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THE ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PROJECT

WHY ELECTIONS FAIL AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

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Voter suppression or voter fraud in the 2014 US elections?

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Synopsis: During recent years, U.S. states have often diverged by adopting either more lenient or stricter electoral procedures. What have been the consequences of these laws for the risks of voter suppression or voter fraud? Heated partisan debate surrounds this question. To consider new evidence, the paper studies variations in the logistical costs of registration and balloting in state laws to generate the most appropriate within-country comparison. Part I sets out the conceptual and theoretical framework. Part II describes the research design that takes advantage of a new dataset, PEI-US-2014, based on an expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity conducted in 21 U.S. states immediately after the 2014 U.S. Congressional elections. This data is combined with a new Convenience Election Laws Index (CEL) summarizing variations in the leniency of state laws for registering and voting. Multilevel (HLM) analysis is used to compare the state-level CEL index against expert evaluations of the integrity of the registration and voting process. Part III presents the results of the analysis. The conclusion in Part IV draws together the major findings and considers their implications.

For the panel on “*Voter Reform and Suppression*” Division 36: Elections and Voting Behavior, American Political Science Association annual meeting, San Francisco, 8am Saturday 5th September 2015.

The 2014 report of the bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration documented a long series of vulnerabilities in American elections. These have been under close scrutiny ever since the notoriously flawed ballot design in Florida in 2000. Since then, reports of wait times in excess of six hours to cast a ballot in Ohio, inaccurate state and local voter registers, insufficiently trained local poll workers, and the breakdown of voting machines in New York have continued to put the quality of American elections in the headlines.¹ Standards remain uneven across the country; the Pew Center's 2012 Election Performance Index suggests that states such as North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin performed relatively well against a range of quality indicators combining voting convenience and electoral integrity, but others, including California, Oklahoma, and Mississippi demonstrated noticeable short-falls.²

It was no different during the 2014 midterm elections. The media reported a range of problems on polling day, some trivial, others more serious, though it remains to be determined whether these were arising from accidental maladministration or intentional dirty tricks. At least 18 state election websites were reported to have experienced disruptions on election day, preventing voters from using the sites to locate polling places and ballot information.³ In Hartford Connecticut, voters were turned away from polling places which did not open on time due to late arriving polling lists.⁴ The Chicago Board of Election Commissioners reported that more than 2000 election judges did not turn up at their polling stations after receiving erroneous information from 'robocalls'.⁵ In Virginia, a State Department of Elections spokesman said that 32 electronic voting machines at 25 polling places experienced problems. In both Virginia and North Carolina, there were also claimed cases of electronic polling machines which recorded a vote for the Democratic candidate when the screen was touched to cast a vote for the Republican.⁶ The state-wide voter registration system crashed in Texas forcing many to complete provisional ballots when poll workers were unable to confirm voter eligibility.⁷ Meanwhile new state laws requiring electors to present photo identification were reported to cause confusion in several states, including Texas, Georgia, and North Carolina.⁸

What explains these sorts of problems in U.S. elections? In particular, how far are registration and voting procedures used in U.S. states associated with the risks of either voter suppression or voter fraud? Debate about electoral laws has become increasingly polarized along party lines in the U.S., with policy reforms generating a complex patch-work quilt of registration and voting procedures across America. It is commonly claimed in popular debate that stricter registration and voting procedures safeguard the security of the ballot, but at the risk of raising the logistical costs of participation and thereby suppressing voting rights. In counterpoint it is also claimed that more lenient electoral procedures with lower barriers

may prove more socially inclusive, but at the risk of increasing voter fraud. Is there good evidence supporting these rival claims and counterclaims?

It is important to understand this issue for several reasons. Firstly, public awareness of electoral malpractices matters for civic engagement, by eroding confidence in elected institutions, such as parties, parliaments and governments, as well as dampening turnout and sparking protest activism.⁹ Therefore flawed contests are not simply an abstract technical issue of concern for liberal elites; these have important implications for civic engagement and the quality of democratic governance. Secondly, a flourishing literature and new sources of empirical evidence have developed during the last decade studying the quality of electoral administration in America and abroad.¹⁰ Many of these studies have focused on specific types of laws, such as mail ballots or identification requirements, either within specific states or across America. Yet previous studies have not generally compared a comprehensive range of registration and voting state laws nor judged these against expert evaluations of electoral performance in U.S. states. Expert evaluations are a common technique employed for many other topics which are difficult to measure directly through official statistics or mass surveys, such as comparative studies estimating corruption (by Transparency International), good governance (by the World Bank Institute), and the quality of democracy (by the Variety of Democracies project).¹¹ It is an appropriate technique which can throw new light on the electoral performance of US states. Finally, from a policy perspective, it is critical to identify legitimate concerns about the workings of American elections in order to identify appropriate remedies and thereby encourage inclusive, accountable and responsive government.

To understand the impact of U.S. state registration and balloting procedures, this paper first sets out the conceptual and theoretical framework that underlies our understanding of electoral integrity around the globe. This study focuses upon the effects of institutional variations across U.S. states. In particular, this paper theorizes that the logistical costs of registration and voting determined by state-level laws will influence the quality of state electoral performance, as monitored through expert judgments.

As more fully discussed later, within-country comparisons provide an opportunity to hold the general levels of economic development and international forces constant, in order to best analyze variance in institutional procedures among U.S. states. The paper uses a research design that takes advantage of a new dataset to assess the performance of U.S. state elections, as the core dependent variable. PEI-US-2014 is based on an expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity conducted in 21 U.S. states immediately after the 2014 US Congressional elections. States were selected to be

representative using a structured random sample. Experts were asked to evaluate how multiple dimensions of electoral integrity performed in their state of residence using a detailed survey instrument covering all eleven stages in the electoral cycle. After describing the results of this survey, this paper focuses on exploring the relationship between this measure of election quality and institutional variance between states, namely state voting and registration laws. The standardized Convenience Election Law (CEL) Index is used to estimate variations in the leniency of state regulations for registering and voting, the primary independent variable. Multilevel (HLM) analysis examines the impact of a CEL index of state-level laws compared with expert estimates of electoral performance, derived from PEI-US 2014. The models control for many conditions expected to influence expert perceptions of the electoral integrity of registration and voting processes, including Level I social and partisan characteristics of the respondents and Level II political characteristics of the states under comparison. The results demonstrate that *more lenient convenience election laws are related to higher levels of electoral integrity*. The findings are contrary to assertions that more lenient procedures open the door to fraud and thereby undermine the honesty of elections. Nevertheless, institutional variants in registration and balloting procedures among states cannot account for the overall quality of U.S. elections, and comprehensive explanations need to take account of the earlier stages of the whole electoral cycle, including electoral administration, redistricting, political finance, and campaign media.

I: The conceptual and theoretical framework

What is electoral integrity?

What is meant by the concept of ‘electoral fraud?’ In the United States the term is commonly used as short-hand (often by those on the right) to mean the act of fraudulent voter impersonation at the polls. Similarly, in popular debates the term ‘voter suppression’ is commonly used (often by liberals) to mean restrictions on voter rights. By contrast, we adopt a comprehensive multidimensional notion of electoral integrity on the grounds that numerous types of flaws and failures can undermine contests at home and abroad. In some countries, opponents are disqualified. District boundaries are gerrymandered. Independent media are muzzled. Citizens are ill-informed about choices. Ballot boxes are stuffed. Contenders refuse to accept the people’s choice. Protests disrupt polling. Electoral registers are out-of-date. Airwaves favor incumbents. Campaigns are awash with hidden cash. Incompetent local officials run out of ballot papers. Incumbents are immune from effective challengers. Rallies trigger riots. Female candidates face discrimination. Ethnic minorities are persecuted. Voting machines jam. Ballot box seals break. Citizens cast more than one ballot. Legal requirements serve to suppress voting rights. Polling

stations are inaccessible. ‘Secure’ ink washes off fingers. Courts fail to resolve complaints impartially. Each of these problems can generate contentious elections characterized by lengthy court challenges, opposition boycotts, public protest, or, at worst, deadly violence.¹² In some cases, failures are intentional; elsewhere they arise through happenstance, although it is tricky to nail down which is which.

The core notions of ‘flawed’ or ‘failed’ elections, which lie at the heart of this paper, requires clear standards and consistent benchmarks against which to judge the quality of any contest. To lay the groundwork, as conceptualized and defined elsewhere, the overarching notion of *electoral integrity* refers to *contests respecting international standards and global norms governing the appropriate conduct of elections*.¹³ These standards have been endorsed in a series of authoritative conventions, treaties, protocols, case law, and guidelines by agencies of the international community.¹⁴ In practice, to measure and monitor standards, the abstract concept of electoral integrity is usefully broken down into its component parts. In an influential framework, Andreas Schedler has previously suggested that problems of democratic elections involve a ‘menu of manipulation’ that ranges sequentially in a series of steps from restrictions on the range of electoral offices through the formation and expression of preferences to the consequences of voting choices for office holders.¹⁵ Conceived in this way, breaking any single link in the process is capable of undermining the legitimacy of elections. Almost a decade ago now, the international community also moved towards understanding that electoral assistance and monitoring should not be focused purely upon election-day, or even on the short-term period of the official campaign. Instead, each election should be understood as a cyclical process involving a long series of sequential steps.¹⁶ The idea of an electoral cycle has now become the ‘gold standard’ for the international community seeking to strengthen the capacity of Election Management Bodies and to invest in long-term sustainable development.¹⁷

[Figure 1 about here]

To operationalize the core notion, the electoral cycle can be deconstructed into a series of eleven sequential steps, illustrated schematically in Figure 2. To address the contemporary popular debate in American politics, this study focuses on the registration and voting processes where problems of voter suppression and electoral fraud are claimed to arise. By contrast to popular usage in contemporary American debate, however, our approach favors a far more comprehensive understanding of electoral integrity which acknowledges that diverse flaws can arise at any stage of the process.

A burgeoning body of research on issues of fraud or malpractice throughout the electoral cycle has generated several variously conceived and measured cross-national indicators monitoring the quality

of elections.¹⁸ This includes the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) 3.0 dataset,¹⁹ derived from a rolling expert survey evaluating parliamentary and presidential national elections around the globe since mid-2012. As discussed fully later, the PEI Index ranks the quality of electoral integrity through an overall composite 100-point index. One of the most striking observations arising from the results concerns the United States; out of 127 contests worldwide, the 2012 U.S. presidential election ranked 42nd and the 2014 U.S. Congressional elections ranked 45th. The combined U.S. score represents the worst national performance among all established democracies in the comparison, rating well below many newer democracies such as Lithuania, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, and Uruguay (see Figure 1). The fact that both U.S. contests were poorly ranked, coupled with the finding that PEI is strongly correlated with equivalent independent cross-national indices measuring the quality of elections,²⁰ suggests that this is not simply an anomaly or measurement error. Among all mature democracies, the nuts and bolts of American elections seem particularly vulnerable to incompetence, malpractices, and simple human errors, as well as structural flaws. In particular, the PEI survey suggests that in the 2012 and 2014 U.S. contests, experts consistently identified the stages of district boundaries, electoral laws, voter registration, and campaign finance as the most severe problems arising in American elections, in that order.²¹ Similar patterns can be observed at state-levels as well, as discussed later. Not surprisingly, concern about these types of issues have also been the focus of heated debate in state-houses and within the beltway. In general, systematic cross-national evidence suggests that compared with equivalent societies, recent American elections are regarded by experts as exceptional – and exceptionally bad.

[Figure 2 about here]

Do electoral laws explain variance in electoral integrity?

From the mid-1960s onwards, and especially since the 2000 Bush v. Gore Presidential election and the unfortunate events in Florida, many U.S. state-houses have sought to amend their registration and voting laws, however these attempts have typically encountered contentious partisan debate and litigious appeals in the courts.²² Like many other in contemporary American politics, there is no agreement about what further types of reforms to state laws should be prioritized to address issues of electoral integrity in the U.S. Debate surrounds whether integrity is hurt more by *overly-strict* procedures (which are thought to cause low turnout, political inequality, and lack of inclusive voting rights by all sectors of society), or by *overly-lenient* requirements (which are believed to increase the risks of voter impersonation and thus fraud at the ballot box invalidating legitimate results and damaging public trust). Electoral laws can therefore either reduce or raise the logistical barriers (time, effort, and possibly money)

which citizens face when seeking to register and/or cast a ballot.²³ These logistical costs reflect one part of the turnout calculus made by rational voters, alongside informational costs and calculations of the anticipated benefits arising from participation.²⁴

Those arguing for the loosening of registration procedures contend that electoral laws may point to convenience electoral facilities as a way of strengthening electoral integrity by reducing logistical costs facing citizens seeking to register and cast a ballot, and thereby promoting full and equal participation. These varied procedures are exemplified worldwide by online registration, automatic registration, election day registration, pre-qualifying age registration, and rolling registers. In the United States, registration via the internet has become widely available, with 20 states allowing online registration applications in the 2014 elections, although making up only 7% of registration submissions.²⁵

Other convenience facilities allow for varied methods of casting ballots, such as advance voting, assisted voting, overseas voting, absentee balloting, postal voting, extended hours/days, and weekend polling, internet voting, proxy voting, special facilities for the disabled, the production of multi-language informational materials, and the deployment of mobile polling stations.²⁶ As a result, voting in person at a local polling station on election-day has become less and less common. According to the 2014 Electoral Administration and Voting Survey, for example, almost one in four American electors cast their ballot before polling day. Figure 3 shows the changes in the use of alternative voting measures from 2010 to 2014.²⁷ But the rules surrounding various convenience voting facilities vary across states.

[Figure 3 about here]

Of course, participating through these facilities is a necessity rather than a ‘convenience’ for several types of citizens—those with physical disabilities or illnesses, those responsible for the care of dependents, populations living in remote areas, care homes such as hospitals or retiree communities, the military and expatriates based abroad, those whose religious commitments prevent them attending polling places on election day, and so on. Governments have, however, increasingly relaxed the rules to allow any qualified citizen to make use of early and remote voting, without any need to provide a reason such as immobility or travel. In this sense, the ‘convenience voting’ label seems accurate.

Most research about the effects of convenience voting on turnout has been conducted in America, including studies focusing upon the impact of introducing different types of reforms in particular states (such as postal voting in Oregon) or across the U.S., with some work in several other established democracies, such as the UK and Switzerland.²⁸ It remains difficult to establish conclusively the effects of any single type of electoral law on participation, however, not least because multiple individual and

macro-level factors affect turnout.²⁹ In one of the seminal early studies on convenience voting, Rosenstone and Wolfinger concluded that U.S. states which used the most relaxed registration processes had higher turnout, and they suggested that similar effects would follow by lowering the costs of registration elsewhere in the country.³⁰ Similarly, Piven and Cloward have argued that legal-institutional factors, including registration procedures, are the most important barriers to voting participation for disadvantaged groups in America.³¹ Burden et al. find that while election-day registration has a positive effect on participation, another convenience measure, early voting, actually tended to depress turnout.³² So while most empirical studies find that stricter registration and balloting rules do correlate with lower turnout, at the same time, reforms designed to ease the process do not necessarily boost participation substantially. Thus in practice the effects of adopting convenience electoral facilities have often fallen well short of the claims of proponents, generating only limited or even null effects on mobilizing overall levels of voter turnout.³³ One reason, Hanmer argues, is that U.S. states like Minnesota with strong participatory cultures are most likely to adopt lenient registration laws, such as election day registration. As a result, it is misleading to extrapolate from these contexts to assume that similar effects would arise from exporting lenient registration facilities to other states with more restrictive traditions of voter rights.³⁴ Another reason is that these facilities are often most likely to be used by engaged citizens, reinforcing their propensity to vote, but this may exacerbate any social gaps in turnout arising from age, socioeconomic status, education, ethnicity, or sex.³⁵

Additionally, critics claim that well-meaning procedural reforms making legal requirements for the registration and voting process more lenient may also have unintended consequences, such as through heightening security risks, undermining the secrecy of the ballot, increasing administrative costs and complexities, producing inconsistent and unequal voting rights across America, and thereby possibly ultimately damaging public confidence in electoral integrity.³⁶ In other words, the desire for inclusive participation needs to be counterbalanced by the need to protect security of the ballot.³⁷ In particular, many on the right argue that overly-lax registration and balloting requirements in America have heightened risks of voter impersonation, allowing non-citizens to vote, and other forms of electoral fraud.³⁸ There is nothing novel about the specter of voter fraud, a rhetorical claim used for more than a century in attempts to limit minority voting rights. Nevertheless, American debate became more heated after the 2000 election. In fact, only 14 U.S. states required some sort of identification to vote in 2000, with the number accelerating to 32 by 2014.³⁹ These changes are designed to minimize the risks of voter impersonation, but they also arguably raise the logistical costs of casting a ballot, depending upon the time, effort and financial costs of fulfilling the identification requirements for eligible citizens. Critics such as Schaffer

charge that in practice even good faith efforts to clean up electoral rolls may suppress participation.⁴⁰ Several marginalized groups of citizens, for example, the elderly, students, transient populations, and the poor, are more likely to lack access to the polls where balloting depends upon presentation of a government-issued photo identification card. As a result, it is believed that stricter qualifications may disadvantage these groups at the polls, although the empirical evidence remains mixed.^{41 42}

In attempts to detect the effects of procedures on incidence of voter fraud in the U.S., recent work has scrutinized the evidence available from legal records and federal prosecutions of electoral crimes in the registration, balloting and counting processes.⁴³ Incident reports reported by poll workers and legal records of prosecutions and convictions have also been used in the United States to monitor the frequency of criminal charges of voter impersonation (implying voting more than once).⁴⁴ Scholars have also deployed techniques of electoral forensics, pouring over precinct returns to detect anomalies, although there is no consensus about the most appropriate statistical tests.⁴⁵ Other scholars have examined the impact of state electoral laws on public confidence and trust in the electoral process, reporting that any effects are cued by partisan leanings, winner-loser effects and use of the news media.⁴⁶ Therefore although popular debates claim that registration and balloting laws will influence many aspects of electoral integrity, for good or ill, and anecdotes are often quoted by proponents on either side of the aisle, systematic observational evidence remains largely indeterminate.

Alternative theories

Many other factors may also be expected to explain patterns of electoral integrity. Three alternative theoretical perspectives, each drawn from the broader comparative literature on democratization, offer insights which may potentially help to explain general cross-national patterns as well as outlier cases. In the classic Lipset tradition, this includes sociological theories, emphasizing the importance of *processes of modernization* that can provide a more hostile or favorable terrain for processes of democratization and for organizing competitive elections in each society.⁴⁷ Inhospitable conditions are exemplified by deep-rooted poverty and inequality, a legacy of inter-communal violence in deeply-divided multicultural societies, or the curse of natural resources. In countries such as Afghanistan, Burundi, or the Central African Republic these types of constraints can be expected to hamper well-meaning efforts by reformers to use elections to strengthen transitions from autocracy and the consolidation of democratic regimes.

In addition, accounts rooted in international relations underscore the role of the globe community, including *multilateral organizations and donor agencies* seeking to strengthen processes of

democratization and electoral integrity. The most common strategies used in this process involve opening barriers to the diffusion of global norms through the free flow of information across national borders, providing technical assistance and development aid invested in electoral processes and building the capacity of electoral management bodies, and sending international teams of observers to monitor elections, combined with diplomatic pressures threatening or punishing regimes which violate standards.⁴⁸ Cross-national evidence suggests that exposure to global norms and regional neighborhood effects matter for the quality of national elections.⁴⁹ Both structural and international factors can be treated as conditions that either constrain or provide important opportunities for domestic reformers seeking to strengthen electoral institutions.

Finally, *institutional* theories emphasize the role of both overarching constitutional arrangements in a country (especially power-sharing institutions), the organizational structure, governance capacities and bureaucratic ethos of electoral management bodies, and the quality of electoral laws and administrative procedures. Among the constitutional arrangements and structural features of the American political system, the general quality of elections is likely to be influenced by some common features across the country, including the winner-take-all single-member plurality electoral system (which increases the incentive for candidate fraud in competitive races, where a few votes make all the difference), and laissez-faire deregulation of campaign spending (reducing the level playing field in party and candidate competition). Likewise, American electoral administration exhibits some common characteristics, notably its extreme decentralization. By contrast to unitary states, and even many other federal countries, such as Canada and Australia, the United States provides an extreme version of fragmented decentralization. Partisan elected and appointed officials in local counties, municipalities, and states have considerable autonomy to set the rules and run contests, helped by an army of temporary poll workers mobilized on election day.⁵⁰

When considering these alternative explanations, certainly U.S. states and geographic regions differ in structural conditions, such as levels of poverty and social inequality, racial and ethnic heterogeneity, partisan leanings, political composition, and cultural attitudes, all factors which can ideally be controlled for in fully-specified models. But as one of the world's most affluent post-industrial societies, general theories of societal modernization, arguments based on the diffusion of international norms, and the general constitutional arrangements in the U.S. political system, are implausible explanations for the contrasts observed in electoral integrity *among* American states, such as Connecticut and Wisconsin, or Iowa and Ohio. However, the aforementioned decentralization of electoral institutions by state, provides

a unique opportunity to test the institutional explanations for electoral integrity. For these reasons, this paper focuses on comparing election laws that differ across states and the logistical costs that can arise from formal registration and voting laws.

II: Research design

Given thus conceptual framework, how can we assess the performance of U.S. state elections? More specifically, what evidence is available to assess the impact of restrictive or lenient legal regulations on the integrity of registration and balloting processes? Previous cross-national studies have utilized several techniques and sources of data to monitor electoral integrity, each with certain strengths and weaknesses, including content analysis of observer reports, randomized controlled experiments, forensic autopsies of polling results, indices constructed for related proxy concepts, event analysis derived from the contents of news media reports, and analysis of public opinion polls.⁵¹ Measures in the United States have relied upon multiple sources of data, including the U.S. Census Bureau's Voting and Registration Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS), the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) conducted by the Election Administration Commission, state and local election board records, and also public opinion surveys.⁵² These resources provide invaluable evidence, although data remains of uneven quality.⁵³ For example, the EAVS depends upon the quality of information provided voluntarily by local election officials, and inconsistent concepts are used to describe the same electoral procedures in different places. Evidence from the CPS, the EAVS, and from local officials typically provides information on matters such as the proportion of registered citizens, voting turnout, and reasons for not voting. But this sort of data, while useful as indicators, is not directly evaluative. Any interpretation of the performance of American elections requires a consensus about the appropriate normative criteria which can form the basis of any judgment. Thus available evidence is unable resolve more fundamental disagreements about optimizing preferences involving trade-off values, such as the priority which should be given to administrative efficiency, citizen convenience, equal non-discriminatory voting rights, and inclusive participation, or accurate, reliable, transparent, honest, and secure registration processes.

Other evidence about public perceptions of elections and reported behaviors are available from opinion polls such as the World Values Survey, the Pew Center post-election surveys, and the American National Election Survey.⁵⁴ But this source of data is also limited. Firstly, many cross-national surveys are limited to asking about only one or two types of electoral malpractices, such as experience of incidents of vote-buying or electoral intimidation. Other surveys use indirect measures, such as trust in electoral authorities, rather than monitoring perceptions about multiple problems which can occur throughout the

electoral cycle. In addition, while mass survey data is useful to gauge citizen evaluations, the public may well be unaware of more technical problems arising in electoral administration, especially illegal and clandestine acts not highlighted by election watchdogs and the press. Finally, in countries where there is strong partisan debate about these matters, including the United States, mass attitudes are often heavily filtered through partisan cues framed by party leaders and the news media, and also biased by the winners-losers effect.⁵⁵

To provide alternative evidence, the Electoral Integrity Project has gathered expert evaluations to monitor the performance of both nation-wide and state elections in America. PEI-US 2014 used a structured random sampling procedure to select 21 U.S. states. The survey monitored expert perceptions of the integrity of registration and balloting processes in these states. We also classified several features of state laws for registration and balloting used for the 2014 mid-term Congressional elections. These procedures are then compared against evidence derived from the PEI-US 2014 survey. Multilevel models (HLM) are used for the cross-sectional analysis.

The Perception of Electoral Integrity expert survey

This study builds on the techniques and methods which the Electoral Integrity Project has established when developing the cross-national Perceptions of Electoral Integrity rolling survey, an instrument gathering evaluations of electoral integrity from independent elections experts since mid-2012.⁵⁶ *Electoral experts* are defined in the PEI as political scientists (or scholars in related social science disciplines, such as law, history, political economy, or political sociology) who are knowledgeable on one or more of the following topics: elections, electoral systems, electoral administration, voting behavior, public opinion, campaigns, political communications, mass media, democracy and democratization, political parties and party systems, human rights and national politics. All these topics touch on different dimensions of the underlying concept of electoral integrity. These experts have published scholarly articles, books and conference papers, teach university level classes on this topics, and/or are members of relevant professional associations. Using a comprehensive survey questionnaire, the project has sought to assess whether contemporary national parliamentary and presidential contests meet international standards throughout the electoral cycle, including during the pre-election period, the campaign, polling day, and its aftermath. The questionnaire includes 49 items monitoring the quality of elections, derived from a series of common and universally-agreed global norms and values, reflecting the conceptual framework already discussed, such as the value of fairness, equality, inclusiveness, honesty, and efficiency in all the sequential steps in the electoral cycle (see Table A in the technical appendix). The overall PEI

index is constructed by summing the separate items for each election and each country, with the results standardized to 100-points. Similar standardized indices are constructed for each of the eleven components of the electoral cycle. In addition, the PEI Index is ranked and categorized by thirds into contests with high, moderate and lower levels of electoral integrity.

To replicate these methods, PEI-US 2014 conducted a sub-national version of the expert survey. The study selected a sample of 21 US states, selected through a simple random walk. We sought to identify 40-50 expert respondents per state through membership lists from the American Political Science Association (APSA) and university political science department listings. Preference was given to academic faculty who had published in related fields. The survey was distributed one month after the end of the 2014 mid-term contests. Respondents were asked to assess the quality of the 2014 Congressional election in the specified state where they were resident. They were instructed not to report their own direct experience of elections, or to provide information about legal or factual technical matters in each state (such as the proportion of the eligible electorate registered to vote, for example, which can be gathered more accurately from alternative sources, including electoral laws and official statistics). We received 195 completed replies, representing a response rate of 22%. The state-level sample can also be compared with the results of the 'standard' nation-wide expert surveys conducted separately in the 2012 and 2014 US elections, providing a cross-check on the representativeness of the sample. In the analytical models, several variables are included to control for the social and demographic characteristics of experts which could color their judgments, including their age, sex, as well as their self-reported left-right ideological position, and their partisan preferences. Given the polarization of issues of voter integrity in the United States, it seems important to make sure that any expert judgments of the quality of state elections are not simply attributable to partisan leanings.

Classifying and measuring state laws on registration and balloting

State laws governing the registration and balloting process were also classified and coded from several sources. First, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Election Laws database contains information on recent changes to election laws and procedures passed in state legislatures.⁵⁷ It outlines legislation in all 50 states ranging from voter identification requirements to methods of disseminating voter information. Data was also derived from the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAV), which has been administered by the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) for every election since 2004. The EAC has surveyed local county and townships election officials biennially to gather statistics on issues such as: the number and types of registrations, the number of ballots

accepted and rejected using each voting procedure (in-person, absentee ballots etc.), the characteristics of poll workers, and the use of voting technologies.⁵⁸ These types of statistical indices help to monitor the technical efficiency of electoral administration, reflecting the mandate and legal framework for the EAC, established following the 2002 Help America Vote Act, including the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), and the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). For the 2014 Congressional elections, the surveys was completed by electoral officials in 4,611 local jurisdictions, and these responses were aggregated at state level.

Based on data contained in the EAV and NCSL, we classified the legal framework used by states in the 2014 elections for the US House of Representatives. State laws regulating common registration and balloting procedures were coded from the most restrictive conditions (coded low) to most lenient requirements (coded high). Table B in the technical appendix provides our classificatory schema and coding. In particular, states were classified in the restrictions or leniency of laws governing the following electoral procedures:

- i. Election-day registration;
- ii. Online registration;
- iii. Pre-registration (prior to attaining the age of 18);
- iv. Voter identification requirements to cast a ballot;
- v. Voting rights for felons;
- vi. Absentee ballots;
- vii. Mail ballots;
- viii. Early ballots;
- ix. Provisional ballots;
- x. Publication of voter leaflets;
- xi. Publication and distribution of sample ballots.

The Convenience Elections Laws Index (CEL) was created by summing these criteria and standardizing the score to 100-points, for ease of interpretation, where a high score reflects the more lenient procedures for registration and voting in the United States. The reliability of the scale was analyzed and the items generated a moderately strong score (Cronbach's Alpha = .53).

[Table 1 and Figure 4 about here]

To test the external validity of our measure, our constructed index was compared with the EVAS measure of the proportion of traditional in-person ballots cast on election day at a polling place in each

state. The two indices were negatively correlated ($R=-.332$, $P=.21$), as illustrated in Figure 4. That is to say, as expected the more convenience voting facilities are available in each state, then the fewer the proportion of citizens waiting until election day to go to the polls. This observed relationship increases confidence in the external validity of our preferred measures. The CEL was also significantly negatively correlated with the proportion of Republican votes for the U.S. House in the 2014 elections ($R=-.279$, $P=.49$); also as expected, more Republican-leaning states had more stringent registration and balloting procedures while by contrast Democratic-leaning states tended to have more lenient procedures. Several other social, demographic and economic characteristics of states, such as population size and density, race and ethnicity, mean educational attainment, and even party control of statehouses were tested and excluded from models as these failed to be associated with Convenience Electoral Laws. The main exception was that more affluent states (measured by median household income) were significantly more likely to have lenient procedures ($R=.275$, $P=.51$, $N=15$). The multivariate models therefore controlled for the partisan leanings of states (% GOP vote 2014) and median household income.

III: Expert perceptions of electoral integrity and US State laws

In the light of these procedures, how did experts perceive the quality of elections in each state, especially regarding the registration and voting processes? And is there a significant relationship between CEL and how experts evaluated electoral integrity in the 2014 Congressional elections?

[Table 2]

Table 2 presents the perceptions of electoral integrity index and scores on each of the eleven sub-dimensions across the states under comparison. The results illustrate the considerable variance in the overall PEI index, ranging from the best overall performance in Connecticut and Iowa compared with the worst in Ohio and Wisconsin. A glance at the rankings of the PEI index suggests that there is no clear regional pattern; thus Massachusetts is ranked as similar overall as Texas, while Alabama and Arizona are equivalent. The average score in the 100-point PEI Index across the states under comparison (71) is strikingly similar to that found nation-wide in the 2014 Congressional elections (69), suggesting that this selection of states is indeed representative of the whole country.

Moreover, the contrasting evaluation of the 100-point standardized measures for each of the eleven stages of the electoral cycle in the PEI-US 2014 are also very similar to those recorded in the nation-wide PEI survey. The worst performing stages across most states were those involving whether *district boundaries* discriminated against some parties, favored incumbents, and failed to be impartial (with a mean score of 42), whether *electoral laws* were unfair to smaller parties, favored the governing party, or

restricted voter's rights (51), *campaign finance* (such as whether parties/candidates had equitable access to public subsidies and political donations), and *voter registration* (including whether some citizens were not listed on the register, whether the register was accurate, and whether some ineligible electors were registered). Yet it is worth noting that *voting processes* were rated more favorably, (including whether any fraudulent votes were cast, whether the voting process was easy, whether voters were offered a genuine choice at the ballot box), along with the *vote count* (85) and *post-election results* (85).

But were expert evaluations of the performance of elections more positive in those states with more lenient registration and balloting procedures? Given the use of multilevel data, hierarchical linear models (HLM) are most appropriate for analysis.⁵⁹ The models in this study use restricted maximum likelihood techniques (REML) to estimate direct and cross-level effects for hierarchical data. Individual expert respondents are thus grouped into states. Each state has a different set of parameters for the random factors, allowing intercepts and slopes to vary by nation.⁶⁰ All the coefficients were first standardized (Z-scores). The models controlled in Level 1 for several characteristics of the individual experts which might influence their judgments, including age, sex, political views on a ten-point left-right ideological self-placement scale, and their partisan preferences (a five point scale from Democrat to Republican).⁶¹ In addition, models controlled in Level 2 for the partisan characteristics of states, measured by the percentage GOP vote in the 2014 contests, as well as median household income. The treatment of missing data is also important. Mean substitution replaced missing data for individual-level judgments where any items were omitted in the expert survey. Models were tested with and without these treatments to check that they did not have a substantial effect on the interpretation of the results. The multilevel regression models used in this study usually generate small differences in the size of the slope coefficient (b) compared with the results of OLS models, but the average standard errors for level 2 variables often tend to be slightly larger. The process is thus more rigorous and conservative, avoiding Type I errors (false positives, concluding that a statistically-significant difference exists when, in truth, there is no statistical difference). The goodness of fit statistic in OLS is the adjusted R^2 , where models with a higher coefficient indicate that it accounts for more of the variance. In the REML model, by contrast, Schwarz's Bayesian Criterion (BIC) is used, where the model with the *lower* value is the best fitting.

[Table 3 about here]

Table 3 presents the results of the models. The first model examines the effects of the independent variables on the PEI-US Voter registration Index. This includes expert assessments (agreed or disagreed on a 5-point scale) as to whether following statements applied to their state elections:

- Some citizens were not listed in the register
- The electoral register was inaccurate
- Some ineligible electors were registered.

The items were therefore designed to catch many concerns about the quality of the voter registration process, including whether it included all eligible citizens, was correct, and was free of fraud. The items were recoded in a positive direction to generate the scale. The results of the regression models in Table 3 show that only two factors predicted expert's judgments: individual-level age (with older experts more critical) and the state-level Convenience Election Law Index. Thus this suggests that *where state laws are more lenient towards registration and balloting, the performance of the voter register is perceived to be of significantly better quality*. Convenience laws are regarded positively by experts. Among the other control factors in the model, the ideological position and party preferences of the experts did not significantly effect their evaluations of voter registration processes. Age was also a significant predictor, with older respondents more negative, for reasons which are not self-evident.

The second model in Table 3 examines similar models but using the Electoral Integrity Index, which covers multiple dimensions of performance throughout the electoral cycle from electoral laws, campaign media and political finance to the vote count and electoral management agency. The results of the second model *did not detect a significant link between the Convenience Elections Law Index and overall levels of electoral integrity*. In many ways this is not surprising since many other laws govern each of these dimensions of elections, such as state laws and procedures for redistricting, political finance and the role of state and local officials in administering contests. The only factors which emerged as significant in this second model were sex (where women have more negative views of electoral integrity than men, a consistent but still puzzling finding for reasons which currently remain unclear) and the left-right ideological scale, where those on the left have more positive evaluations of electoral integrity in America than those on the right. Given the claims of the right about fraud, this is not surprising. Future research needs to explore whether other types of laws, beyond those governing the registration and balloting process, could be help to explain additional linkages. In exploring the data, however, we were unable to detect any further significant relationships between the Convenience Elections Law index and other performance indicators in PEI, including measures about the incidence of fraud, the fairness of election officials, or the impartiality of electoral authorities, all of which raise important questions for further research.

Conclusions

This study sought to test whether the logistical costs of registration and voting determined by state-level laws influence the perceived quality of American elections. A long series of studies in the previous research literature has sought to determine the impact of registration and balloting laws on voter turnout, as well as whether laws affect public trust and confidence in the electoral process. By contrast, we sought to look more directly at the impact of the legal frameworks on measures of the performance of American state elections, as monitored through expert judgments.

The evidence presented in this study suggests two main conclusions.

Controversies about electoral reforms have become deeply mired in bitter arguments along party lines in the U.S., with Republicans arguing that overly-lax registration procedures have heightened the risks of significant ballot fraud ‘stealing elections’ in close contests, while Democrats counter-claim that overly-zealous voter identification laws are enacted where claims of fraud are used as a smoke screen disguising new attempts at voter suppression of the poor and minorities. The heated debate has generated many new state laws since the events in Florida during the 2000 election, producing a mélange of inconsistent registration and balloting procedures in states and localities across America. Legal appeals against the new statutes commonly claim that reforms to registration and voting processes, which either raise or lower the logistical costs of participation, will either heighten the risks of voter fraud or else suppress voting rights.

The new evidence we analyzed suggests that even after controlling for many factors which might influence expert’s judgments, including their ideological and partisan leanings, state laws for registration and balloting are indeed related to the performance of voter registration and balloting processes. In particular, the analysis suggests that *more lenient registration and balloting procedures used in a state are significantly associated with more accurate and inclusive electoral registers, according to expert evaluations*. At the same time, based on the analysis, *we found no proof that convenience procedures led to more ineligible electors being registered*, again according to expert judgments of the quality of state elections. From these findings, it does appear that the assumed trade off between convenience and security is false; we were unable to demonstrate that more lenient procedures increased the risks of voter impersonation, identity theft, or other irregularities in the electoral roll.

Secondly, however, the impact of these state laws should not be exaggerated; *convenience state registration and balloting procedures do not affect the overall performance of state elections*, as monitored through the standardized PEI index measuring more general perceptions of electoral integrity. This finding is not surprising in many ways. Although controversies about registration and balloting laws

receive the most media attention in American, these procedures cannot account for the full electoral integrity score in each state.

This observation reinforces the necessity of broadening our conceptualization of electoral integrity and studying the entire electoral cycle, not just the end stages of the process. Cases around the world demonstrate that electoral integrity can also be undermined by partisan gerrymandering or by malapportionment favoring incumbents when drawing constituency boundaries.⁶² Party and candidate registration processes may prove equally problematic, for example where independent candidates or new parties face high thresholds before they can gain ballot access.⁶³ Imbalanced campaign media coverage can also fail to provide a level playing field, and political finance regulations pose another range of challenges, especially where candidates need to accumulate large war chests to succeed.⁶⁴ Voting processes in polling places can be flawed, including issues of ballot irregularities and broken machines, while inaccurate counts or insecure ballot seals can undermine the vote tabulation process. The credibility of the outcome can suffer from undue delays in announcing the results, or by lack of transparency and audit processes. And finally election officials are vital to administering electoral processes and implementing the rules, and problems can commonly arise where authorities lack know-how capacity, technical resources, or a culture of impartiality. This study therefore sheds light on some of the reasons why American elections perform so poorly compared with other established democracies – but clearly each of the stages throughout the electoral cycle need to be taken into consideration for comprehensive explanations of patterns of electoral integrity.

Table 1: Convenience Election Laws in U.S. States, 2014

State	Convenience Election Law Index standardized	% In person voting in polling place 2014 (EAVS)	No need for voter ID	Can vote absentee with no excuse	Can vote by mail	Can vote early	Election Day Registration allowed (NCSL)	Online Registration allowed (NCSL)	Felon voting most lenient	Can cast provisional ballot if not on register	Can register under 18	Voting info pamphlets issued	Sample Ballots issued
California	99	35	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Maine	95	78	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Nebraska	95	76	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Oregon	95		✓	✓	✓ (Only)			✓		✓	✓	✓	
DC	86	6	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		
Nevada	86	44	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Vermont	86	83	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Wyoming	86	79	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Illinois	82		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			
North Carolina	82	6	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	
Colorado	77	4		✓	✓ (Only)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
New Jersey	77	92	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓
New Mexico	77	47	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			
West Virginia	77	78	✓			✓				✓	✓		
New York	65		✓					✓		✓			
Utah	65	56		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Arizona	56	19		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Total	54	68		✓		✓				✓			
Arkansas	47	54			✓	✓				✓			
Georgia	47	63		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		

State	Convenience Election Law Index standardized	% In person voting in polling place 2014 (EAVS)	No need for voter ID	Can vote absentee with no excuse	Can vote by mail	Can vote early	Election Day Registration allowed (NCSL)	Online Registration allowed (NCSL)	Felon voting most lenient	Can cast provisional ballot if not on register	Can register under 18	Voting info pamphlets issued	Sample Ballots issued
Montana	47	4		✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	
Florida	43	47		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Texas	43	44			✓	✓				✓	✓		✓
Kansas	39	73		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		
Ohio	39	71		✓		✓				✓			
Oklahoma	39	91		✓		✓				✓			✓
Alabama	34					✓			✓	✓			✓
Delaware	34	97				✓		✓			✓		
Hawaii	34	39		✓	✓	✓					✓		
Idaho	34	71		✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	
Louisiana	34	84			✓	✓		✓			✓		
N. Hampshire	34	93					✓			✓		✓	✓
Wisconsin	34	85		✓		✓	✓			✓			
Connecticut	26	95					✓	✓					
North Dakota	26	61		✓		✓							
Tennessee	26	56				✓				✓			
Virginia	26	94				✓		✓		✓			
Mississippi	22	79			✓					✓		✓	
South Dakota	22	8		✓		✓							
Kentucky	17	96											✓
Iowa	9	59	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Maryland	9	77	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓

State	Convenience Election Law Index standardized	% In person voting in polling place 2014 (EAVS)	No need for voter ID	Can vote absentee with no excuse	Can vote by mail	Can vote early	Election Day Registration allowed (NCSL)	Online Registration allowed (NCSL)	Felon voting most lenient	Can cast provisional ballot if not on register	Can register under 18	Voting info pamphlets issued	Sample Ballots issued
Minnesota	9	88	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Alaska	6	69		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	
Massachusetts	6	95	✓							✓		✓	
Pennsylvania	6	97	✓							✓			
Washington	6			✓	✓ (Only)	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Michigan	4	74											
Indiana	3	84				✓		✓		✓			
Missouri	3	95						✓			✓		
Rhode Island	3	95								✓	✓	✓	
South Carolina	3	87						✓		✓			
All 50 states +DC			19	31	18	38	12	20	5	41	22	16	9

✓ State balloting and registration facility available in the 2014 elections

Sources: National Conference of State Legislative (NCSL) Election Law Database (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/2011-2013-elections-legislation-database.aspx>) and the 2014 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Statutory Overview Report (http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Page/2014_Statutory_Overview_Final-2015-03-09.pdf).

Table 2: Perceptions of electoral integrity in the selected U.S. states, 2014

State	PEI index	Electoral laws	Electoral procedures	District boundaries	Voter registration	Party and candidate registration	Media coverage	Campaign finance	Voting process	Vote count	Results	Electoral authorities
Connecticut	80	55	84	60	66	88	77	75	83	95	94	84
Iowa	78	61	84	81	64	80	73	68	77	90	85	84
Nebraska	76	47	91	52	78	88	68	56	79	90	85	81
Oregon	75	61	97	47	80	82	57	54	81	91	80	88
New Hampshire	75	64	76	70	57	87	67	68	74	87	92	75
Minnesota	74	62	87	58	69	88	62	57	78	85	84	79
Kentucky	73	50	84	32	62	87	67	70	77	75	97	82
Florida	73	51	84	35	65	88	73	65	77	82	79	80
Illinois	72	64	85	39	57	79	61	56	75	90	88	82
California	72	48	86	53	64	80	63	50	75	84	88	85
New Mexico	71	45	79	44	59	83	53	77	73	85	79	79
Rhode Island	70	43	75	39	70	85	63	50	72	91	86	82
Massachusetts	70	57	83	33	68	74	63	57	74	83	85	81
Texas	70	58	79	37	57	83	63	58	72	83	86	77
Missouri	69	49	76	42	56	85	62	59	70	87	81	76
Washington	69	54	80	45	53	78	66	51	74	80	80	78
North Carolina	69	47	76	29	64	78	68	53	73	85	81	79
Alabama	68	46	80	37	54	77	61	61	67	83	86	72
Arizona	66	44	74	42	58	75	64	42	73	83	81	75
Ohio	65	36	79	22	60	77	55	53	72	83	85	70
Wisconsin	64	39	74	27	56	74	55	41	74	82	85	71
Total	71	51	81	42	62	80	64	56	74	85	85	79

Source: Electoral Integrity Project sub-national expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI-US 2014) in 2 US States, ranked by the overall 1-point PEI index.

Table 3: Models explaining expert perceptions of electoral integrity

	Model A Voter Registration Index			Model B Electoral Integrity index		
	b	SE	Sig.	b	SE	Sig.
INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL						
Demographic characteristics						
Age (years)	-3.01	1.50	.049	-.697	.712	.330
Sex (male=1)	-.800	1.40	.573	-1.36	.653	.039
Self-reported ideological L-R placement	1.73	2.24	.445	1.97	1.00	.053
Partisan preferences	-1.91	1.81	.294	-.038	.869	.965
STATE-LEVEL						
% Vote GOP 2010	-.263	2.30	.912	.797	1.81	.667
Median household income (US\$)	.001	.000	.654	.000	.000	.203
Convenience Election Law (CEL) Index	4.31	1.62	.045	1.17	1.32	.393
Constant	60.6			54.1		
Goodness of fit: Schwarz's BIC	754			741		
N. respondents	193			193		
N. states	21			21		

Note: All independent variables have been standardized using mean centering (z-scores). *Model A* presents the results of the REML multilevel regression models. The PEI-US 2014 expert evaluations for Voter Registration and Electoral Integrity 100-point scales were the dependent variables. Models report the unstandardized beta coefficients (b), the standard errors, and their significance. The models were checked by tolerance tests to be free of any multi-collinearity problems. See appendix A for details about the measurement, coding, and construction of all variables. Significant coefficients are highlighted in **bold**.

Figure 1: Steps in the sequential electoral cycle

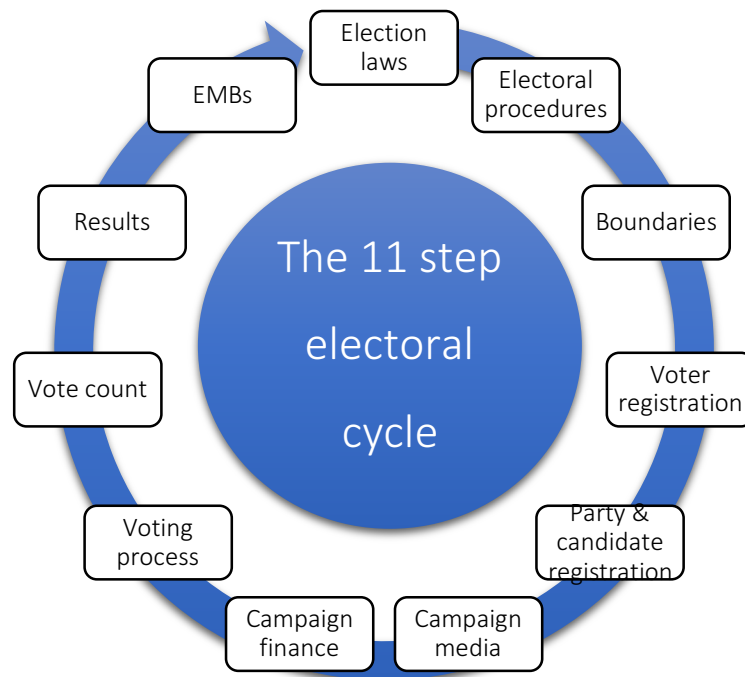


Figure 2: Countries ranked by perceptions of Electoral Integrity

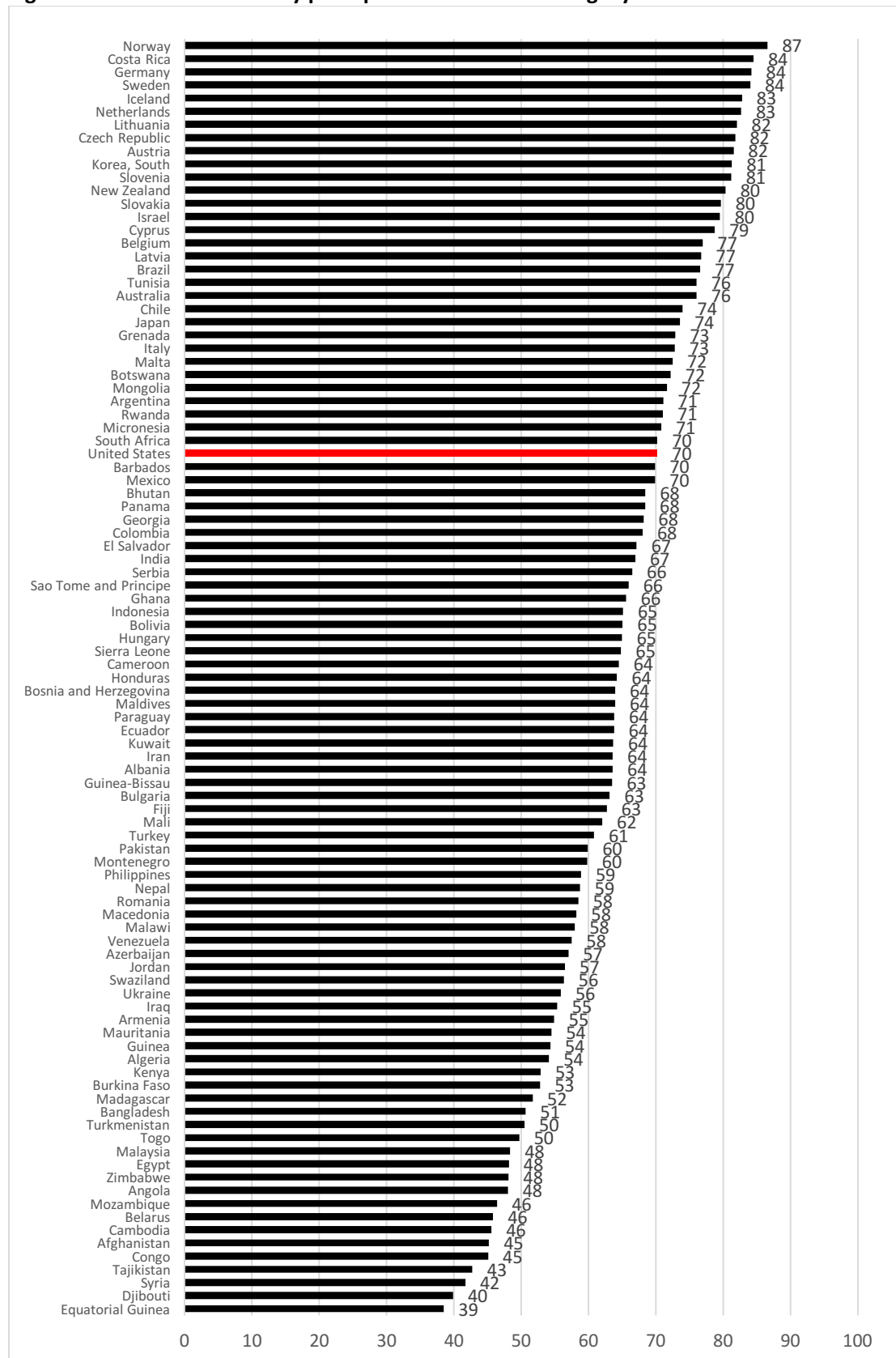
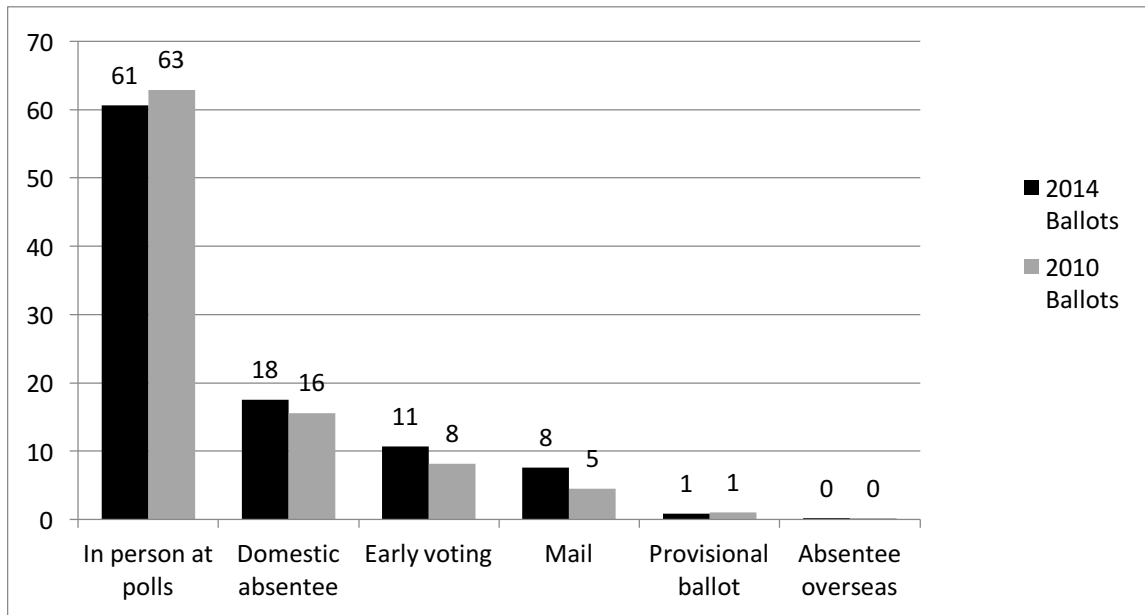


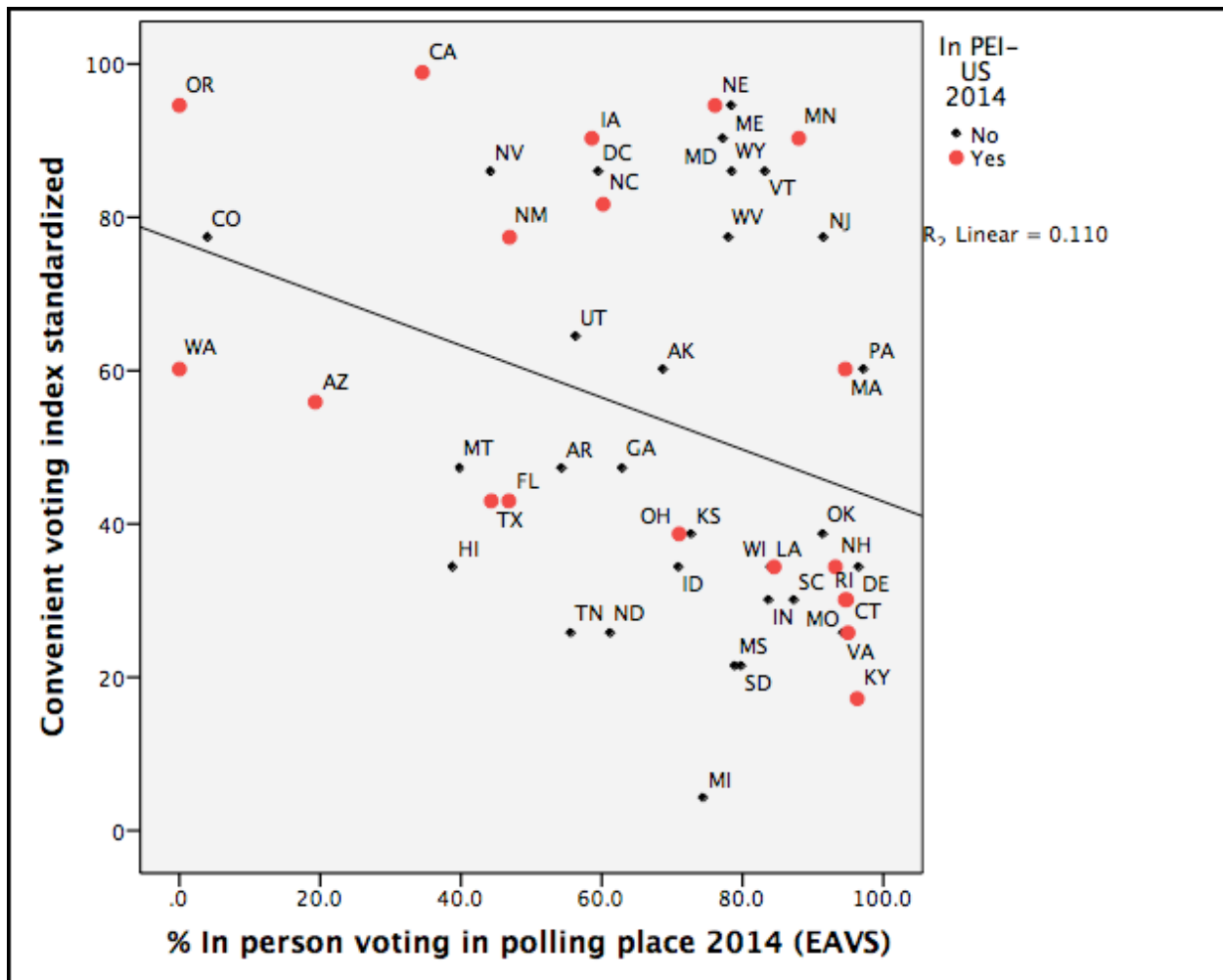
Figure 3: The use of convenience election laws, US 2012-2014



Note: The proportion of ballots cast through different procedures.

Source: Electoral Assistance Commission. 215. *The 2014 EAC Election Administration and Voting Survey Comprehensive Report*. http://www.eac.gov/research/election_administration_and_voting_survey.aspx

Figure 4: Convenience electoral facilities and in-person voting in the U.S. states, 2014



Technical Appendix

Table A: Overview of PEI-US-2014 Survey

OVERALL INTEGRITY MEASURES

There are two overall integrity measures, the PEI Index and the experts' rating of the election.

Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index (individual level)

The PEI index is designed to provide an overall summary evaluation of expert perceptions that an election meets international standards and global norms. It is generated at the individual level using experts' answers to the 49 substantive variables below. The 49 scores are summed and then standardized to a 100-point scale. In the original Index, the score is missing if an expert does not answer a question.

Another index including all experts was created in which sub-index component variables were replaced with state means. Percentages of missing values for electoral integrity survey questions (this does not include the personal information) ranged from 0 (whether the voting process was easy, for example, was one three component variables with no missing values) to 66% (international monitors, though this is almost double the percentage of the next most missing variable (whether some were missing from registration list, at 36% missing). The mean of missing values for a variable was 11%.

ELECTORAL LAWS

In the electoral law questions, all respondents read this header:

"When thinking about the electoral laws used in the last national election in this country, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

1. Electoral laws were unfair to smaller parties.
2. Electoral laws favored the governing party or parties.
3. Elections laws restricted citizens' rights."

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Respondents also had the possibility to answer "Don't know" and "Not applicable".

ELECTORAL PROCEDURES

In the electoral law procedures section, all respondents read this header:

"In terms of electoral procedures... Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

4. Elections were well managed.
5. Information about voting procedures was widely available.
6. Election officials were fair.
7. Elections were conducted in accordance with the law."

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Respondents also had the possibility to answer "Don't know" and "Not applicable".

BOUNDARIES FOR DISTRICTS

In the electoral law procedures section, all respondents read this header:

"In some countries the electoral district boundaries are re-defined at intervals, a process also known as 'redistricting'. If this does not apply, please reply 'not applicable'. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

8. Boundaries discriminated against some parties.

9. Boundaries favored incumbents.

10. Boundaries were impartial.”

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. Respondents also had the possibility to answer “Don’t know” and “Not applicable”.

VOTER REGISTRATION

In the voter registration section, all respondents read this header:

“Turning to voter registration... Do you agree or disagree with the following statements

11. Some citizens were not listed in the register

12. The electoral register was inaccurate

13. Some ineligible electors were registered”

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. Respondents also had the possibility to answer “Don’t know” and “Not applicable”.

PARTY AND CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

In the registration process section for parties and voters, all respondents read this header:

“Thinking about the registration process for parties and candidates to get on the ballot... Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

14. Some opposition candidates were prevented from running

15. Women had equal opportunities to run for office

16. Ethnic and national minorities had equal opportunities to run for office

17. Only top party leaders selected candidates

18. Some parties/candidates were restricted from holding campaign rallies”

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. Respondents also had the possibility to answer “Don’t know” and “Not applicable”.

MEDIA COVERAGE

In the media coverage section, all respondents read this header:

“Thinking about the media’s coverage of these elections, do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

19. Newspapers provided balanced election news.

20. TV news favored the governing party.

21. Parties/candidates had fair access to political broadcasts and advertising.

22. Journalists provided fair coverage of the elections.

23. Social media were used to expose electoral fraud.”

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. Respondents also had the possibility to answer “Don’t know” and “Not applicable”.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

In the campaign finance section, all respondents read this header:

"Another issue concerns campaign finance, do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

24. Parties/candidates had equitable access to public political subsidies.

25. Parties/candidates had equitable access to political donations.

26. Parties/candidates publish transparent financial accounts.

27. Rich people buy elections.

28. Some state resources were improperly used for campaigning".

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Respondents also had the possibility to answer "Don't know" and "Not applicable".

VOTING PROCESS

In the voting section, all respondents read this header:

"When voting, do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

29. Some voters were threatened with violence at the polls.

30. Some fraudulent votes were cast.

31. The process of voting was easy.

32. Voters were offered a genuine choice at the ballot box.

33. Postal ballots were available.

34. Special voting facilities were available for the disabled.

35. National citizens living abroad could vote.

36. Some form of internet voting was available".

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Respondents also had the possibility to answer "Don't know" and "Not applicable".

VOTE COUNT

In the vote counting section, all respondents read this header:

"When voting... Do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

37. Ballot boxes were secure.

38. The results were announced without undue delay.

39. Votes were counted fairly.

40. International election monitors were restricted.

41. Domestic election monitors were restricted".

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Respondents also had the possibility to answer "Don't know" and "Not applicable".

VOTING RESULTS

In the announcement of the results section, all respondents read this header:

"After the official results were announced, do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

42. Parties/candidates challenged the results.

-
- 43. The election led to peaceful protests.
 - 44. The election triggered violent protests.
 - 45. Any disputes were resolved through legal channels.”

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. Respondents also had the possibility to answer “Don’t know” and “Not applicable”.

ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES

In the electoral authorities section, all respondents read this header:

“Thinking about the electoral authorities administering elections, in your view... Do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

- 46. The election authorities were impartial.
- 47. The authorities distributed information to citizens.
- 48. The authorities allowed public scrutiny of their performance.
- 49. The election authorities performed well.”

The respondents gave their opinion in a five point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. Respondents also had the possibility to answer “Don’t know” and “Not applicable”.

For more on the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity index, see www.electoralintegrityproject.com

Table B: Classification of the main types of Convenience Election Laws used in the U.S.

TYPE	MECHANICS	CODING	SOURCE
Voter ID	The identification required to vote at the polling station varies across states, ranging from mandatory photo identification, to copies of a bill, bank statement or government document showing name and address, to no identification at all.	0 – Some form of identification required to vote 1 – No identification required to vote	National Conference of State Legislative (NCSL) Election Law Database
Absentee Balloting	Absentee balloting allows voters to receive a ballot before the election day and return it before election day. Traditionally, an application for an absentee ballots could be submitted for a limited number of reasons, ranging from being physically unable to go to a polling station to living abroad. No-excuse absentee balloting allows any citizen to apply for an absentee ballot, with no reason required.	0 – Excuse needed for absentee ballot 1 – No excuse needed for absentee ballot	Election Administration and Voter Study (EAVS), Statutory Overview Report 2014
Vote by Mail	Voters receive a ballot in the mail before the election. Ballots can be returned via mail or dropped off at satellite locations or at elections office. Three states (Oregon, Colorado and Washington) conduct all vote-by-mail elections.	0 – No mail-in voting 1 – Mail-in voting an option or the default method of casting a ballot	NCSL Election Law Database
In-person Early Voting	Voters have the option of casting a ballot in person early at a satellite location or at an election office. In some states an excuse is needed. In most jurisdictions, the same voting machinery is used for early in-person and Election Day balloting.	0 – No early voting option 1 – In-person early voting available	EAVS Statutory Overview Report 2014
Election Day Registration	Some states allow voters who are not registered prior to election day to register on election day.	0 – Election day registration not available 1 – election day registration available	NCSL Election Law Database
Online Registration	Some states have enacted online voter registration systems, which allow voters to check their status, amend their information, and/or register online.	0 – No online registration available 1 – Limited or full online registration available	NCSL Election Law Database
Felon Disenfranchisement	The voting rights of felons and incarcerated populations varies by state, often based on the nature of the felony.	0 – Most restricted felon disenfranchisement (all felonies, and some other crimes) 1 – Least restricted felon disenfranchisement (not all felonies result in disenfranchisement)	EAVS Statutory Overview Report 2014

Provisional Ballots	Provisional ballots are provided when the eligibility of a voter is questioned due to, for example, a lack of proper identification. Depending on the state, these ballots will be verified when the voter returns with ID, by matching signatures or by swearing an affidavit.	0 – No provisional ballots 1 – Provisional ballots allowed	NCSL Election Law Database
Registration under 18	In some states, those under the age of 18 can register to vote when they reach a certain age (usually 16 or 17), or if they will be 18 before the next election.	0 – No pre-registration 1 – Pre-registration available	NCSL Election Law Database
Voting Information Pamphlets	Some states are required by law to publish and distribute pamphlets containing voter information. The contents will vary by state.	0 – Voting Information pamphlets not required 1 – Voting information pamphlets required	NCSL Election Law Database
Sample Ballots	Some states are required by law to publish sample ballots. Their distribution will vary. Some states post these sample ballots at voting booths, others publish them in newspapers, and others still mail them to each household.	0 – Sample ballots not required 1 – Sample ballots required	NCSL Election Law Database

Sources:

- National Conference of State Legislative (NCSL) Election Law Database (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/2011-2013-elections-legislation-database.aspx>) contains a listing of election laws by state.
- 2014 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Statutory Overview Report (http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Page/2014_Statutory_Overview_Final-2015-03-09.pdf) compares state election laws and practices.

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