

# ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN AFRICA

**VOTER REGISTRATION LAWS**  
**VOTE COUNT ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES**

**VOTE BUYING** EQUATORIAL GUINEA RENAMO HERY RAJAONARIMAMPINANINA JOSE MARIO VAZ  
ANGOLA ALI BENGLIS JACOB ZUMA **PRESIDENTIAL** ABDELAZIZ BOUTEFLIKA

**BOUNDARIES VOTING** MOZAMBIQUE NPP CPDS CONGO, REP. MPLA

**INTIMIDATION RESULTS** IAN KHAMA PETER FPR MUTHARIKA  
**CAMPAIGN MEDIA** BDO FLN HELEN ZILLE CORD JEAN-LOUIS ROBINSON CELLOU DALEIN DIALLO

**FINANCE** GUINEA-BISSAU MALI MALAWI EGYPT ZIMBABWE DJIBOUTI FPR RPG AR PCT SLPP EQUAL ACCESS

SAO TOME & PRINCIPE

**MEDIA** SECOND CHAMBER KENYA **SPENDING**  
COVERAGE **ELECTORAL CYCLE LIMITS**

**POLLS FRAUD** ALGERIA RPM FRELIMO BURKINAFASO MONCEF MARZOUKI

**PARTY REGISTRATION** GHANA SIERRA LEONE CAMEROON

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DUMA BOKO  
CDP NDC

Max Grömping & Dr. Ferran Martínez i Coma

THE ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PROJECT  
WHY ELECTIONS FAIL AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT



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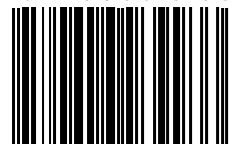
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# Foreword

Since its launch in 2012, the Electoral Integrity Project has studied electoral integrity around the world, considering such notions as why electoral integrity matters, why elections fail, and what can be done to address these problems. The project has generated a series of book and article publications including the editing of a special issue in *Electoral Studies*, articles in the *Journal of Democracy*, the *European Journal of Political Research*, and *PS: Political Science & Politics*, and books on *Advancing Electoral Integrity* (Oxford University Press 2014), *Why Electoral Integrity Matters* (Cambridge University Press 2014), *Why Elections Fail* (Cambridge University Press 2015), and *Contentious Elections* (Routledge 2015). Moreover, the project also produces its annual report evaluating the quality of elections worldwide, entitled 'The Year in Elections'.

This is the first EIP report that presents findings of the study of electoral integrity in a specific region. I am especially delighted that the report focuses on Africa, a continent of great diversity whose elections are under-studied in comparison with Europe or America.

The purpose of this report is twofold. First, to present the African results of the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert surveys, and then to analyse important elements at play in shaping the integrity of African elections. Much attention has been placed on polling day and the immediate administration of elections, but Ferran Martínez i Coma and Max Grömping show that many other elements of the electoral cycle are key to the integrity of the elections.

During 2015, Zambia, Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Burundi and Burkina Faso, among others, have voted or are expected to do so. The integrity of the elections is crucial, not only for normative reasons, but for instrumental factors, such as the internal stability of the country, and citizens' satisfaction with their regimes. We are currently gathering data on those contests and hopefully this will be the first of many reports to come.

*Professor Pippa Norris*

*Director  
The Electoral Integrity Project*

This report is part of a global research project on electoral integrity by Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and the Department of Government and International Relations of the University of Sydney. The Hanns Seidel Foundation, a German non-profit organization promoting democracy, good governance and the rule of law across the African continent, has commissioned the researchers to compile this report focusing specifically on Africa. We welcome this new index as a first attempt to measure electoral integrity across the continent. It is indicative in terms of the quality of the electoral process in individual countries and it will help to promote the debate on electoral integrity.

The findings are based on expert surveys. As such, the data presents a perception index, which is currently the best rating tool available. The research project is an ongoing initiative which does not only allow a comparison between countries, but over time will enable us to compare consecutive elections within countries as well as identifying regional trends.

We wholeheartedly support this research initiative and hope it will stimulate the debate on the integrity of elections across Africa.

*Dr. Wolf Krug*

*Hanns Seidel Foundation  
Southern Africa Office*

## Executive Summary

The quality of a country's elections has become increasingly important for government legitimacy and domestic and international support. This report provides new, comprehensive analyses of recent elections in African countries. It covers 49 different indicators of electoral integrity in national executive and legislative elections of 28 countries from July 2012 to December 2014.

**This report has eight main findings<sup>1</sup>**

**1.**

**The degree of threats to electoral integrity is more severe in Africa when compared to the rest of the world**

**2.**

**The types of problems in Africa are similar to those found in the rest of the world. Put simply, there is no African electoral exceptionalism**

**3.**

**The report highlights the fact that elections can fail long before election day, so attention should be paid to the electoral dynamics and institutional quality over the entire election cycle not just election day**

**5.**

**Difficulties in regulating campaign finance extend across the continent**

**6.**

**The vote count is consistently the highest rated part of the election cycle**

**7.**

**Countries with good overall electoral integrity may still perform poorly in certain dimensions of the electoral cycle, on the other hand, low overall performers may excel in certain dimensions**

**8.**

**Two country case studies of Malawi and Mozambique highlight that countries with similar levels of economic development can have vastly different outcomes of electoral integrity**

**4.**

**State resources for elections are important, but not determinant**

## Overview of the research team

The Electoral Integrity Project (EIP) is an independent, non-profit, scholarly research project based at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and the University of Sydney's Department of Government and International Relations. It is funded by the Australian Research Council and other grant-making research bodies, and directed by Professor Pippa Norris. The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) survey is managed and maintained by Dr Ferran Martínez i Coma with research assistance by Max Grömping.

The EIP is governed by an Advisory Board of distinguished scholars and practitioners. It is an independent academic body, and the contents of this report are the assessments of the EIP alone. Nevertheless, through a series of international workshops and conferences, the project collaborates closely with many

professional associations and international agencies, including the Australian Political Studies Association, the American Political Science Association, the Carter Center, Democracy International, Global Integrity, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), International IDEA, the International Political Science Association (IPSA), the Sunlight Foundation, the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Values Survey (WVS).

All of the EIP's survey data and reports are available to the public free of charge.

Further details about the project are available at:  
[www.electoralintegrityproject.com](http://www.electoralintegrityproject.com)

## Assessing electoral integrity in African countries

In this report, *the concept of electoral integrity refers to international standards and global norms governing the appropriate conduct of elections.*<sup>2</sup> These norms are primarily based on the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>3</sup> and the subsequent specifications of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 along with other international conventions.<sup>4</sup> These international agreements helped establish the current international norm that governments receive their legitimacy through the will of their citizens as measured by periodic genuine elections. The Global Commission on Elections, Security and Democracy (2012) defines a genuine election as “any election that is based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality as reflected in international standards and agreements, and is professional, impartial, and transparent in its preparation and administration throughout the electoral cycle.”<sup>5</sup>

These standards have been endorsed in a series of authoritative conventions, treaties, protocols, and guidelines by agencies of the international community, notably by the decisions of the UN General Assembly, by regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the OAS, and by member states in the United Nations.<sup>6</sup> Following endorsement, these standards apply universally to all countries.

In the African context, crucial documents in this regard are the Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa<sup>7</sup> (the Durban Declaration) of 2002

and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance<sup>8</sup> (May 2007). In addition to these pan-African standards, sub-regional organizations have engaged in similar norm entrepreneurship.<sup>9</sup> Regional African standards for electoral integrity thus do exist and, in practice, differ little from the global normative framework. Global and regional standards together form a universal framework to assess the integrity of elections.

However, for myriad reasons the history of African countries differs from countries in other regions. For example, the role of ethnicity in the continent seems to be more relevant than in Europe or the Americas.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, many African countries are considered, in the words of Collier and Levitsky, “democracies with adjectives”<sup>11</sup> since they are undergoing a transitioning process which is sometimes fraught with democratic backsliding. The question is whether there is any directional development towards more consolidated democracies at all.

Yet, strikingly - as this report demonstrates - while Africa exhibits overall lower levels of electoral integrity, the problems found in Africa are the same as for the world. In other words, there is no African electoral exceptionalism. The difference between Africa and the rest of the world is of degree not kind. Therefore, while it is still useful to compare countries to global benchmarks,<sup>12</sup> the comparison of this report is within Africa and consequently, the comparisons will be made only considering African countries.



# Measuring Electoral Integrity

*This report examines the thirty elections held in twenty-eight African countries from the second half of 2012 to the end of December 2014.<sup>13</sup>*

In this period, two African countries held multiple elections (Mauritania and Tunisia). This report focuses on the country level because the differences between the elections for these two countries are minimal. The data used in this report is publicly available at

<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/29114>

## MEASUREMENT

To measure the integrity of elections, the EIP conducts the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) expert survey. The survey questionnaire includes

### **forty-nine measures of electoral integrity covering the whole electoral cycle**

(see Appendix Table A1). These items are grouped into eleven sequential sub-dimensions that reflect the dimensions of the electoral cycle (see Figure 4). The electoral integrity items in the survey are then recoded so that a higher score consistently represents a more positive evaluation. Tying election integrity to an election's cycle suggests that a failure in even one step of the sequence (or one link in the chain) can undermine electoral integrity.

The list of countries and elections in the survey is presented in Appendix Table A2. In order to create the aggregated summary PEI index, missing data was replaced using estimates from the multiple imputation of chained equations in groups composing of the eleven sub-dimensions. The PEI Index is an additive function of the forty-nine imputed variables, standardized to a 100-point scale.

All the variables composing the index are equally weighted. Scholars may choose to give different weights to different items and, consequently, create an alternative index. This is not the objective of this report, which builds on the global

## SAMPLE OF ELECTION EXPERTS

**An election expert is defined as a political scientist or other social scientist in a related discipline who has demonstrated knowledge of the electoral process in a particular country - such as through publications, membership of a relevant research group or network, or university employment.**

Roughly forty domestic and international experts were consulted about each election, with requests to participate sent to a total of 1,070 experts. 246 responses were received leading to an overall mean African response rate of 23% (comparable to the 29% response rate for the global study). The number of responses ranged from two to three responses for elections in Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Congo Brazzaville (during the pilot phase) to 16 to 17 for South Africa and Tunisia respectively. The number of responses for African elections has increased every year.

## African Results

Compared to other world regions, Africa exhibits lower overall levels of electoral integrity as can be seen in Figure 1. The continent's average PEI score is 58, while the global average is 64. However, the regional averages do not show the respective country performances. In this regard, and since the focus of this report is on Africa, comparisons will be only made among African countries.

Levels of electoral integrity vary considerably within the African continent. The map in Figure 2 shows the results of the PEI survey for all African countries that held elections between 1 July 2012 and 31 December 2014. The colours represent deviations from the African mean of electoral integrity. It is a purely intra-African comparison that measures the elections of various African countries against their peers. According to this measure, only one country (Tunisia) could be considered to have very high levels of electoral integrity.

Tunisia was evaluated with a PEI Index of 74—more than two standard deviations above the regional mean (58). While ten countries exhibit high integrity in African comparison, eight show moderate and seven countries low levels of electoral

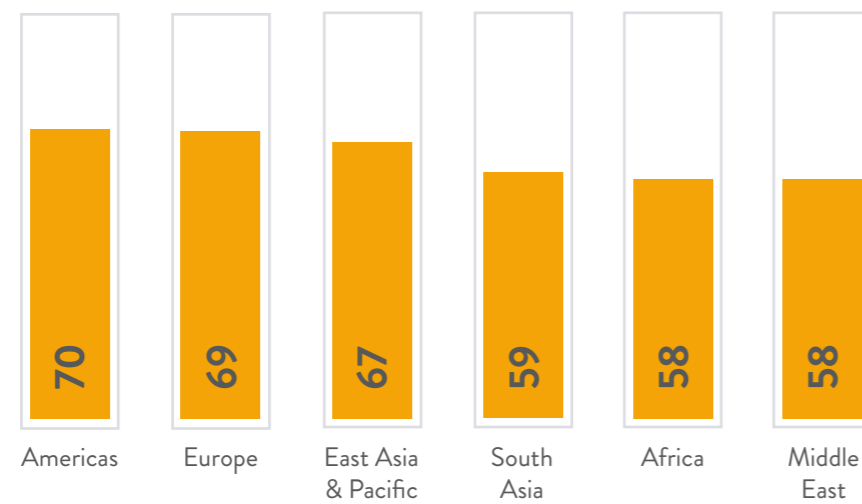


Figure 1: Electoral Integrity by World Region

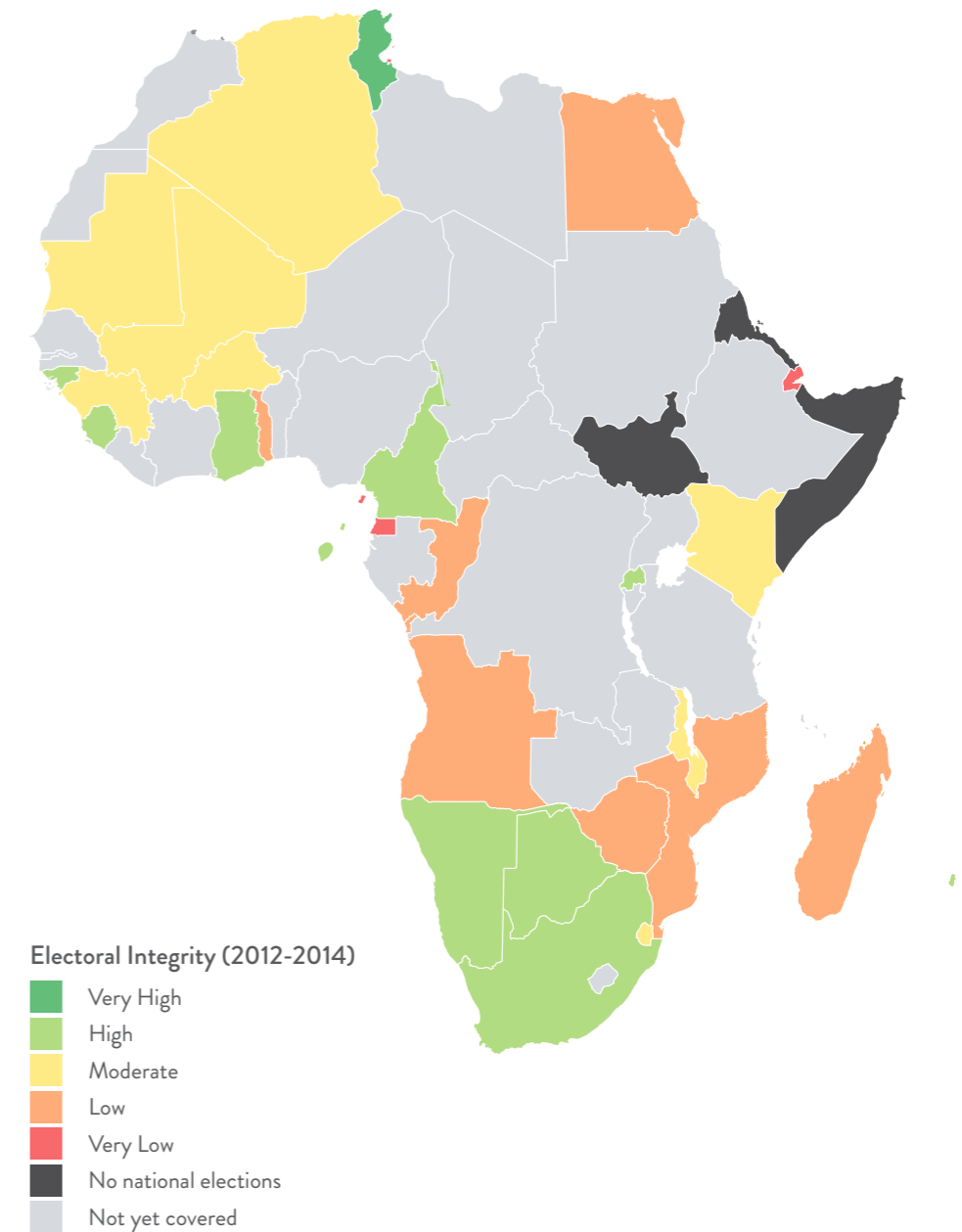


Figure 2: Electoral Integrity in Africa (July 2012-December 2014)

Note: See the Technical Appendix for a list of the countries included in the survey. The levels of electoral integrity are calculated in terms of standard deviations from the African mean.<sup>14</sup>

## Conventional wisdom suggests that election integrity is a function of economic development.

Linking economic development with democracy, modernization theory would suggest that as income grows, so should election quality. Is this the case in Africa? Among the twenty-eight countries in our sample, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita ranges from below US\$1,000 in Malawi or Mozambique to more than US\$37,600 in Equatorial Guinea. The second highest income country is Mauritius with about US\$16,200. The average for the countries is above US\$15,000. In other words, Equatorial Guinea distorts any analysis. Indeed, the correlation between the Integrity Index and economic development is negative (-0.1). When we log the income variable – so the distances are more compacted – the correlation is positive, but weak (0.06). Consequently, to show the relationship between per capita income and electoral integrity, we have not included Equatorial Guinea and report 27 countries. The correlation depicted in Figure 3 is slightly positive with a correlation coefficient of 0.34 (n = 27, p = 0.08). Hence, our bivariate results suggest a somewhat positive relationship between a

country's economic development and the integrity of its elections, but one that is not as strong as initially expected. As Figure 3 shows, there are a number of countries with very similar levels of economic development, but vastly different levels of electoral integrity. Examples include Malawi and Mozambique with GDP per capita below US\$1,000, but a ten-point difference in their respective PEI Index (Malawi: 58; Mozambique: 48). The same is true for countries with higher levels of economic development, as the comparison of South Africa (GDP per capita: US\$11,989; PEI Index: 71) and Algeria (GDP per capita: US\$12,779; PEI Index: 55) shows. The positive correlation of 0.34 suggests that economic development is one, but certainly not the only determinant of electoral integrity. To be conclusive, a solid statistical model is necessary and other drivers of electoral integrity need to also be considered.

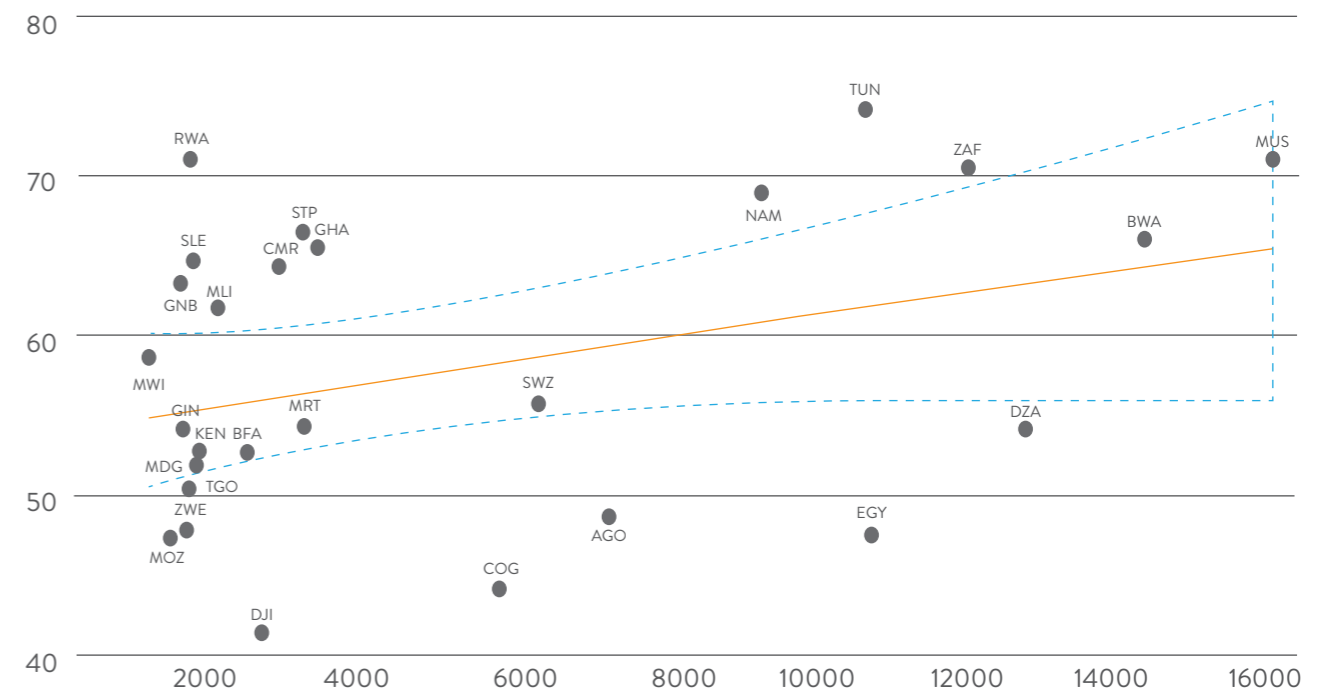


Figure 3: Relation of PEI index & GDP per capita (PPP)

GDP per capita on purchasing power parity 2011

- PEI Index of electoral integrity, imputed
- ▭ 95% confidence interval



# What do elections involve? The Electoral Cycle

Elections are not only about casting a ballot. Quite the contrary, elections involve many other aspects that are extremely important for their success. In fact, according to the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, the following elements are also involved:

“the design and drafting of legislation, the recruitment and training of electoral staff, electoral planning, voter registration, the registration of political parties, the nomination of parties and candidates, the electoral campaign, polling, counting, the tabulation of results, the declaration of results, the resolution of electoral disputes, reporting, auditing and archiving.”

This is why, “after the end of one electoral process, it is desirable for work on the next to begin: the whole process can be described as the electoral cycle.”<sup>15</sup> Depicted in Figure 4, the election cycle is a useful heuristic summarizing all the different elements involved in holding an election. Indeed, the international community has adopted the electoral cycle approach by recognizing that observing only the balloting, vote count and results is too limited unless there is a longer-term assessment of each contest. A glance at the observation reports by different organisations such as the European Union (EU) confirms this. For example, the EU mission reports on

Malawi (2014),<sup>16</sup> Mozambique (2014),<sup>17</sup> Swaziland (2013),<sup>18</sup> or Kenya (2013)<sup>19</sup> cover almost all of the dimensions described in Figure 4.

Moreover, the election cycle describes where the problems in an election may exist beyond election day. Although much media attention focuses on election day and irregularities like ballot-stuffing, ballot-box fraud, or vote count falsification, problems may emerge at any step in the process. It is what Andreas Schedler has labelled the “menu of manipulation.”<sup>20</sup> As Figure 4 shows, the integrity of the contest may be



Figure 4: The Electoral Cycle

compromised if the different stages of the process are not well executed.

The integrity of the election may be broken at any number of points. It may be in the drafting or modifying of electoral laws, for example through increasing the electoral threshold or the size of districts. It may also occur by changing the district boundaries (gerrymandering), or imposing higher requirements for voters and parties. Campaign media regulations may give an unfair edge to some parties over others, or the rules for campaign finance may be inadequate to guarantee a level playing field. Similarly, stiffening the voting procedures for certain groups, or having an election management body politically beholden to the incumbent

may decrease electoral integrity.

It should be noted, however, that deliberate manipulations are not the only source of electoral integrity violations. It may be the case that certain parts of the electoral cycle fail simply due to understaffing, lacking resources, incompetence, or negligence.

A natural question then arises—which is the weakest link? The short answer is that it depends on the country being analysed. A more complete answer follows, and the remainder of this report addresses this question in the African context.

# Which dimensions of elections work well in Africa and which ones do not?

Figure 5 suggests that different African countries perform differently in terms of their overall PEI score. The solid red line shows the African average of electoral integrity while the dashed line allows for a comparison to the global average.

The overall PEI assessments are useful for a broad global and regional comparison, however such scores do not tell us which specific problems occurred during each election. To observe this, we need to differentiate between the sequential steps of the electoral cycle. Accordingly, we have constructed multi-item indicators to

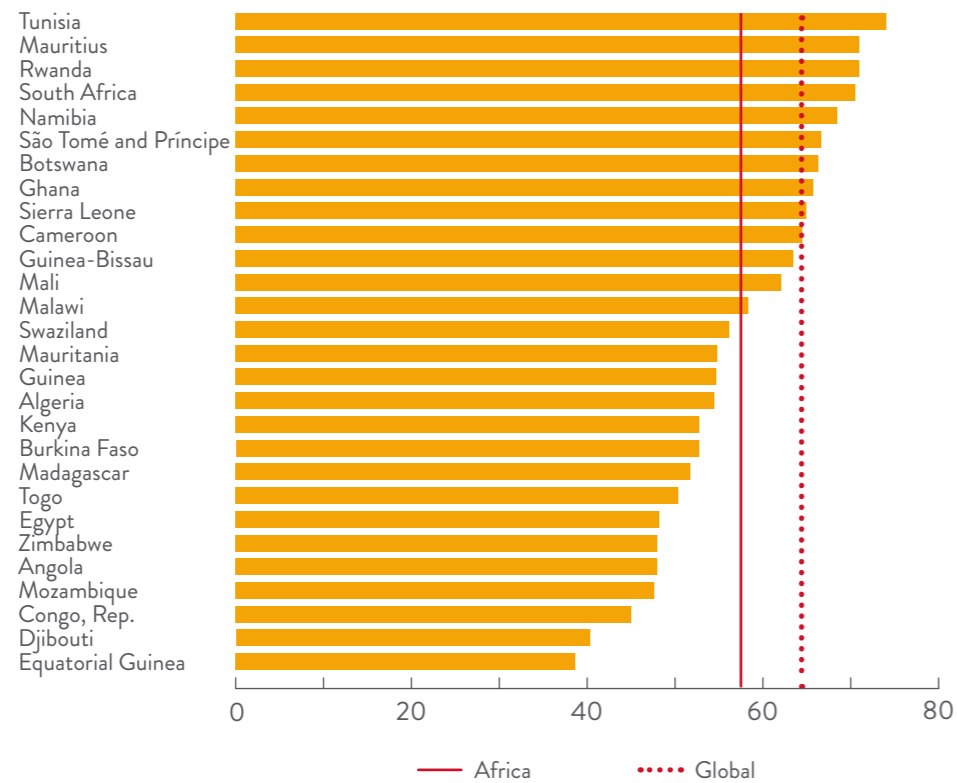


Figure 5: PEI Index in Africa

monitor each dimension accounting for each of these steps. The eleven 'PEI sub-dimensions' shown in Figure 6 and Appendix Table A1 thus correspond to the eleven dimensions of the electoral cycle shown in Figure 4 above. When we analyse which aspects of elections work well in Africa and which ones do not, the evidence in Figure 6 is very clear: campaign finance, voter registration, and campaign media coverage are the most problematic stages of the electoral cycle. These dimensions are also the most problematic in global comparison. Therefore, the strengths and the weaknesses of elections in Africa are similar to those of elections held in the rest of the world, even if they have not yet been seen as such.

Contrary to the attention given to them by journalists and scholars, the later stages of the electoral cycle (involving the process of vote tabulation, electoral procedures, and

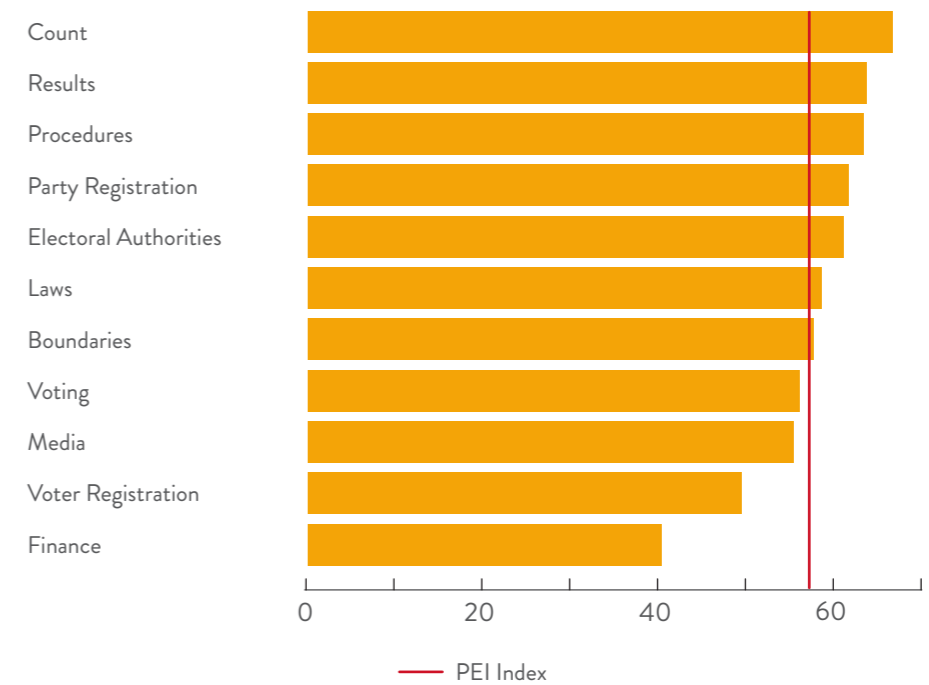


Figure 6: Electoral Integrity in Africa by PEI sub-dimension

*Electoral laws* in Africa are generally on par with the global average. This PEI sub-dimension assesses whether the legal framework of elections benefits the incumbent or larger parties, or whether citizens' rights are restricted.

**Ghana is the best performer in this dimension with a score of 84 - far above both the African (59) and global (64) averages. In fact, Ghana's electoral laws rank 9th in the world. The region's worst performer is Equatorial Guinea (31).**

The *electoral procedures* category evaluates whether elections are well managed and conducted in accordance with the law. A country can thus score favorably in this dimension even if the electoral laws are severely tilted towards a particular candidate or party. In addition, this dimension addresses the fairness of election officials and the levels of voter information and education. Mauritius performed exceptionally well in this category with a score of 92, 12th best in the world. By contrast, Djibouti had the worst electoral procedures (both in Africa and globally) with a score of only 32.

*Voting district boundaries* are a crucial component of electoral integrity. In many electoral autocracies, strategies such as gerrymandering of electoral wards or malapportionment are used to systematically favor a ruling party. Yet the same might be true for OECD democracies like the United States, albeit for different reasons. The US is, in fact, the third worst country in this PEI sub-dimension in a global comparison. In Africa, South Africa scored best in this category, with a score of 79, while Burkina Faso had the worst problems in this regard with a score of 36.

Manipulation, as well as simple lack of capacities and funds, can impede electoral integrity at the stage of the *voter registration* process. This PEI sub-dimension assesses to what extent citizens are missing from the voter roll, whether ineligible voters are on the roll, and how accurate the voter register is overall. Rwanda leads this category in African comparison with a score of 84. At the other end of the spectrum, the PEI experts noted severe problems with voter registration in Equatorial Guinea, which was again at the bottom of the African (and global) cases with a score of only 24.

*Party and candidate registration* encompasses inter-party as well as intra-party competition. Items in this PEI sub-dimension include: to what extent opposition candidates are prevented from running or holding campaign rallies, how party candidates are selected, and whether women or ethnic minorities have equal opportunities to stand for office. In many newer democracies only recently emerging from one-party rule, this dimension still scores low. Ghana leads the African comparison with a score of 80, while Djibouti is at the bottom of the regional and global list with a score of 31.

## **Media coverage is particularly problematic for electoral integrity in Africa.**

Yet this is also true more broadly, and the regional average (55) is only slightly lower than the global (57) one. Items in this category assess how balanced and fair election reporting is in print and broadcast media, and whether political parties have equitable access to airtime.

It also assesses the extent to which citizens use social media and the internet to scrutinize the electoral process. Burkina Faso (80) scores highest in this category, which demonstrates the importance of disaggregating electoral integrity into multiple dimensions. The country is simultaneously the continent's best performer in media coverage and the worst in district boundaries (see above). Severe problems such as unfair or biased

reporting and unequal access to the media were found in Equatorial Guinea, which scored 27.

The PEI sub-dimension of *campaign finance* is by far the worst sub-dimension in African elections - as it is in the rest of the world. The African average of 40 is not far below the global average of 48. The effect of money in politics is a common concern in many developing countries like Burkina Faso and the Republic of Congo, but also in many affluent societies like the United States, Spain, and Italy.

The regulation of money in politics deserves greater attention by domestic actors and the international community when seeking to reduce corruption, the abuse of state resources, and vote-buying, and to strengthen public confidence in elections, and ensure a level playing field for all parties and candidates.<sup>21</sup> Rwanda (64) scored highest in this dimension regionally, while Congo (Brazzaville) scored lowest at 27.

The regional *voting procedures* sub-dimension (56) is significantly lower than the global average (62), but at the same time, very close to the overall average of integrity for the African region (57). This dimension is the most varied and comprehensive since it includes the consideration of first order conditions such as whether voters were threatened with violence at the polls, political manipulation (whether some fraudulent votes were cast), and logistical elements such as whether postal ballots or some form of internet voting was available. In this dimension, the best performer was Botswana (72), while Equatorial Guinea (30) again scored lowest.

## The vote count process was the most highly regarded dimension in the whole electoral process in Africa.

This result is no different from the rest of the world. That the vote count is, overall, in good shape is worth emphasizing because significant media and electoral observation mission attention is invested in examining this process. Some of the indicators include whether the results were announced without undue delay and whether international and domestic election monitors were restricted. The top scoring country in this regard was Mauritius (89), and the lowest was Djibouti (34) followed by Equatorial Guinea (37).

Once the tabulation is done, the **results** are announced. In some cases, parties challenge the results. If this is not properly addressed, the election can lead to protests. In the extreme, elections trigger violence. However, in many cases, the disputes are resolved through legal channels. The survey evaluates the results dimension and, overall, it performs above the rest of the indicators. The top scoring country is Botswana (83) while Djibouti (46) scored lowest.

The electoral cycle also includes the performance of the **election management body (EMB)**. As academic Sarah Birch points out, “the organization of electoral administration is the third main institutional ‘leveling’ device that can be expected to be associated with public confidence in the

electoral process.”<sup>22</sup> In that regard, the election authorities’ impartiality; whether they distributed information to citizens; whether they allowed public scrutiny of their information; and their overall performance, are items to be considered.

The evaluation of African EMBs is slightly above the average. The top scoring EMB is in Mauritius (87) while the lowest, again, is that of Equatorial Guinea (30).

Table 1 summarizes the above findings by highlighting the worst and best performers in the eleven PEI sub-dimensions and comparing them to the African average.

### COUNTRY EXAMPLES

We have shown the overall trends of electoral integrity in Africa and looked at the different components of the electoral cycle and their performance in isolation. Within the remainder of this report, we present some country examples that highlight the varying performance of these states in different dimensions of the electoral cycle. This puts the overall trends and the varying scores in PEI sub-dimensions in the context of concrete elections. We have selected three symptomatic cases above, around and below the average performance, respectively. These are South Africa, Malawi, and Mozambique.

### COUNTRY EXAMPLES

PEI sub-dimension	Best performance	African mean	Worst performance
Laws	84 (Ghana)	59	31 (Equatorial Guinea)
Procedures	92 (Mauritius)	63	32 (Djibouti)
Boundaries	79 (South Africa)	58	36 (Burkina Faso)
Voter registration	84 (Rwanda)	49	24 (Equatorial Guinea)
Party registration	80 (Ghana)	62	31 (Djibouti)
Media	80 (Burkina Faso)	55	27 (Equatorial Guinea)
Finance	64 (Rwanda)	40	27 (Congo, Rep.)
Voting	72 (Botswana)	56	30 (Equatorial Guinea)
Count	89 (Mauritius)	67	34 (Djibouti)
Results	83 (Botswana)	64	46 (Djibouti)
Electoral authorities	87 (Mauritius)	61	30 (Equatorial Guinea)

Table 1: Electoral Integrity in Africa by PEI sub-dimension

## Above Average

South Africa was rated by the PEI experts as one of the best in Africa (ranked 4th among African countries and 40th globally) with a PEI Index score of 71.

The 7 May 2014 election was an election of firsts. It was the first election held since the 2013 death of Nelson Mandela, the first election in which so-called 'born frees' (those born after 1994) were able to vote,<sup>23</sup> and the first national election in which South Africans living abroad were allowed to vote.<sup>24</sup> A number of new parties were also competing, including the Economic Freedom Fighters (who won 25 seats), the National Freedom Party

(6 seats), and the Agang party (2 seats).<sup>25</sup> Despite these new parties and voters, the 2014 South African election resulted in little change. The African National Congress (ANC) returned to government with 249 seats and 62.2% of the vote, which, though slightly weaker support than the previous election in 2009, was enough to keep President Zuma in power.<sup>26</sup>

**New legislation implemented in anticipation of the upcoming elections prohibited photographs of ballots to avoid unfairly influencing or encouraging particular voting trends.<sup>27</sup>**

During the voting process, some logistical problems occurred with 11% of polling stations reported to have opened later than allowed, causing friction where particular stations tended to attract voters sympathetic to particular parties.<sup>28</sup> Yet the PEI experts gave an overall positive score for the voting process (South Africa: 67; African mean: 56).

Although there were media reports of riots outside Johannesburg before the election and after the results were announced,<sup>29</sup> African Union election observers gave a largely glowing report of the quality of the election.<sup>30</sup> These positive reports are also reflected in the PEI Index, in which South Africa scored above the African average in all categories, and above the global average in all but campaign finance. In particular, the score for campaign finance (South Africa: 47; African mean: 40; Global mean: 48) was lowered by the responses to the statement "Some state resources were improperly used for campaigning" which scored a mean of 4.2 on 5-point scale (from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).



**The misuse of state resources and corruption of elected officials were major issues in the campaign.**

Having held power since the end of Apartheid in 1994, the ruling ANC has recently been marred by a number of high-profile scandals, including a perception that President Zuma used government resources to advance business deals of friends and family.<sup>31</sup> In particular, a scandal involving the usage of government funds to renovate his estate led to a corruption charge, which, although now dropped, still shook his campaign.<sup>32</sup>

This is what made the prospect of new young voters, who were not alive when the ANC swept to power in South Africa's first truly democratic election, so influential in this election. A generation removed from the ANC's historic role in the end of Apartheid, these new voters could have signaled a change in South Africa's political climate. But only a third of these 1.9 million first-time voters aged 18-19 registered to cast a ballot.<sup>33</sup> When the results came in, voters had given the ANC its fifth electoral victory.

Looking at the results of the PEI survey, South Africa did not achieve the highest score among African countries in any of the eleven PEI sub-dimensions. Yet, it scored rather high across all of them.

The lesson here is that overall electoral integrity is not so much dependent on achieving superlative performance in any single area, but rather on improving the multitude of aspects of elections along the whole electoral cycle.

This may provide lessons to international assistance providers who often focus technical assistance on relatively narrow areas such as biometric voter registration or capacity building for electoral authorities.

Is the most pressing issue of electoral integrity in South Africa the lack of democratic alternation since 1994? Or will corruption and concerns about misuse of government funds remain systemic even with a change in government? Despite new voters and new parties, South Africa's election stayed the course, showcasing a good example of elections with high integrity across most dimensions of the electoral cycle

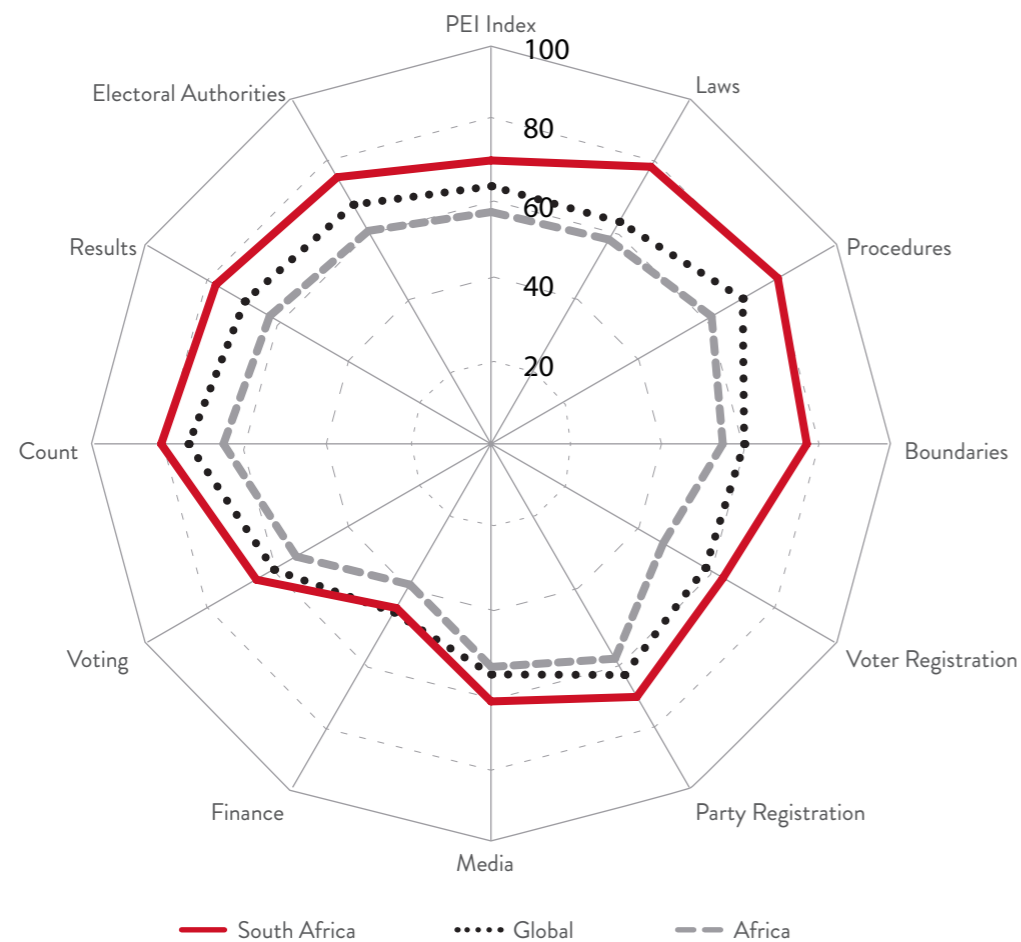


Figure 7: Electoral Integrity in South Africa by PEI sub-dimension

## About Average

Malawi serves as an example of a country in the medium-range of African electoral integrity, doing well in some dimensions and poorly in others. The country ranked 13th in Africa and 79th in the world, with an overall PEI Index of 58.

The 2014 Malawian general elections were Malawi's first 'tripartite elections' - including simultaneous elections for local governments, the national parliament and the presidential office.

The presidential election - decided by a simple plurality of votes for a five-year term<sup>34</sup> - was described by the media as a close race.<sup>35</sup> After the death of President Bingu wa Mutharika in 2012, the presidency was assumed by Vice-President Joyce Banda, who had been expelled from the ruling party in 2010 and since started her own political platform, the People's Party, while remaining in the office of vice-president.<sup>36</sup> The 20 May 2014 presidential election was Banda's chance to be popularly elected to the office of president under the banner of her new party. However, one major issue during the campaign was Banda's involvement in a web of corruption around the President's office known as the 'Cashgate' scandal.<sup>37</sup>



Peter Mutharika (brother of former President Mutharika) of the Democratic Progressive Party won the 2014 race with 36.4% of the vote. Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party came second with 27.8% of the vote, while Banda received 20.2% of the vote.<sup>38</sup> After preliminary results were announced, Banda called for a new vote citing irregularities and fraud. This was protested by the electoral commission and rejected by the country's highest court. Banda accepted the ruling, but the controversy nevertheless set off some riots in the country.<sup>39</sup>

As Figure 8 shows, Malawi scored well above the African average in the PEI sub-dimensions of electoral laws (Malawi: 76; African mean: 59), voting district boundaries (Malawi: 73; African mean: 58), and party/candidate registration (Malawi: 75; African mean: 62). However, other areas were deemed more problematic. These included the voting sub-dimension (Malawi: 49; African mean: 56), which scored below the African average. These results were echoed by delegations from the African Union<sup>40</sup> and the European Union<sup>41</sup> who observed the 2014 election. Their main concerns regarded the structural capacity of the Malawi Electoral Commission. Due to a lack of materials and organization, some polling locations opened late - sometimes not until the afternoon. Often the elections proceeded with ad hoc solutions for missing materials, which made the counting process far more difficult. Election observers reported that the election was largely peaceful, with the exception of riots in some locations in Blantyre, probably due to the late opening of polling stations. The African Union reported the possibility of some materials having been burned by rioters in these areas.<sup>42</sup> Voting in some of these areas was postponed to the next day.

There were also reports of irregularities in the results database of the election.<sup>43</sup> The non-partisan Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN) - a conglomerate of civil society organizations that has observed elections since 2004 - noted that "in about 65 [vote tally] centers, the number of votes cast was higher than the registered number of voters."<sup>44</sup> While the Malawi Electoral Commission intended to conduct a total recount, an extension of the deadline for the release of results to provide time for a recount was not granted by the courts. However, the European Union Observation Mission concluded that the irregularities in the results would not have changed the substantive results of the election. Nevertheless, the results sub-dimension of the PEI survey performed poorly in African comparison (Malawi: 58; African mean: 64).

As in other African countries, political finance remains the biggest problem for electoral integrity in Malawi.

The country achieved a score of only 34 in that sub-dimension, compared to the African mean of 40, and a global mean of 48. The European Union Election Observation Mission noted the "absence of rules for financing of election campaigns and lack of clear and enforceable regulations to prohibit the use of state resources for campaigning."<sup>45</sup> Yet this problem is far from unique to Malawi. Instead, this finding reinforces the point that African elections suffer from the same problems as elections worldwide.

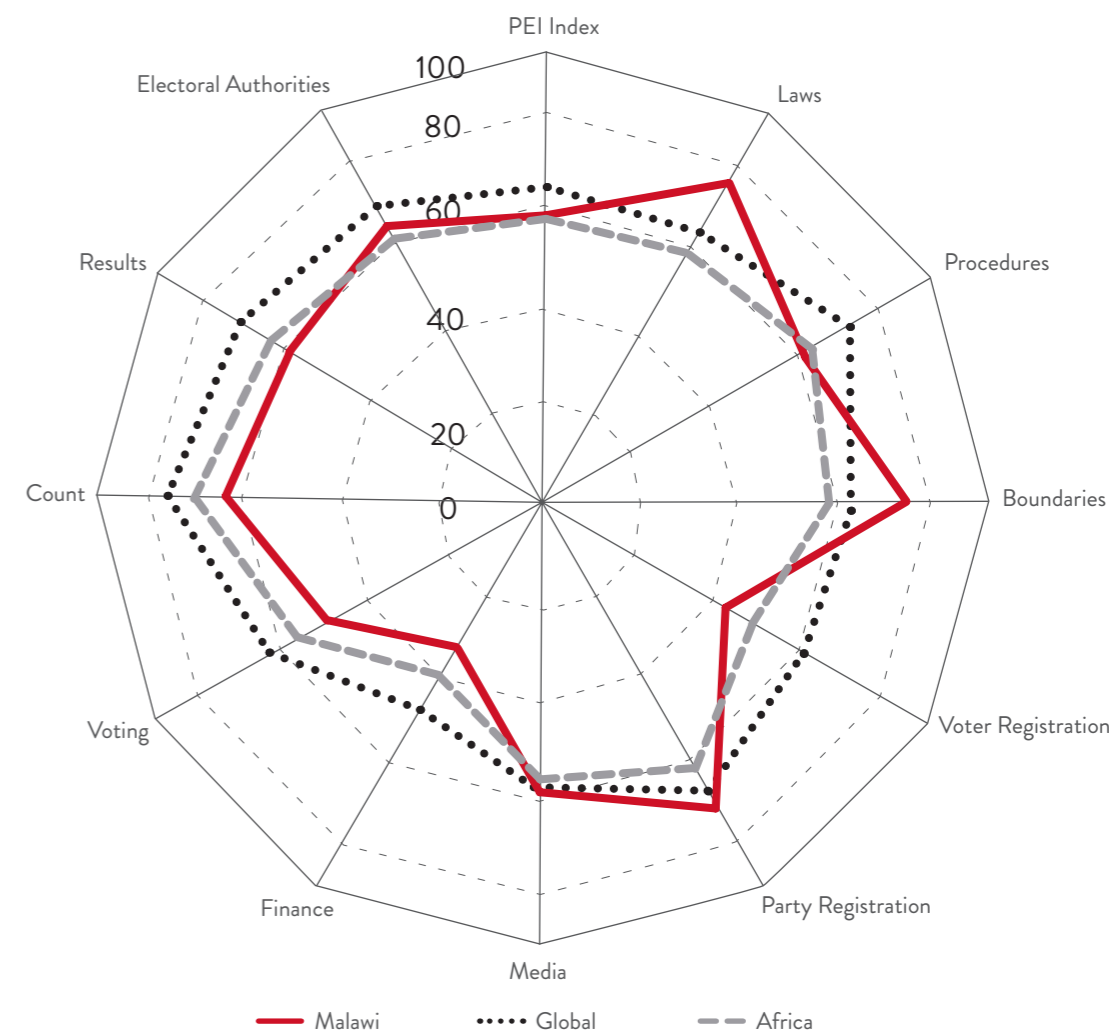


Figure 8: Electoral Integrity in Malawi by PEI sub-dimension

## Below Average

At the lower end of the spectrum of electoral integrity are countries which still struggle with a violent past such as Mozambique. Ranked 25th in Africa and 99th in the world, with an overall PEI Index of 48, this southern African country scores below the African average in all eleven PEI sub-dimensions, as shown in figure 9.

Major issues in the 15 October 2014 general elections were the improvement of living conditions and the fight against corruption. The Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), which waged a 17-year civil war against the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) after independence from Portugal in 1975, began campaigning after almost two years of sporadic clashes between its militiamen and government forces.

**“An agreement to stop the violence gave RENAMO a greater say in overseeing the elections and the right to integrate its fighters into the army”.**<sup>46</sup>

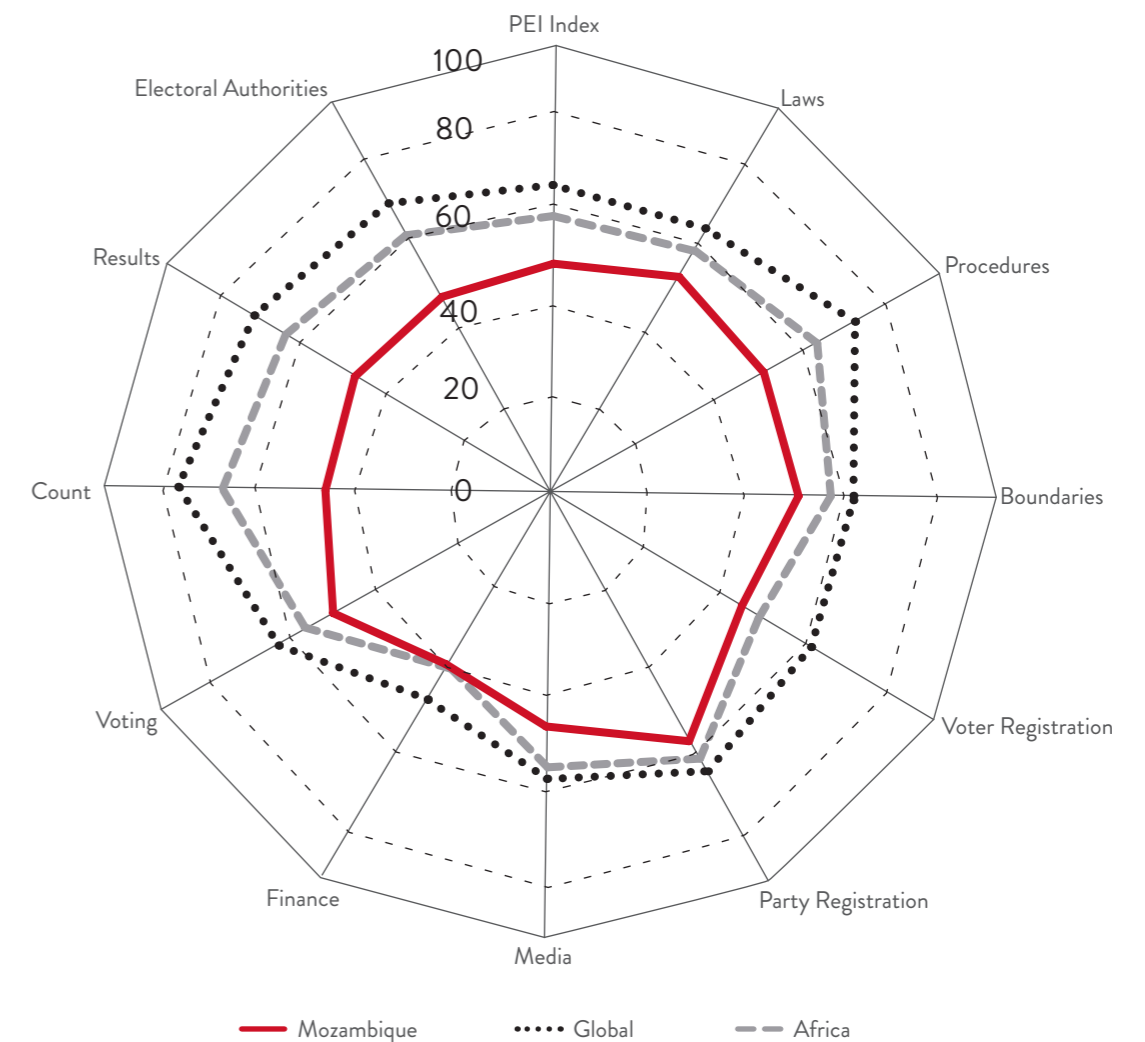


Figure 9: Electoral Integrity in Mozambique by PEI sub-dimension

The election resulted in a victory for the ruling FRELIMO party. Incumbent president Armando Guebuza could not run for a third term as per the Constitution<sup>47</sup>, therefore Filipe Nyusi was appointed as his political successor, while Guebuza - FRELIMO's founding father since the independence war - remained the party leader.<sup>48</sup> Nyusi won with 57% of the vote, while his main challenger, Alfonso Dhlakama (RENAMO), was placed second (36.6%). This could be considered an electoral breakthrough for the opposition compared with only 16% of the vote in the previous 2009 election. David Simango, who left RENAMO and formed the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM), scored third with 6.4% of the vote.<sup>49</sup> FRELIMO lost significant electoral support in 2014 as opposed to the 2009 election, when it won with a landslide victory of 75% of the popular vote. The close race resulted in the rejection of electoral outcomes by the opposition and



accusations of fraud. RENAMO had lost all elections since the end of the country's 16-year civil war in 1992. "We don't accept the results," RENAMO spokesman Antonio Muchanga told the Reuters news agency. "The results should be annulled and new elections held."<sup>50</sup>

African election monitors endorsed the vote as largely peaceful and free.<sup>51</sup> The report of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) gave the election a clean bill of health,<sup>52</sup> but other observer missions were far more critical. The European Union observer mission noted that the "tabulation process, with all the problems registered, and the unbalanced electoral campaign [fell] short to meet the commitments set by the Mozambican electoral legislation and the international conventions subscribed by the country."<sup>53</sup>

### Domestic observers noted unbalanced media coverage by the public media<sup>54</sup> as well as instances of electoral fraud.<sup>55</sup>

As figure 9 shows, Mozambique typifies a transitional country with challenges along the whole electoral cycle. It scored well below the regional average in most PEI sub-dimensions. Electoral laws were found to benefit the ruling party (Mozambique: 52; African mean: 59). In addition, the three sub-dimensions that affect the immediate administration of elections (during voting, counting and results announcement) were all below the regional average and far below the global one. This is interesting insofar as these processes during election day are generally found to be the least problematic ones in global comparison. This is explained by the particularly poor score in the survey item "Some fraudulent votes were cast", in which Mozambique achieved a score of 1.25 (out of 5). Only Equatorial Guinea scored lower on this item with 1 out of 5.

On the other hand, the country performed around the African average in terms of party/candidate registration (Mozambique: 57; African mean: 62) and campaign finance (Mozambique: 40; African mean: 40), which is a rather striking result, given the generally poor score in other dimensions. Indeed, the EU concluded that "the advantage of the ruling party over its adversaries through the use of material and human resources of the state resulted in an uneven playing field".<sup>56</sup>

Mozambique is an example of the uneven relationship between economic development and electoral integrity.

Its GDP per capita is higher than Malawi's (though neither country reaches over 1000 USD). Yet both countries exhibit vastly different levels of electoral integrity – with problems of different degree and at different stages of the electoral cycle.

## Conclusion

The results presented in this report point out that there are some problems in African elections that have to be addressed. However, those problems are no different than those apparent in the rest of the world. Some of these problems are easier to detect than others. For example, limitations on voter registration are normally more visible than problems with campaign finance which, by nature, are more covert. We have been able to detect which are the weakest parts of the cycle components. However, we are still not able to judge which stage of the cycle is the most important in determining the integrity of the election. This is a relevant question for those interested in getting elections right. It is closely related to normative conceptualizations of the function and role of elections. In order to answer this question, more data and more statistically sophisticated methods are necessary.

It is evident that some of those findings have implications for policymakers. However, before offering any, we prefer to be conservative and gather more data. To draw any kind of definitive conclusions about the drivers of electoral integrity, more sophisticated econometric models are necessary. Obviously, as more elections will be held, we will gain more confidence on the results, not only among African countries, but also in the comparison of Africa with the rest of the world.

**The empirical findings of this report can be summarized as follows:**

1.

**The degree of threats to electoral integrity is more severe in Africa when compared to the rest of the world**

2.

**The types of problems in Africa are similar to those found in the rest of the world. Put simply, there is no African electoral exceptionalism**

3.

**The report highlights the fact that elections can fail long before election day, so attention should be paid to the electoral dynamics and institutional quality over the entire election cycle not just election day**

5.

**Difficulties in regulating campaign finance extend across the continent**

6.

**The vote count is consistently the highest rated part of the election cycle**

7.

**Countries with good overall electoral integrity may still perform poorly in certain dimensions of the electoral cycle, on the other hand, low overall performers may excel in certain dimensions**

8.

**Two country case studies of Malawi and Mozambique highlight that countries with similar levels of economic development can have vastly different outcomes of electoral integrity**

4.

**State resources for elections are important, but not determinant**

**APPENDIX**

TABLE A1: PEI SURVEY QUESTIONS

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

Note: Direction of the original items P=positive, N=negative.

TABLE A2: LIST OF COUNTRIES AND ELECTIONS

Country	Office	Date	PEI Index
Tunisia	Both	7-Dec-14 & 26-Oct-14	74
Mauritius	Legislative	10-Dec-14	71
Rwanda	Legislative	16-Sep-13	71
South Africa	Legislative	7-May-14	70
Namibia	Presidential	28-Nov-14	69
Sao Tome & Principe	Legislative	12-Oct-14	67
Botswana	Legislative	24-Oct-14	66
Ghana	Presidential	7-Dec-12	66
Sierra Leone	Presidential	17-Nov-12	65
Cameroon	Legislative	30-Sep-13	64
Guinea-Bissau	Presidential	18-May-14	63
Mali	Presidential	11-Aug-13	62
Malawi	Presidential	20-May-14	58
Swaziland	Legislative	20-Sep-13	56
Mauritania	Both	21-Jun-14 & 21-Dec-13	55
Guinea	Legislative	28-Sep-13	55
Algeria	Presidential	17-Apr-14	55
Kenya	Presidential	4-Mar-13	53
Burkina Faso	Legislative	2-Dec-12	53
Madagascar	Presidential	20-Dec-13	52
Togo	Legislative	25-Jul-13	50
Egypt	Presidential	26-May-14	48
Zimbabwe	Legislative	31-Jul-13	48
Angola	Legislative	31-Aug-12	48
Mozambique	Presidential	15-Oct-14	48
Congo, Rep.	Legislative	5-Aug-12	45
Djibouti	Legislative	22-Feb-13	40
Equatorial Guinea	Legislative	26-May-13	39

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