3	3.5	3.3	3.8	3.1	3.4	1.9	77
	Czech Republic	2.3	3.5	2.4	4.1	4.4	3.7	2.8	2.4	1.9	74
	Slovenia	2.8	3.4	3.2	3.4	4.6	3.2	2.8	2.5	2.6	73
High	Italy	2.4	3.2	3.4	3.5	4.1	3.3	2.6	2.3	2.1	69
	Cyprus	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.1	4.7	3.3	2.9	2.1	3.1	68
	Timor-Leste	2.4	4.0	4.4	3.2	4.8	4.1	3.3	3.7	2.3	67
	Barbados	2.1	3.5	3.5	2.7	4.8	3.4	2.9	3.6	2.3	66
Moderate	Colombia	2.4	3.8	2.3	3.1	3.4	3.7	3.1	3.3	1.9	59
	Grenada	3.6	3.5	2.8	3.0	4.0	3.0	2.8	2.3	3.0	56
	Montenegro	3.2	2.8	2.8	3.6	4.6	3.0	2.4	1.3	3.0	54
	El Salvador	3.8	3.0	2.6	3.3	4.0	3.1	2.3	2.3	2.2	54
	Hungary	1.8	2.3	3.2	3.1	4.2	2.2	1.6	1.6	2.6	52
	Sierra Leone	4.0	2.5	3.5	3.5	4.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.5	50
	Russia	3.0	2.8	4.0	3.4	3.9	2.6	2.2	2.8	3.0	50
Low	Antigua & Barbuda	4.0	1.0	2.0	2.5	4.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	3.5	48
	Paraguay	3.8	2.5	2.4	2.7	3.6	3.6	2.4	2.4	2.5	44
	Lebanon	2.7	3.2	1.9	3.8	4.0	3.1	2.9	1.9	3.6	42
	Turkmenistan	3.7	2.3	4.0	1.5	4.0	2.0	1.7	2.0	3.0	41
Very low	Azerbaijan	3.2	1.8	4.4	3.4	4.7	1.6	1.8	2.5	2.5	38
	Egypt	2.5	1.3	3.6	3.0	4.3	1.2	1.2	2.2	1.5	36
	Djibouti	4.0	2.0	1.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.0	1.5	3.0	34
	Malaysia	2.4	3.0	3.3	3.8	3.3	2.5	1.8	2.5	2.6	33
	Iraq	2.4	2.3	1.1	3.7	2.7	2.9	1.6	2.3	1.9	32
	Venezuela	3.4	2.3	2.9	2.8	3.6	3.0	1.9	2.2	1.7	27
	Total	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.2	4.0	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.5	53

Note: For the questions, see Table 1. Mean scores per election. All items were recoded in a positive direction to facilitate consistent comparisons across questions and the scores for each item ranged from low (1) to high (5). Countries were ranked by the overall PEI Index, ranging from 0-100.
Source: Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey (PEI-6.5)

The results in Figures 5 and 6 show that countries which generally perform poorly in elections overall, such as Egypt, Djibouti, and Venezuela, commonly have the most problems in media campaigns as well. But it is worth highlighting that some other specific weaknesses also emerge, such as partisan reporting in Montenegro, poor journalistic standards following government repression of the press in Hungary, and fake news on social media in Costa Rica and the Czech Republic. The silver lining from the results is that in most cases experts reported that few elections were subject to cyber attacks on official voting records. The next report, with a broader range of elections throughout 2018, will examine these issues in more depth.

## Figure 6: Campaign media pluralism and journalistic standards
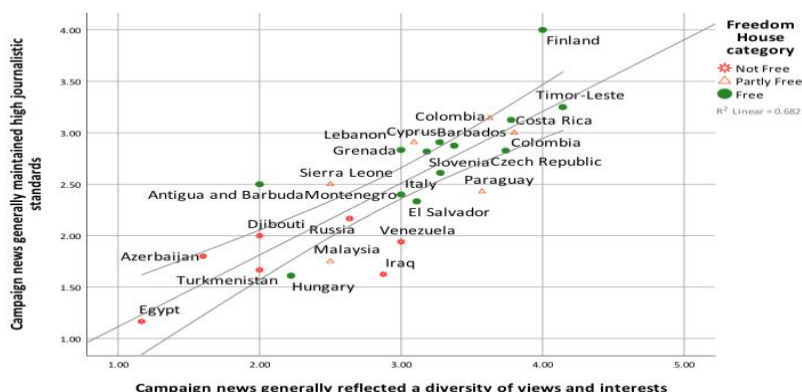
III: Case-studies of elections in 2018: Italy, Russia and Venezuela

The period January 1 – June 30, 2018 has seen a range of important elections in all regions of the world. The quality varied a great deal, due to structural, institutional and political factors.[10]

At the top end of the electoral integrity scale in 2018 were Presidential elections in Finland (84) and Costa Rica (77), showcasing best practices with few problems (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Election-level PEI Index scores for elections in 2018
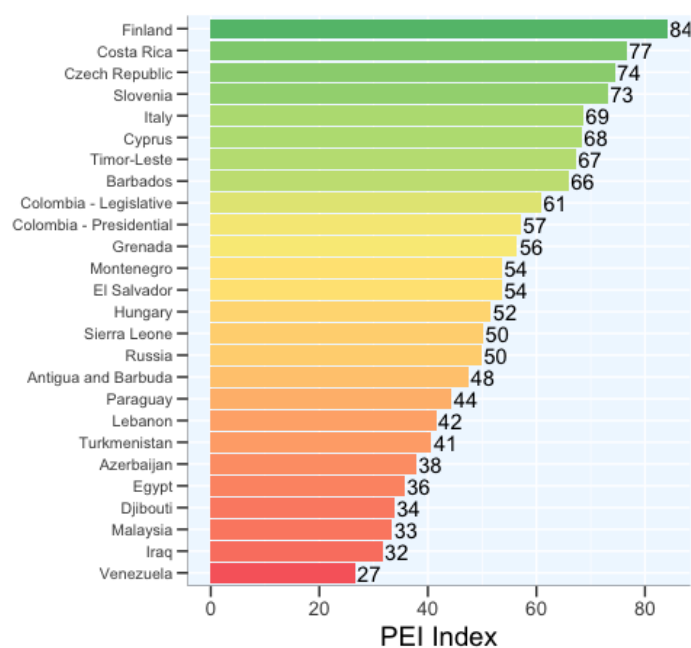
Source: *The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey (PEI 6.5), election-level*

At the other end of the scale, however, in Iraq, a turbulent contest saw ballots subject to a recount set ablaze, exacerbating tensions amid widespread electoral malpractices.[11] In Lebanon, the first national elections held since 2009 marked a vital step forward, but the contest was marred by endemic corruption, clientelism, and interference from outside forces.[12]

A shock victory for the opposition in Malaysia was particularly remarkable in light of the odds stacked against them by systemic electoral malpractices favouring the incumbent. Despite a peaceful transition of governing parties, for the first time since independence, Malaysia continues to score near the bottom globally on the subdimensions of electoral laws, electoral boundaries, campaign finance, and electoral authorities.

Some selected cases illustrate the findings in more detail.

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Italy

Italy held general elections on the 4th of March, 2018, following a period of political turbulence following the resignation of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, leader of the center-left Party Democratic (PD), in December 2016. Members of Italy's bicameral Parliament serve 5-year tems, with the president of the parliamentary republic serving as head of state in a seven year term.[13] The passage of the "Rosatellum" electoral law of 2017 saw the adoption of a parallel voting system.[14] The lower house has 630 members, with first-past-the-post used for 232 seats and the remainder determined by closed-list proportional representation with regional quotas.[15] The election was held against the backdrop of the country's declining economic conditions, which exacerbated tensions associated with the migrant crisis, driving dissatisfaction with the establishment and the European Union.[16]

The campaign saw sporadic outbreaks of xenophobia and violence, including a far right activist shooting at and injuring African migrants.[17] OSCE observers lamented the hollowing out of moderate discourse amid a rhetorical arms race centered on concerns about immigration and integration. In particular, the OSCE raised concerns about "discriminatory stereotyping and intolerant rhetoric targeting immigrants, including on social media".[18] Voter turnout, down to 69% in the lower house (-14%), suggests that these conditions may have taken a toll on citizen engagement.[19]

Renzi's centre-left coalition led by PD saw a dramatic decline in its seat share, maintaining only 122 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and losing 227. The primary beneficiaries were Matteo Salvini's centre-right coalition, which added 138 members, for a total of 265. The populist Five Star Movement gained 114 seats, for a total of 227.[20] After extensive negotiations, the Five Star Movement and the League formed a governing coalition headed by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. The coalition government represents a populist victory for anti-establishment, anti-immigration, and eurosceptic forces.

The PEI experts suggest that Italy's 2018 elections performed relatively poorly on the PEI Index compared with other states in Northern and Western Europe, with an overall score of 69, similar to an index of 67 in the 2013 elections. Despite this, the country has seen strong gains on the reformed electoral laws (+21) and campaign finance (+9) dimensions from the 2013 legislative elections.

As with most countries, Italy continues to have moderate scores on campaign media, rating at 52/100. This is consistent with the country's relatively high levels of fake news (Figure 5). Mistrust of the news media followed years of delegitimization by political elites, including former Prime Minister and media mogul Silvio Berlusconi. The digital turn in Italian politics, central to the success of the Five Star Movement, created fertile conditions for misinformation to thrive, exacerbated by the weakness of the independence of the media oversight body.[21] Despite high quality elections overall, politicization of media regulation, lack of media diversity, and harsh libel laws may undermine the ability of Italian citizens' to make informed political choices, particularly as the problems associated with fake news and misinformation grow more severe.

Figure 8. Italy's Performance on the PEI Subdimensions
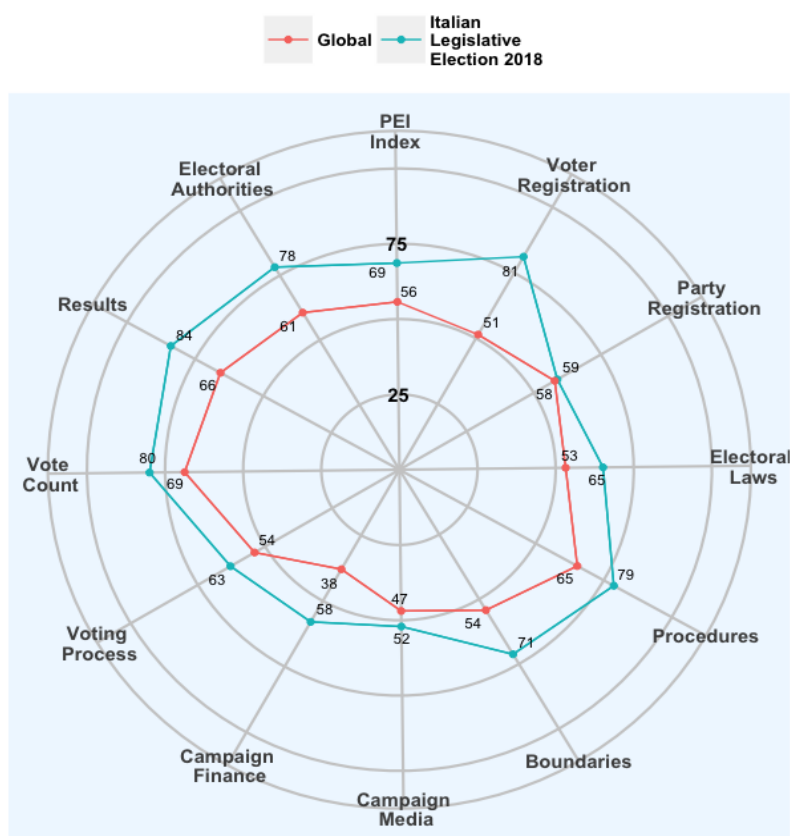
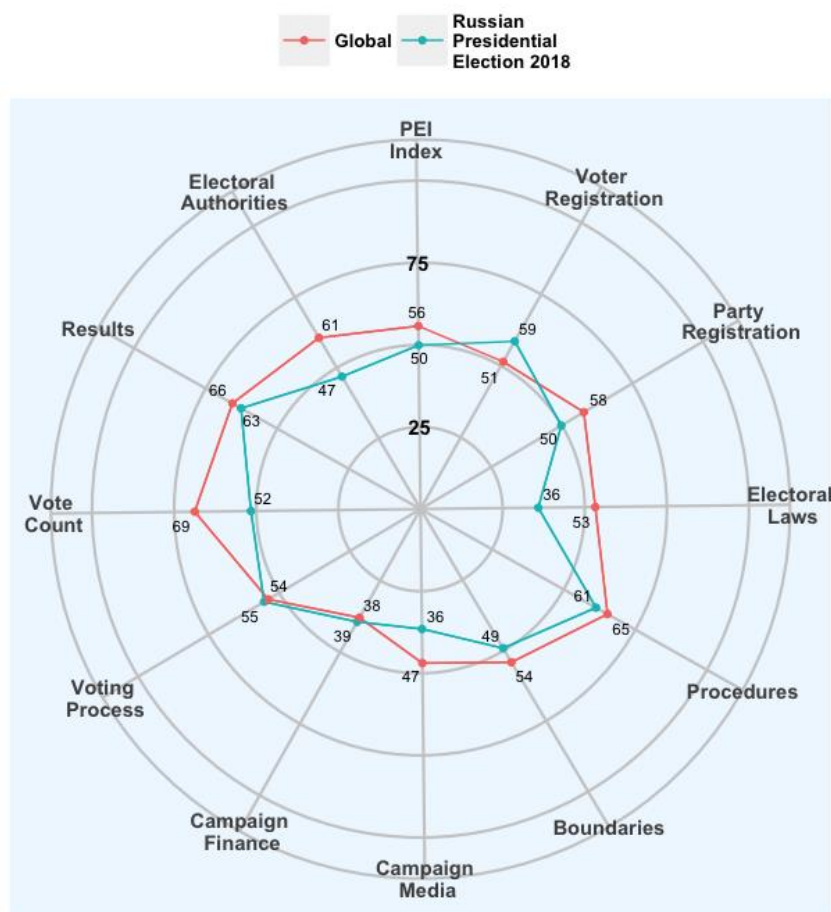***Source:*** *The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey (PEI 6.5), election-level*

Russia

The reelection of President Putin in the Russian election on the 18th of March 2018 was in no doubt flawed, the vote was seen by some analysts as "a sort of celebration of the post-Crimea majority's identity".[22] The Kremlin's proactive measures to prevent the existence of any genuine consolidated opposition, the absence of a free press, and loyalist security forces, serve to preserve the status quo.[23] Russian elections are characterized by widespread voter intimidation and the jailing of political opponents, and independent journalists have become common targets of state repression, with state media ensuring the delivery of propaganda. OSCE observers characterized the election as having been conducted in "an overly controlled legal and political environment", in which restrictions on fundamental freedoms of expression and candidate registration and "extensive and uncritical coverage of the incumbent" skewed the playing field.[24]

OSCE observations are confirmed by the relatively poor performance of Russia's 2018 election on the PEI Index, with particularly severe issues identified on the electoral laws and campaign media (Figure 9). Yet, improvements on the formal aspects of the presidential election, the electoral procedures, and the vote count saw a slightly stronger performance than we reported in the 2016 Duma elections.

Figure 9. Russia's Performance on the PEI Subdimensions

Source: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey (PEI 6.5), election-level

Venezuela

The Venezuelan Presidential election held on the 20th May 2018 was widely denounced as a "farce" and a "show election", with the Organization of American States stating that in the electoral process "the dictator Maduro tried – without success – to give a democratic veneer to his totalitarian regime".[25] The legitimacy of the contest, which Maduro won easily with more than two-thirds of the valid vote total, was further undermined by an opposition boycott and record low turnout.[26] Incumbent President Maduro inherited and expanded upon Chavez's mechanisms of political control, which empowered him to suppress political opposition and critical press.[27] In 2017, Maduro dissolved the National Assembly, after a coalition of opposing parties formed a majority after the 2015 parliamentary election for the first time in nearly two decades.[28] Despite a formal ban on public protests, runaway inflation and shortages of basic goods brought protestors into the streets again during the 2018 elections.[29]

The elections were widely condemned, with G7 leaders making a joint statement, "united in rejecting the electoral process leading to the May 20, 2018, Presidential election in

Venezuela" for "failing to meet accepted international standards".[30] The High Representative of the EU similarly released a statement condemning the elections for failing to comply with minimum international standards of political pluralism, transparency, and the upholding of the rule of law,[31] while Members of the European Parliament called for "fresh presidential elections in accordance with internationally recognised democratic standards".[32]

As Figure 10 shows, Venezuela performs extremely poorly on electoral integrity throughout the various stages of the electoral cycle, well below the global average on all dimensions. Venezuela's PEI Index score has halved across its past three Presidential elections, from 54 in 2012 to 39 in 2013 to 27 in the most recent contest in 2018. This decline has been driven in large part due to major declines on the electoral laws (-35), electoral procedures (-45), party registration (38), and electoral authorities (-30) subdimensions. These results correspond with downgrades from other ratings agencies, including Freedom House, which now scores Venezuela as "Not Free", substantially on the basis of the deterioration of its democratic institutions.[33]

Figure 10. Venezuela's Performance on the PEI Subdimensions
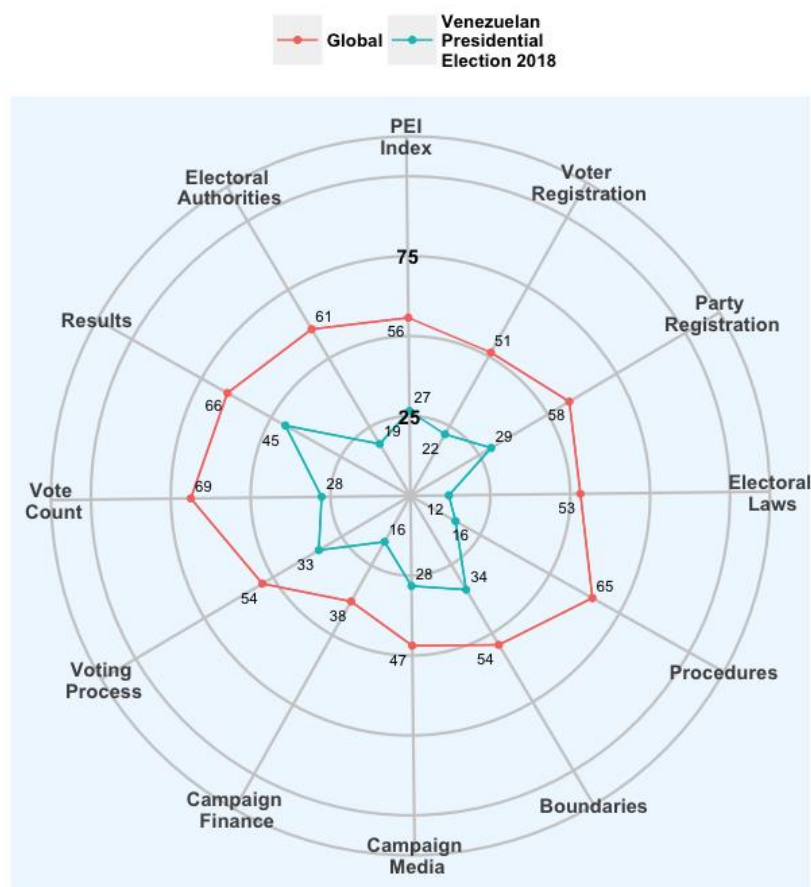
Source: *The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey (PEI 6.5), election-level*

IV: Technical Appendix: Performance Indicators, Methods and Data

Global Coverage: The PEI survey of electoral integrity covers independent nation-states around the world which have held direct (popular) elections for the national parliament or presidential elections. The criteria for inclusion are listed below. The elections analyzed in this report, see Figure 3, cover the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2018. In total, PEI 6.5 covers 310 elections in 165 nations.

Table A1: Country coverage

Criteria for inclusion in the survey	#	Definition and source
Total number of independent nation-states	194	Membership of the United Nations (plus Taiwan)
Excluded categories		
Micro-states	11	Population less than 100,000 as of 2013: Andorra, Dominica, Liechtenstein, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Nauru, Palau, San Marino, Seychelles, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Tuvalu.
Without de jure direct (popular) elections for the lower house of the national legislature	5	Brunei Darussalam, China, Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia
State has constitutional provisions for direct (popular) elections for the lower house of the national legislature, but none have been held since independence or within the last 30 years (*de facto*).	3	Eritrea, Somalia, and South Sudan
State has direct elections for the lower house of the national legislature but only candidates for the ruling party have ballot access, excluding independents and candidates for any other party.	2	North Korea, Cuba
Not yet included in the survey	8	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kiribati, Libya, Luxembourg, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Yemen.[34]
Covered to date in the PEI 6.5 dataset (from mid-2012 to mid-2018)	165	95% of all the subtotal of nation-states

Because of the selection rules, elections contained in each cumulative release of the PEI survey can be treated as a representative cross-section of *all* national presidential and legislative elections around the world (with the exception of the exclusion of micro-states). The countries in PEI 6.5 are broadly similar in political and socio-economic characteristics to those countries holding national elections which are not yet covered in the survey, with the exception of being slightly larger in population size.

Respondents: For each country, the project identified around forty election experts, defined as a political scientist (or other social scientist in a related discipline) who had demonstrated knowledge of the electoral process in a particular country (such as through publications, membership of a relevant research group or network, or university employment). The selection sought a roughly 50:50 balance between international and domestic experts, the latter defined by location or citizenship. In total, 3,524 completed responses were received in the survey, representing just under one third of the experts that the project contacted (28%). In certain cases listed in Table A4, highlighted with an *, the number of responses was very low and these results should be treated with due caution.

Concepts: The idea of electoral integrity is defined by the project to refer to agreed international conventions and global norms, applying universally to all countries worldwide through the election cycle, including during the pre-election period, the campaign, on polling day, and its aftermath. [35]

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Measurement: To measure this concept, the PEI survey questionnaire includes 49 items on electoral integrity (see Table A1) ranging over the whole electoral cycle. These items fell into eleven sequential sub-dimensions, as shown. Most attention in detecting fraud focuses upon the final stages of the voting process, such as the role of observers in preventing ballot-stuffing, vote-rigging and manipulated results. Drawing upon the notion of a 'menu of manipulation', however, the concept of an electoral cycle suggests that failure in even one step in the sequence, or one link in the chain, can undermine electoral integrity. [36] The PEI 6.5 Codebook provides detailed description of all variables and imputation procedures. A copy and all the data can downloaded from https://thedata.harvard.edu/dataverse/PEI.

The electoral integrity items in the survey were recoded so that a higher score consistently represents a more positive evaluation. Missing data was estimated based on multiple imputation by chained equations in groups composing of the eleven sub-dimensions. The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) Index is an additive function of the 49 imputed variables, standardized to 100-points. Sub-indices of the eleven sub-dimensions in the electoral cycle are summations of the imputed individual variables.[37]

Validity and reliability tests: The results of the pilot study, from the elections held in 2012, were tested for external validity (with independent sources of evidence), internal validity (consistency within the group of experts), and legitimacy (how far the results can be regarded as authoritative by stakeholders). The analysis demonstrated substantial external validity when the PEI data is compared with many other expert datasets, as well as internal validity across the experts within the survey, and legitimacy as measured by levels of congruence between mass and expert opinions within each country.[38]

For *external* validity tests, the PEI-6.5 Index was significantly correlated with other standard independent indicators contained in the 2017 version of the Quality of Government cross-national dataset. This includes the combined Freedom House/imputed Polity IV measure of democratization (r=.75**, N. 160) and the Varieties of Democracy measures of electoral democracy (polyarchy) (r=.82**, N. 151) and Liberal Democracy (r=.87**, N. 151).[39]

For *internal* validity purposes, tests were run using OLS regression models to predict whether the PEI index varied significantly by several socio-demographic, political and experiential characteristics of the experts, including sex, age, education, their level of expertise, and their self-reported ideological position. The sample was broken down by type of regime in the country (using Freedom House's classification), since a higher proportion of international experts were surveyed in autocracies, where fewer political scientists study elections. The results indicate that the use of domestic or international experts proved significant across all types of regimes, suggesting the importance of relying upon both sources. Political views across the left-right ideological spectrum are significant and positive across all regimes, with experts who located themselves on the right more likely to give favourable assessments. Finally, in democratic states, sex, education, and familiarity with elections also played a role. The relatively modest adjusted R^2 suggested that the models explained a limited amount of variance in overall scores.

Table A2: Predictors of electoral integrity scores

			Model A Autocracies (Not Free)				Model B Hybrid (Partly Free)				Model C Democracies (Free)			
	Var		B	SE	Beta	P	B	SE	Beta	P	B	SE	Beta	P
Demographics	sex	(1=female; 0=male)	1.52	1.61	0.04		-0.34	1.01	-0.01		-3.04	0.67	-0.11	***
	education	Highest level of education	-0.18	3.37	0.00		0.58	2.69	0.01		5.20	2.32	0.05	*
	agegroup	Age groups by decade	0.20	0.56	0.02		0.42	0.38	0.04		0.03	0.25	0.00	
Expertise	familiarity	How familiar are you with elections in this country?	0.66	0.41	0.07		0.42	0.35	0.04		2.08	0.27	0.20	***
	expertdomestic	Int'l (0) or domestic (1) expert	9.23	1.86	0.26	***	2.34	1.22	0.08		2.21	0.82	0.08	**
	lived	# years lived in country	-0.69	0.66	-0.08		-1.15	0.49	-0.14	*	-0.09	0.38	-0.01	
	born	Were you born in this country?	-2.11	2.40	-0.06		-0.15	1.58	-0.01		-1.06	0.96	-0.04	
Political views	leftrightscale	Political views on Left (1) / Right (10) scale	1.67	0.44	0.17	***	1.10	0.28	0.13	***	0.60	0.19	0.07	**
		(Constant)	25.99	17.26			40.26	13.82			22.71	11.64		
		Adjusted R2	0.08				0.02				0.07			
		N	518				972				1768			

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Table A3: PEI Core Survey Questions

	Sections	Performance indicators	Direction
PRE-ELECTION	**1. Electoral laws**	1-1 Electoral laws were unfair to smaller parties	N
		1-2 Electoral laws favored the governing party or parties	N
		1-3 Election laws restricted citizens' rights	N
	2. Electoral procedures	2-1 Elections were well managed	P
		2-2 Information about voting procedures was widely available	P
		2-3 Election officials were fair	P
		2-4 Elections were conducted in accordance with the law	P
	3. Boundaries	3-1 Boundaries discriminated against some parties	N
		3-2 Boundaries favored incumbents	N
		3-3 Boundaries were impartial	P
	4. Voter registration	4-1 Some citizens were not listed in the register	N
		4-2 The electoral register was inaccurate	N
		4-3 Some ineligible electors were registered	N
	5. Party registration	5-1 Some opposition candidates were prevented from running	N
		5-2 Women had equal opportunities to run for office	P
		5-3 Ethnic and national minorities had equal opportunities to run for office	P
		5-4 Only top party leaders selected candidates	N
		5-5 Some parties/candidates were restricted from holding campaign rallies	N
CAMPAIGN	**6. Campaign media**	6-1 Newspapers provided balanced election news	P
		6-2 TV news favored the governing party	N
		6-3 Parties/candidates had fair access to political broadcasts and advertising	P
		6-4 Journalists provided fair coverage of the elections	P
		6-5 Social media were used to expose electoral fraud	P
	7. Campaign finance	7-1 Parties/candidates had equitable access to public subsidies	P
		7-2 Parties/candidates had equitable access to political donations	P
		7-3 Parties/candidates publish transparent financial accounts	P
		7.4 Rich people buy elections	N
		7-5 Some state resources were improperly used for campaigning	N
ELECTION DAY	**8. Voting process**	8-1 Some voters were threatened with violence at the polls	N
		8-2 Some fraudulent votes were cast	N
		8-3 The process of voting was easy	P
		8-4 Voters were offered a genuine choice at the ballot box	P
		8-5 Postal ballots were available	P
		8-6 Special voting facilities were available for the disabled	P
		8-7 National citizens living abroad could vote	P
		8-8 Some form of internet voting was available	P
POST-ELECTION	**9. Vote count**	9-1 Ballot boxes were secure	P
		9-2 The results were announced without undue delay	P
		9-3 Votes were counted fairly	P
		9-4 International election monitors were restricted	N
		9-5 Domestic election monitors were restricted	N
	10. Results	10-1 Parties/candidates challenged the results	N
		10-2 The election led to peaceful protests	N
		10-3 The election triggered violent protests	N
		10-4 Any disputes were resolved through legal channels	P
	11. Electoral authorities	11-1 The election authorities were impartial	P
		11-2 The authorities distributed information to citizens	P
		11-3 The authorities allowed public scrutiny of their performance	P
		11-4 The election authorities performed well	P

Note: The direction of the original items P=positive, N=negative. These are the items repeated each year.

Source: PEI 6.5 www.electoralintegrityproject.com

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V: Acknowledgments

The full report is available for download from www.electoralintegrityproject.com and the PEI 6.5 dataset and codebook is available to be downloaded from http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/PEI .

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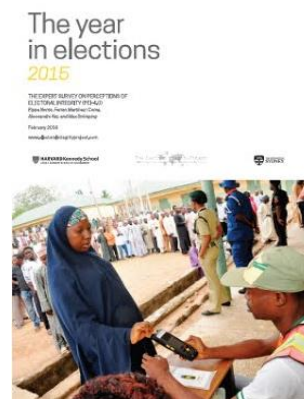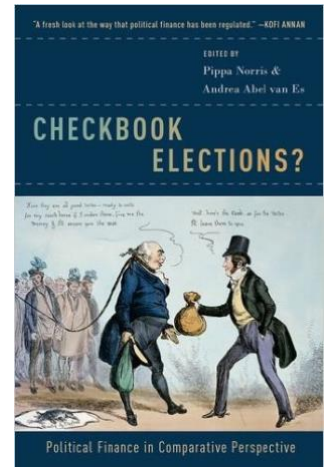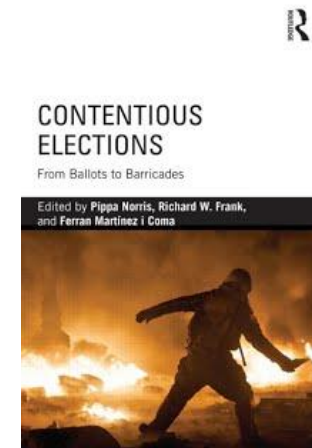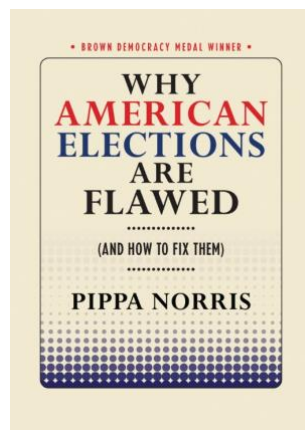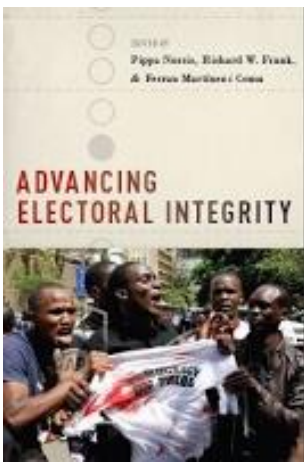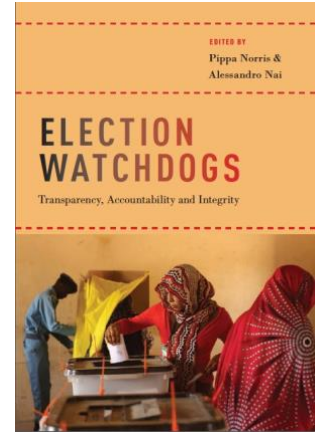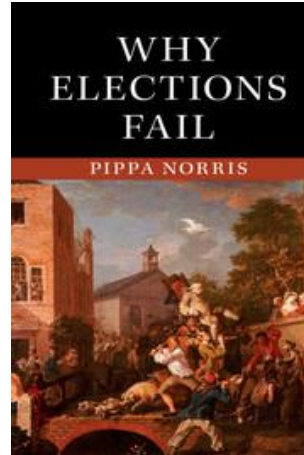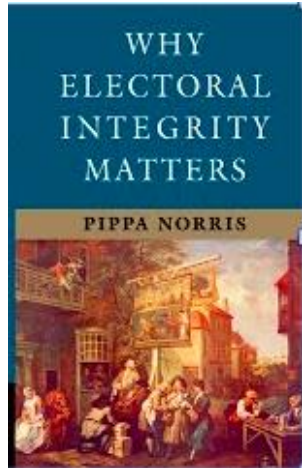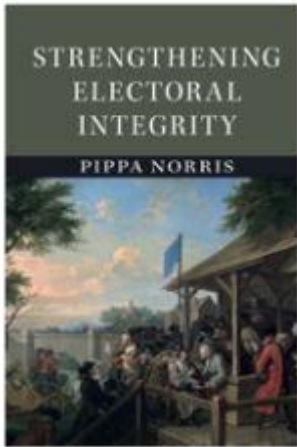
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