THE ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PROJECT

WHY ELECTIONS FAIL AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

PEI research design

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Introduction

The following provides a brief technical description about the research design leading to the construction of the Perception of Electoral Integrity (PEI) Pilot Study April 2013 dataset.

Users of the dataset are requested to cite Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard W. Frank. 2013. *The Expert Survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, Pilot Study April 2013*.

For a more detailed description of the methods used for measuring electoral integrity, see Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard Frank '*Measuring Electoral Integrity*', paper presented at the EIP annual workshop, Harvard University 3-4 June 2013. Available with the datasets at www.electoralintegrityproject.com

1. Questionnaire design

The PEI pilot survey questionnaire included forty-nine item electoral integrity ranging over the whole electoral cycle, as conceptualized by UNDP. The electoral cycle is defined in terms eleven sub-dimensions in a sequence, including:

1. Electoral laws
2. Electoral Procedures
3. Boundaries for Voting Districts
4. Voter registration
5. Party and candidate registration
6. Campaign media
7. Campaign finance
8. Voting process
9. Vote count
10. Voting results
11. Electoral authorities

Table 1 summarizes the core variables. All items were measured using 5-point Strongly Agree-Strongly Disagree Likert-type scales.

The questionnaire included items which were framed in both positive and negative directions for electoral integrity, to deter respondents from simply 'checking the boxes' across all questions. The values for the negative items were subsequently recoded in a positive direction and these new variables were added to the pilot dataset.

In addition, the questionnaire included several other items, summarized in Table 2,monitoring 'anchoring vignettes', familiarity with the election, general institutional confidence, and the social, demographic and political background of expert respondents.

2. Selection and types of national elections

The pilot study covered national elections occurring from July to December 2012.[i] In total, the survey included twenty national elections held during these months. A *national election* is defined as a nation-wide contest either for the executive or the legislature where citizens vote directly for the person (or group) on the ballot. This definition excludes indirect elections, referenda and plebiscites, as well as sub-national and supra-national contests. The pilot stage also differentiated between election rounds.

National elections included three types: presidential (direct contests for the executive), legislative contests for the lower house, and legislative contests for the upper house.

3. Country coverage

Table 3 summarizes the elections included in the pilot study. These contests were held in a diverse range of societies around the world, and under diverse regimes, including in Angola, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Republic of Congo, Czech Republic, Georgia, Ghana, Japan, Kuwait, Lithuania, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sierra Leone, Republic of Korea (South Korea), Romania, Ukraine, USA, and Venezuela. The additional document '*The PEI Overview of elections in the pilot study*' provides a descriptive overview of these contests.

In future stages, the ongoing survey project will include all national elections in all independent nation states (defined by membership of the United Nations) containing more than 50,000 inhabitants.[ii]

4. Selection of election experts

For the pilot phase, the survey sought to identify and contact around forty experts per election.

An *election expert* is defined as a political scientist (or social scientist in a related discipline) who has published or who has other demonstrated knowledge of the electoral process in a particular country.

Demonstrated knowledge is defined by the following criteria: (1) membership of a relevant research group, professional network, or organized section of such a group; (2) existing publications on electoral or other country-specific topics in books, academic journals, or conference papers; (3) employment at a university or college as a teacher. Occasionally other social scientists were also used—from law, sociology, or to a lesser degree economics, anthropology, mathematics, or statistics.

During the pilot phase, at least forty experts per country were contacted, including both domestic and international experts.[iii] This distinction was drawn based upon the location of institutional affiliations, and monitored in the survey through citizenship and country of residence.

In the pilot phase, 819 experts were contacted in twenty countries. Table 4 briefly summarizes the number of experts contacted per country and the distribution of domestic and international experts in the pilot study.

5. Response rate

Overall we received completed questionnaires from 226 experts. The *response rate* is calculated as the number of complete surveys divided by the number of invitations sent. This means that we include in our denominator those experts who declined to take part of the survey. Table 5 summarizes the response rates by country.

The overall response rate was 29.5%. Three emails were sent. 15.4% responded by completing the survey after the first email, 10.9% responded to a reminder email sent a week later, and 7.9% responded to the last email sent two weeks after the initial email.

6. Constructed variables

Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index

The forty-nine survey item measuring eleven dimensions of electoral integrity were recoded consistently into a positive direction, where a higher score represents greater electoral integrity. Missing data was estimates based on mean substitutions of the national score. The items were then summed and

standardized to 100-points to generate the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index. The Index shows a normal distribution with a modest positive skew (see Figure 1).

The PEI index can be treated as an evaluation of the overall quality of a contest and how far experts perceived that an election met international standards and global norms.

Indices of sub-dimensions of electoral integrity

In addition, after survey items were recoded consistently into a positive direction, summary indexes were constructed for each of the eleven sub-dimensions of perceptions of electoral integrity. These indices were also standardized for ease of comparison across different dimensions.

Sub-dimension indices	Aggregated from:
1. Electoral laws	lawsunfair2, favoredincumbent2, citizens2
2. Electoral Procedures	managed, votinginfo, fairofficials, legalelections
3. Boundaries for Voting Districts	bfavored2, bdiscrim2, bimpartial
4. Voter registration	reglisted2, reginaccurate2, ineligible2
5. Party and candidate registration	oppprevent2, womenopp, minorityopp, leaderselect2, rallies2
6. Campaign media	newspapers, tv2, fairaccess, faircoverage, socialmedia
7. Campaign finance	subsidies, donations, accounts, rich2, resources2
8. Voting process	violence2, fraudulent2, easy, choice, postal, disabled, expats, internet
9. Vote count	secure, delay, faircount, intlmonitors2, domesticmonitors2
10. Voting results	challenged2, protestspeace2, protestsviolent2, disputes
11. Electoral authorities	impartial, info, scrutiny, performance

Analysts can therefore examine the overall perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index, or indices for any of the sub-dimensions, or the disaggregated scores of expert perceptions on individual items. The latter can also be re-aggregated into whatever alternative measures of electoral integrity are preferred conceptually.

7. Weights

The pilot data is currently unweighted. In subsequent releases, weights will be added for country (to equalize responses by nation) and for population size.

Acknowledgments

The Perception of Electoral Integrity (PEI) Pilot Study April 2013 dataset is part of The Electoral Integrity Project, based at the University of Sydney and Harvard University. The research is generously funded by the Laureate Award by Australian Research Council and the support of many partner agencies. Sandra Urquiza and Max Grömping assisted in implementing the expert survey. We would also like to thank Andrew Reynolds, Jorgen Elklit, Lawrence LeDuc and Carolien van Ham for invaluable comments when developing the pilot survey, and colleagues in the Department of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney in establishing the project.

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Table 1. Dimensions of the electoral cycle in the questionnaire

Period	Sections	Questions	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)	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 states 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.Post-election	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; Direction of the original items P=positive, N=negative. **Source:** Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard W. Frank. 2013. *The Expert Survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, Pilot Study May 2013*: www.electoralintegrityproject.com.

Table 2. Additional questions

General Vignettes

- In Country A, the opposition decides to boycott parliamentary contests, so that the government wins most seats by default
- In Country B, the Electoral Authority is very effective in registering voters and conducting the election, but it is closely tied to the interests of the governing party
- In Country C, all parties that received over a certain percentage of the votes are entitled to public funds, and there clear limits on the maximum amount of money that parties and candidates can spend on their campaign
- In Country D, the governing party had a great advantage in the TV and radio coverage of the campaign, although in all other regards the election was free and fair
- In Country E, many parties and candidates ran for office, and the overall campaign was fair and balanced but independent observers were banned

Background questions

- Are you currently in full or part-time employment?
- Do you work or have you worked, in…
- What is (or was) your most recent employment?
- What is your year of birth?
- What is your sex?
- What is your highest level of educational qualification?
- Were you born in this country?
- How long have you lived in this country, if at all?
- Did you participate in the last national election of this country in any of the following roles?
- Are you a citizen of this country?
- Which political party, if any, did you support in the last national election?
- Below is a 10 scale on which the political views are arranged from very left to very right. Where would you place your views on the scale?

Source: Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard W. Frank. 2013. *The Expert Survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity*, *Pilot Study May 2013*: www.electoralintegrityproject.com.

Table 3. Elections from July-Dec 2013 included in the PEI pilot study

Country	Election	Date
Angola	Legislative	31-Aug-12
Belarus	Parliamentary	23-Sep-12
Burkina Faso	Parliamentary	2-Dec-12
Congo (Brazzaville)	Legislative	15-Jul-12
Czech Republic	Legislative	12-Oct-12
Georgia	Parliamentary	1-Oct-12
Ghana	Legislative	7-Dec-12
Japan	Parliamentary	16-Dec-12
Kuwait	Parliamentary	1-Dec-12
Libya	Legislative	7-Jul-12
Lithuania	Parliamentary	14-Oct-12
Mexico	Legislative	1-Jul-12
Montenegro	Parliamentary	14-Oct-12
Netherlands, The	Parliamentary	12-Sep-12
Romania	Parliamentary	9-Dec-12
Sierra Leone	Legislative	17-Nov-12
Slovenia	Presidential	11-Nov-12
South Korea	Presidential	19-Dec-12
Ukraine	Parliamentary	28-Oct-12
United States	Legislative	6-Nov-12
Venezuela	Presidential	7-Oct-12

Source: Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard W. Frank. 2013. *The Expert Survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, Pilot Study May 2013*.

Table 4. Experts contacted in the PEI pilot study

Country	Domestic	International	Total	% Domestic
Japan	40	0	40	100
United States	40	0	40	100
Romania	39	1	40	98
Slovenia	39	3	42	93
Netherlands, The	37	8	45	82
Lithuania	28	13	41	68
Mexico	27	13	40	68
Czech Republic	24	16	40	60
South Korea	20	20	40	50
Ghana	19	23	42	45
Venezuela	19	24	43	44
Georgia	19	36	55	35
Kuwait	12	26	38	32
Ukraine	11	25	36	31
Belarus	9	33	42	21
Congo-Brazzaville	5	30	35	14
Montenegro	5	34	39	13
Angola	3	37	40	8
Burkina Faso	2	39	41	5
Sierra Leone	2	38	40	5
Mean	20	21	41	49

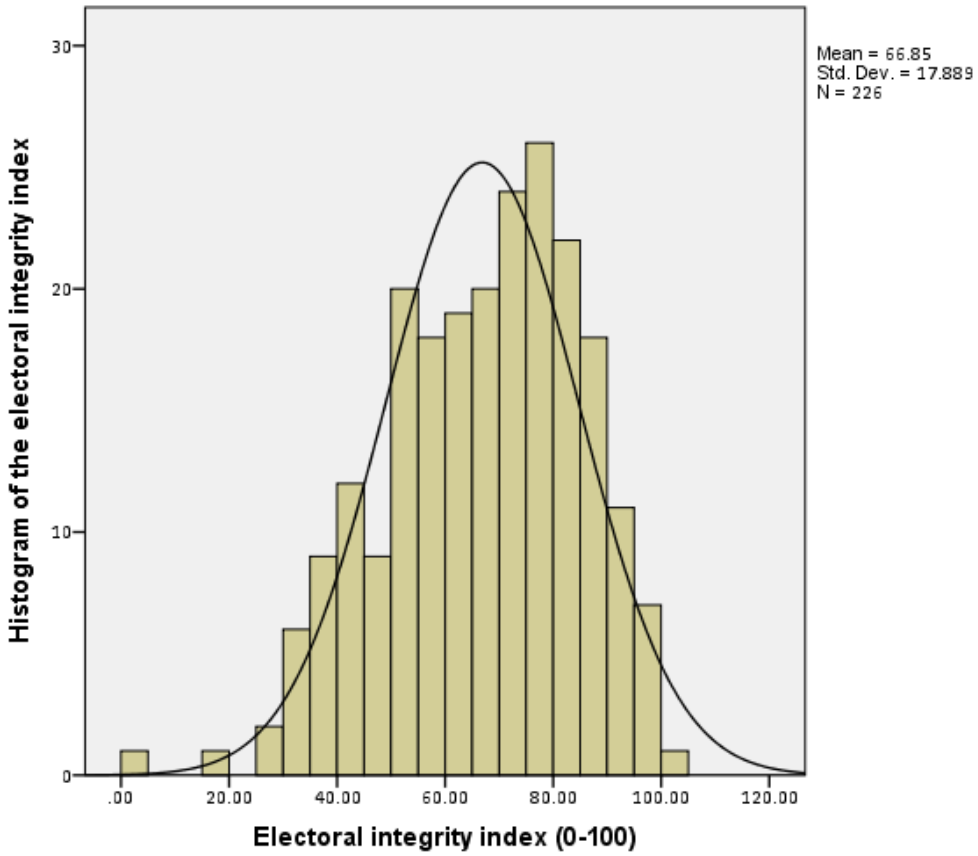
Source: Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard W. Frank. 2013. *The Expert Survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, Pilot Study May 2013*: www.electoralintegrityproject.com.

Table 5. Response rates

	Election Date	1st Response	2nd Response	3rd Response	Final Response
Netherlands, The	14-Oct-12	31	13	25	53
Czech Republic	2-Dec-12	26	18	16	46
Ukraine	12-Sep-12	24	16	10	42
Venezuela	16-Dec-12	26	19	5	42
Mexico	7-Dec-12	23	10	11	38
United States	9-Dec-12	20	13	13	38
Ghana	12-Oct-12	26	11	5	37
Romania	1-Jul-12	21	13	8	36
Japan	1-Dec-12	10	22	8	35
Angola	31-Aug-12	16	14	3	32
Lithuania	1-Oct-12	19	7	8	31
Kuwait	11-Nov-12	0	22	8	27
Slovenia	14-Oct-12	19	0	8	24
South Korea	17-Nov-12	0	14	10	23
Congo, Republic of	28-Oct-12	15	0	4	18
Georgia	15-Jul-12	13	2	3	17
Montenegro	6-Nov-12	3	10	4	15
Belarus	19-Dec-12	5	5	6	15
Burkina Faso	23-Sep-12	0	10	4	10
Sierra Leone	7-Oct-12	9	0	0	9
Total Response Rate		15	11	8	30

Source: Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard W. Frank. 2013. *The Expert Survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, Pilot Study May 2013*: www.electoralintegrityproject.com.

Figure 1. Distribution of the Electoral Integrity standardized 100-pt Index



Source: Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard W. Frank. 2013. *The Expert Survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, Pilot Study May 2013*: www.electoralintegrityproject.com.

Endnotes

[i] Elections in Libya, Senegal, and Timor-Leste were not included due to time constraints.

[ii] Micro-states were excluded, namely, Vatican City, Nauru, Tuvalu, Palau, San Marino, Monaco and Liechtenstein. We define a nation state by United Nations' membership. Thus, territories like Palestine are excluded. The reason for excluding extremely small micro-states (with populations below 50,000 people, is largely the lack of availability of enough election experts regarding each country.

[iii] There were a few cases in which more than forty experts were used, and a few with fewer than forty due to difficulties in finding experts with the relevant expertise.