



The Electoral Integrity Project
Why Elections Fail And What We Can Do About It

Electoral Integrity in the 2018 American Elections

PEI-US-2018

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I: Overview

Ever since the events in the 2000 US presidential elections in Florida, America has seen growing partisan polarization over basic electoral procedures and voting rights. A long series of vulnerabilities in the conduct of U.S. elections has been widely documented, for example in the 2014 report of the bipartisan [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#). The [Pew Center's Election Performance Index](#) has repeatedly highlighted uneven standards across U.S. states. The [2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections](#) found that voters reported that the Election Day experience often went smoothly, but voter identification laws were unevenly implemented within states, and 12% of voters - or around 16 million Americans- encountered at least one problem in the 2016 election.¹

Like its predecessors, before polling day, the 2018 U.S. midterm contest saw concern before polling day about many issues in American elections.² Campaign commentary focused on the potential problems of misinformation campaigns, cybersecurity threats, and fake news experienced in 2016. Republicans expressed apprehension about the potential risks of voter fraud, while Democrats highlighted the dangers of the suppression of voting rights and gerrymandered boundaries. Technical issues arose in Florida, delaying the final announcement of the results, arising from faulty equipment in Palm Beach County and a ballot design flaw in Broward County. Above all, political concern and media discussions focused upon the Mueller report investigating threats from Russian hacking into the Democratic National party email server, and their misinformation campaign using social media, resulting in indictments against 26 Russians.³ Given the centrality of elections to liberal democracy, not surprisingly, doubts about the integrity of US elections serve to undermine general satisfaction with how democracy works.⁴ Public confidence in the honesty of American elections in Gallup polls fell from 40% in 2015 to 30% in 2016.⁵

By contrast to 2016, against this backdrop, the 2018 midterm elections saw several positive signs, including record [levels of turnout](#), and the return of [record numbers of Democratic women and minorities to Congress](#). Women activists were also highly engaged in local campaigns during the 2018 electoral cycle. Overall, the Democrats regained control of the House while the Republicans retained the Senate with a bare majority. National security officials expressed fears that America remained vulnerable to a repeated foreign cybersecurity attack on the American voting system.⁶ In 2018 Congress appropriated [\\$380 million to help states improve election cybersecurity](#) and the [Department of Homeland Security](#) worked with many state and local electoral officials to tighten defences. In fact, however, the [DoJ and DHS reported](#) that there were no reported cases of foreign interference in official voting records in 2018, and the White House has downplayed potential threats to the 2020 contest. During the election, [Facebook](#) monitored, and blocked, accounts suspected to be linked with foreign entities, especially the Russian-based Internet Research Agency. [The Pew Research Center](#) reported that after the 2018 election, most voters had positive views about the mid-term elections, saying that it was 'very easy' to vote, and confidence in election security improved.

What is the evidence about the integrity of the contest in the 2018 mid-term U.S. elections? How do American states vary in the performance of their elections? And have American elections got better – or worse – over time?

To address these questions, the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP), an independent academic project based at Harvard and Sydney Universities, gathered expert perceptions of electoral integrity for PEI-US-2018. The project has conducted expert surveys of [Perceptions of Electoral Integrity](#) for the last eight years to evaluate the quality of parliamentary and presidential elections around the world, including during US elections. This technique is commonly used for evaluating performance in the absence of directly observable indicators. It is similar to the methods employed for the [Perception of Corruption Index](#) by Transparency international. PEI-US-2018 was conducted by Pippa Norris (Universities of Sydney and Harvard), Holly Ann Garnett (Royal Military College of Canada), and Max Grömping (University of Heidelberg) for the Electoral Integrity Project. This report highlights the key findings of the PEI-US-2018 dataset and suggests areas for further analysis by scholars and policymakers.

II: Methods

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of ‘electoral integrity’ refers to international standards and global norms governing the appropriate conduct of elections. ‘*Electoral Integrity*’ refers to international standards and global norms governing the appropriate conduct of elections during the pre-election period, the campaign, polling day and its aftermath. 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 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the African Union (AU), and by member states in the United Nations. Following endorsement, these standards apply universally to all countries throughout the electoral cycle, including during the pre-electoral period, the campaign, on polling day, and in its aftermath.

MEASUREMENT

The empirical evidence is gathered from rolling expert surveys gauging Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) globally since 2012, and across US states (previously in 2014 and 2016). The EIP has also conducted similar sub-national surveys in Mexico, Russia, India, and the United Kingdom. To operationalize the core notion, the PEI survey asks experts to evaluate elections using 49 indicators, grouped into eleven categories reflecting the whole electoral cycle. The dataset also includes a 100-point PEI Index based on summing all 49 indicators. The PEI index provides one way to summarize the overall integrity of the election. Alternatively, analysts can examine indices for each of the eleven dimensions, or they can use the disaggregated scores for each of the 49 individual indicators. In this way, data can be re-aggregated flexibly to construct any measure which is preferred conceptually. The PEI dataset is designed to provide a comprehensive, systematic and reliable way to monitor the perceived quality of elections. Additional rotating batteries of items are asked to gauge emerging problems in specific contests.

There are many ways to define an election expert. In this survey, an expert is defined as a political scientist based at a university in the United States, who has published on (or who has other demonstrated knowledge of) the electoral process in America. Specifically, demonstrated knowledge is defined by the following criteria: (1) membership of a relevant research group, professional network, or organized section of such a group (such as ‘Elections, Public Opinion and Voting Behavior’ (EPOVB) at the American Political Science Association (APSA)); (2) existing publications on electoral or other country-specific topics in books, academic journals, or conference papers; and (3) employment at a university or college as a teacher in the state. At least twenty experts were contacted for each US state. Respondents were initially contacted two weeks after the US mid-term elections of Nov 6th, 2018. Three reminders were sent. Respondents completed an online questionnaire lasting approximately 12 minutes. The questionnaire is listed in the technical appendix, Table A1. For PEI-US-2018, the Electoral Integrity Project gathered evaluations from 574 experts.

INTERPRETING THE DATA

Given the limited number of respondents in each state, small differences in PEI scores between any two states should be treated with considerable caution. Confidence Intervals are provided in Technical Appendix Table A2 to indicate the range around the mean. It is more useful to look at the overall distribution as well as the more substantial contrasts dividing the states ranked at the top and bottom of the PEI Index and sub-indices. Moreover, the EIP makes no claims about rating democracy; the EIP measures electoral integrity, which is far from equivalent. Liberal democracies require effective elections, but also many other institutions which facilitate competition and participation.

MORE INFORMATION

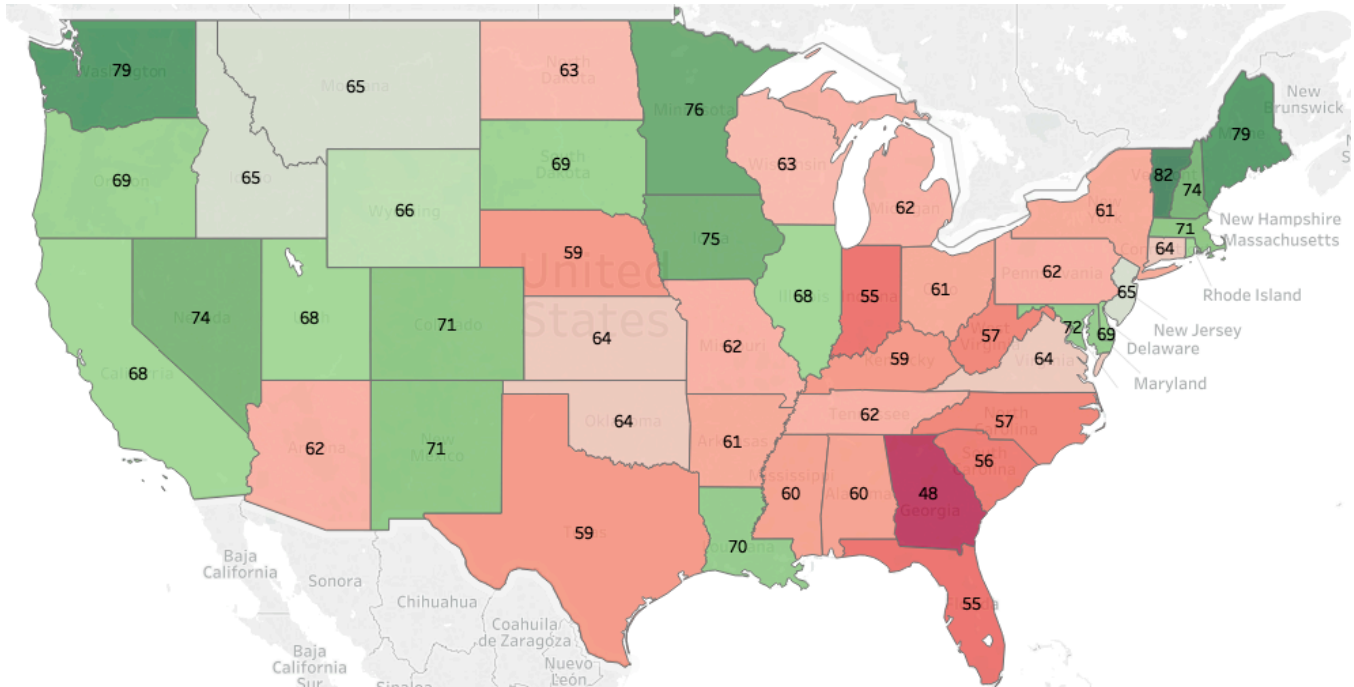
The dataset, codebook, and questionnaire are available for download at:

<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/PEI>.

III: Results:

Figure 1 maps how experts evaluated the 2018 election across all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. The U.S. states which experts rated most highly in electoral integrity were Vermont, Washington, Maine, Minnesota and Iowa. By contrast, states scoring worst in the perceptions of electoral integrity index in this election were Alabama (ranked last), followed by Alaska, Arizona, and Arkansas.

FIGURE 1: THE PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY INDEX 2018 BY US STATE



Note: The map shows the mean for each state in the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index, with imputed values, and the scale ranging from 0-100. **Source:** The Electoral Integrity Project PEI-US 2018 www.electoralintegrityproject.com

What changed in evaluations from 2016 to 2018 – which states improved, and which fell, according to the experts? Table 1 shows the differences between the PEI index in 2016 and 2018. Figure 2 illustrates this graphically.

Overall many states saw improvements in their performance scores, including Nevada, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. Some states experienced a sharp fall in their PEI index from 2016-18, however; Georgia had the worst drop, according to the experts, followed by Idaho and West Virginia.⁷ It is also important to be very cautious when interpreting absolute rankings, however, since the differences in mean scores between states were often relatively modest. What is more, the number of responses was limited in some states, such as Wyoming, Washington and Kentucky, generating large confidence intervals.

States can also be categorized to summarize the key changes in their electoral performance from 2016 to 2018. The categories of electoral integrity provide a more reliable guide than the absolute score. The results show positive news: the number of states with ‘moderate’ levels of integrity was halved from 16 to 8. By contrast, the number of states categorized with ‘high’ (+4) and ‘very high’ (+3) integrity both improved.

TABLE 1: CHANGE IN THE STATE PEI INDEX AND STATE RANKING, 2016-2018

State	PEI index of electoral integrity		Rank of state		Change in rank	Type of integrity	
	2016	2018	2016	2018		2016	2018
Vermont	75	83	1	1	↔	Very High	Very High
Washington	72	79	7	2	↑	Very High	Very High
Maine	72	79	6	3	↑	Very High	Very High
Minnesota	69	76	13	4	↑	High	Very High
Iowa	73	75	4	5	↓	Very High	Very High
New Hampshire	73	74	3	6	↓	Very High	Very High
Nevada	62	74	34	7	↑	High	Very High
District of Columbia	67	72	19	8	↑	High	Very High
Massachusetts	67	72	17	9	↑	High	Very High
New Mexico	73	71	5	10	↓	Very High	Very High
Colorado	71	71	10	11	↓	Very High	Very High
Maryland	70	71	11	12	↓	High	Very High
Louisiana	71	71	9	13	↓	Very High	Very High
Oregon	69	70	12	14	↓	High	High
Delaware	68	70	14	15	↓	High	High
South Dakota	62	69	32	16	↑	High	High
Illinois	64	69	25	17	↑	High	High
California	65	68	23	18	↑	High	High
Utah	65	68	24	19	↑	High	High
Rhode Island	57	68	44	20	↑	Moderate	High
Hawai'i	72	66	8	21	↓	Very High	High
Wyoming	67	66	18	22	↓	High	High
New Jersey	63	66	27	23	↑	High	High
Idaho	73	66	2	24	↓	Very High	High
Montana	67	65	16	25	↓	High	High
Virginia	60	65	36	26	↑	Moderate	High
Connecticut	68	65	15	27	↓	High	High
Kansas	62	65	33	28	↑	High	High
Oklahoma	55	64	48	29	↑	Moderate	High
Alaska	66	64	21	30	↓	High	High
Wisconsin	54	63	50	31	↑	Moderate	High
North Dakota	63	63	30	32	↓	High	High
Missouri	64	63	26	33	↓	High	High
Michigan	57	63	41	34	↑	Moderate	High
Tennessee	55	62	49	35	↑	Moderate	High
Arizona	53	62	51	36	↑	Moderate	High
Pennsylvania	56	62	45	37	↑	Moderate	High
Arkansas	63	62	28	38	↓	High	High
Ohio	57	62	42	39	↑	Moderate	High
New York	61	61	35	40	↓	High	High
Mississippi	56	61	47	41	↑	Moderate	High
Alabama	58	61	40	42	↓	Moderate	High
Kentucky	62	60	31	43	↓	High	Moderate
Nebraska	66	60	22	44	↓	High	Moderate
Texas	59	60	37	45	↓	Moderate	Moderate
North Carolina	58	58	39	46	↓	Moderate	Moderate
West Virginia	66	58	20	47	↓	High	Moderate
South Carolina	56	56	46	48	↓	Moderate	Moderate
Indiana	63	56	29	49	↓	High	Moderate
Florida	58	55	38	50	↓	Moderate	Moderate
Georgia	57	49	43	51	↓	Moderate	Low
Total	64	66	51	51			

Source: The Electoral Integrity Project PEI-US-2018 www.electoralintegrityproject.com

FIGURE 2: CHANGES IN THE PEI INDEX 2016-2018.



Notes: States above the line improved in the PEI Index, compared with 2016. States below the line performed worse than in 2016. **Source:** The Electoral Integrity Project PEI-US-2018 www.electoralintegrityproject.com

FIGURE 3: SUMMARY OF STATES BY LEVELS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

	Low integrity (40-49)	Moderate integrity (50-59)	High integrity (60-69)	Very High integrity (70 or more)	Totals
# of states					
2016	0	16	25	10	51
2018	1	8	29	13	51
Total	1	24	54	23	102
Percentages					
2016	0%	31%	49%	20%	100%
2018	2%	16%	57%	26%	100%
Total	1%	24%	53%	23%	100%

PROBLEMS IN AMERICAN ELECTIONS

The overall PEI Index is useful for broad comparisons, but this does not tell us which specific problems may have been more prevalent or when and where they occur. It is important to examine the sequential steps of the electoral cycle. Casting a ballot on election day and tabulating the results are only the last stages in a complex and ongoing process, best conceptualized as a continuous cycle, starting anew immediately after the end of an election.

According to a common definition by the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, the following elements are involved in this electoral cycle: “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.”⁸ The election cycle is a useful way to summarize all the different elements involved in holding an election. Corresponding to the eleven stages of the electoral cycle, Figure 4 illustrates how experts evaluated state performance across 11 sub-dimensions of electoral integrity in the 2016 and 2018 U.S. elections. Scores are averaged across all 50 states plus the District of Columbia.

FIGURE 4: DIMENSIONS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY, AVERAGED ACROSS US STATES, 2016-2018

	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
2016	64	47	79	33	56	75	53	53	69	79	65	73
2018	66	47	77	37	58	77	60	54	69	79	79	73
Change	2	0	-3	4	2	2	7	1	0	-1	14	0

Note: Mean score calculated from state-level data (N=51)

Source: The Electoral Integrity Project PEI-US-2016 and 2018 (www.electoralintegrityproject.com)

The stages of the process with the cleanest bills of health across all the states in 2018, according to experts, include the electoral procedures, party and candidate registration, the vote count, and the announcement of the results. Greater areas of weaknesses in 2018, in experts’ judgments, include district boundaries, followed by state electoral laws, and the issue of campaign finance. Comparing changes in performance ratings between the two contests, most evaluations of the 2018 campaign saw slight improvements, and the greatest gains concerned the announcement of the results and the media coverage of the campaign.

What is driving state performance? Party polarization is clearly one of the factors which is most important in debates about electoral integrity, with Democrats emphasizing the importance of voting rights, balloting facilities, electoral security, and gerrymandered district boundaries, while Republicans contend that mitigating risks to voter fraud are critical for maintaining public confidence in the electoral process.

One way to see whether these partisan debates influence political practices is to compare the performance on the dimensions of electoral integrity of states where each party controls the State House, Senate and governorship. As Table 2 shows, the states where Republicans controlled the House, or the Senate or the Governor’s mansion were all ones rated more poorly in electoral integrity, especially on district boundaries, electoral procedures and electoral laws.

TABLE 2: STATE PERFORMANCE BY PARTY CONTROL

	PEI index	Electoral laws	Electoral procedure	District boundaries	Voter registration	Party and candidate	Media coverage	Campaign finance	Voting process	Vote count	Results	Electoral authorities
Democrat House	69	57	84	45	63	79	59	57	72	82	72	80
Republican House	62	41	75	30	54	74	55	51	67	78	72	70
Difference	7	16	10	15	9	5	3	6	5	4	0	11
Democrat Senate	70	57	85	46	63	79	59	57	72	82	72	81
Republican Senate	62	41	74	29	54	74	55	51	67	77	72	69
Difference	7	16	10	17	9	5	4	7	5	5	1	11
Democrat Governor	67	51	81	40	61	78	58	55	71	81	71	77
Republican Governor	64	44	77	31	55	74	56	52	68	78	73	71
Independent Governor	65	56	78	51	48	82	52	49	71	74	67	68
Difference	4	7	4	9	6	3	2	3	4	2	-1	6

Note: US State Houses are classified by party control

Source: The Electoral Integrity Project PEI-US-2016 and 2018 (www.electoralintegrityproject.com)

MAJOR CHALLENGES TO ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN THE UNITED STATES

Delving deeper into the results disaggregated by state and PEI sub-dimension, Table 3 depicts how dimensions in each state were evaluated well or poorly. Substantial contrasts can be observed, ranging from an absolute minimum score for district boundaries in Ohio to a high score for both electoral procedures in Idaho, and party registration in Washington.

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Experts judged the most problematic issues of electoral integrity in America concerned district boundaries. The issue of partisan gerrymandering has also been consistently rated as the weakest aspect of U.S. voting procedures in the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity global survey.⁹ Partisan gerrymandering either silences minority voices or entrenches one party legislative majority status even when it receives a minority of votes.¹⁰ Extreme partisan gerrymandering combined with primaries ensures that representatives are returned time and again based on mobilizing the faithful, without having to appeal more broadly to constituents across the aisle, thus potentially exacerbating the bitter partisanship which plagues contemporary American politics. In the PEI sub-dimension of 'district boundaries' North Carolina and Ohio ranked lowest, both cases where redistricting litigation is under review by the courts, with North Carolina and Indiana next worst.¹¹ By contrast, this stage was most positive in Iowa and Vermont.

ELECTION LAWS

The issue of voter suppression has been a major issue for debate where some new laws, focusing on voter identification and polling facilities, can be seen as suppressing the right of legitimate citizen voters to participate. Republican commentators, on the other hand, respond that election laws are needed to eliminate the risks of voter fraud.¹² Several reforms to state electoral laws were litigated in the run up to the 2018 campaign.¹³ The score on 'election laws' was lowest in Wisconsin and Georgia. The legal framework was seen by experts as the second-worst aspect of election conduct overall in the US, after gerrymandered district boundaries.

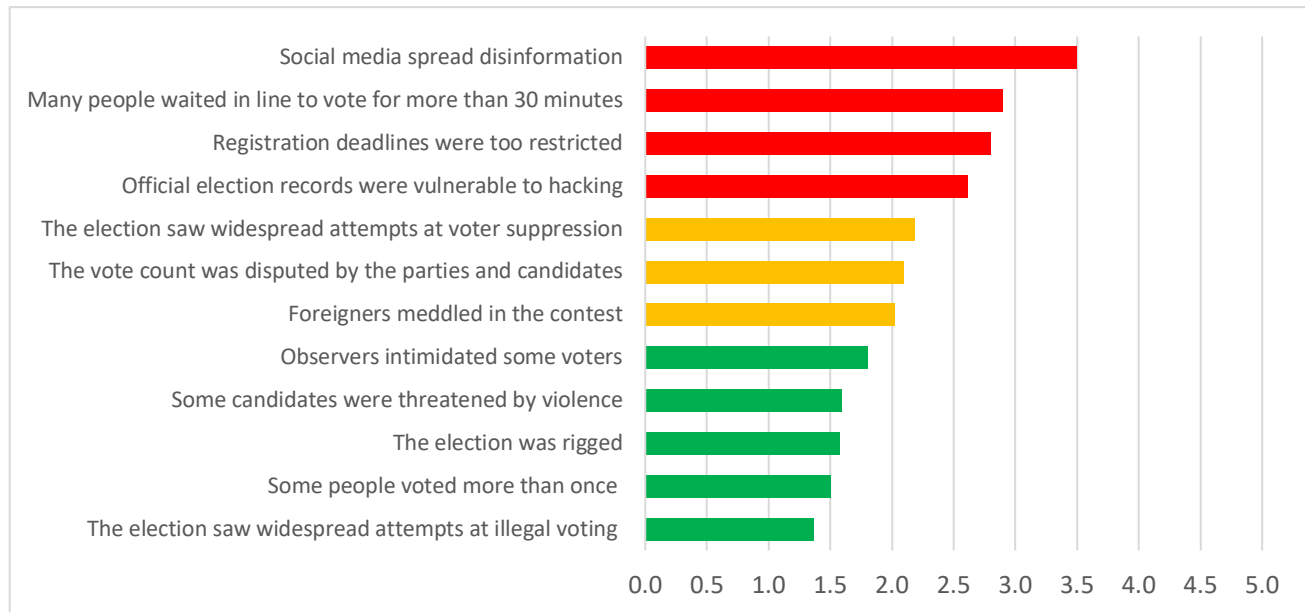
CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The need to reform the role of money in politics has been highlighted over successive campaigns but there is no consensus or political will on the way to address the role of money in US politics. Particularly, there is disagreement about the degree of state regulation of campaign financing practices, with the US being in the middling range of state intervention, and in the lower third of campaign finance scores, in global comparison.¹⁴ This dimension is uniformly problematic, however, with the exception of several states performing relatively well, such as Vermont, Maine and Minnesota.

MISINFORMATION, MALADMINISTRATION, AND CYBERSECURITY

Finally, PEI-US-2018 added a special rotating battery of items to gather new information on several concerns arising in recent years. Experts were asked to assess how commonly these problems occurred in the elections in their state, using a scale from never or rarely (0) to frequently (5). The results in Table 4 show that some of the most extreme fears were not realized. The problem which experts thought most common concerned the role of social media like Facebook and Twitter in spreading misinformation and disinformation, an issue widely discussed in the media.¹⁵ Experts also called attention to problems from long lines to vote in polling places, restricted registration deadlines and the vulnerability of official election records to hacking. Expert rated other problems as far less common (rated below 2.5) including attempts at voter suppression and partisan vote disputes. The risks of foreigners meddling in the election were also regarded as a moderate concern, again reflecting the reports of the security services and DHS following the 2018 election. Other issues alleged to be widespread were seen by experts as uncommon, such as attempts at illegal voting, repeated voting and rigged elections.

FIGURE 5: EXPERT ASSESSMENTS OF THE FREQUENCY OF PROBLEMS OCCURRING IN THE 2018 ELECTIONS



Source: The Electoral Integrity Project PEI-US- 2018 (www.electoralintegrityproject.com)

Therefore, overall experts saw a positive improvement in the performance of the 2018 US mid-term elections, compared with the 2016 presidential contest. Yet despite important gains, states showed an uneven performance. Without a comprehensive program addressing underlying vulnerabilities and structural weaknesses, which strikes a balance between the values of inclusion and security, it remains unclear whether any progress will be sustained in the 2020 contest.

TABLE 3: PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY BY SUB-INDEX, US STATES 2018

State	PEI index	Electoral laws	Electoral procedures	Voting boundaries	Voter registration	Party and candidate registration	Media coverage	Campaign finance	Voting process	Vote count	Results	Electoral authorities	State Rank
Vermont	83	87	93	83	70	82	72	76	77	92	93	91	1
Washington	79	71	91	58	73	98	65	58	83	89	84	94	2
Maine	79	83	91	67	71	92	73	71	78	84	66	92	3
Minnesota	76	69	88	54	69	85	69	70	74	87	82	84	4
Iowa	75	53	91	90	65	87	71	70	77	85	77	77	5
New Hampshire	74	47	88	52	58	83	65	67	76	83	89	90	6
Nevada	74	64	89	65	73	82	63	57	70	89	79	85	7
District of Columbia	72	64	85	65	66	86	64	67	71	82	87	77	8
Massachusetts	72	59	92	41	67	80	60	60	71	84	86	78	9
New Mexico	71	64	97	49	61	86	59	52	73	79	72	85	10
Colorado	71	60	72	53	79	77	62	66	66	83	80	85	11
Maryland	71	60	86	29	62	80	61	63	76	81	84	76	12
Louisiana	71	57	86	31	71	83	61	57	65	83	93	83	13
Oregon	70	43	89	40	76	77	55	56	77	78	79	83	14
Delaware	70	63	81	47	67	78	54	54	72	77	85	81	15
South Dakota	69	50	84	48	55	76	66	53	75	83	82	73	16
Illinois	69	51	82	21	60	81	67	49	74	82	83	76	17
California	68	54	84	57	56	77	59	55	73	76	77	80	18
Utah	68	59	79	27	56	77	63	63	72	76	83	74	19
Rhode Island	68	37	89	19	52	76	55	55	71	87	89	91	20
Hawai'i	66	44	69	64	59	82	64	47	74	72	73	67	21
Wyoming	66	50	78	55	55	70	48	53	66	80	89	78	22
New Jersey	66	54	84	30	56	67	58	57	70	81	74	75	23
Idaho	66	48	81	40	60	66	53	52	66	86	79	77	24
Montana	65	41	81	35	67	74	59	46	76	74	76	69	25
Virginia	65	32	78	20	56	74	60	58	71	81	83	69	26
Connecticut	65	57	68	51	56	79	55	56	66	76	84	72	27
Kansas	65	40	64	29	50	75	62	59	71	75	87	70	28
Oklahoma	64	42	75	25	63	78	54	53	65	80	79	70	29

State	PEI index	Electoral laws	Electoral procedures	Voting boundaries	Voter registration	Party and candidate registration	Media coverage	Campaign finance	Voting process	Vote count	Results	Electoral authorities	State Rank
Alaska	64	56	75	50	36	83	55	45	68	77	65	73	30
Wisconsin	63	22	71	3	54	78	65	48	71	79	85	82	31
North Dakota	63	40	68	53	60	73	50	51	68	78	83	59	32
Missouri	63	41	75	27	57	79	60	52	66	78	84	66	33
Michigan	63	35	78	17	64	82	65	53	71	79	75	67	34
Tennessee	62	50	71	26	48	73	60	54	61	75	80	70	35
Arizona	62	26	74	34	68	63	60	50	68	74	80	67	36
Pennsylvania	62	38	76	40	53	75	58	49	64	78	77	69	37
Arkansas	62	53	58	33	56	85	53	45	57	79	87	63	38
Ohio	62	33	78	4	52	73	59	48	70	78	82	65	39
New York	61	45	75	34	55	67	57	46	62	76	75	66	40
Mississippi	61	27	63	31	47	69	60	54	67	76	84	63	41
Alabama	61	32	76	19	55	71	47	50	60	84	86	68	42
Kentucky	60	46	59	17	58	63	55	52	65	75	82	65	43
Nebraska	60	38	71	19	56	67	53	46	63	75	79	69	44
Texas	60	32	69	19	44	79	59	50	63	78	77	67	45
North Carolina	58	29	61	6	54	72	71	48	64	72	58	66	46
West Virginia	58	36	67	35	43	68	59	35	63	70	80	62	47
South Carolina	56	41	74	14	47	70	47	38	54	70	84	68	48
Indiana	56	25	60	9	47	68	54	43	64	73	75	61	49
Florida	55	30	58	28	51	75	60	46	64	61	53	55	50
Georgia	49	23	38	18	37	67	62	49	62	58	50	33	51
Total	66	47	77	37	58	77	60	54	69	79	79	73	26

Source: The Electoral Integrity Project PEI-US 2018 www.electoralintegrityproject.com

IV: Technical Appendix

Aims: To gather new evidence on electoral integrity worldwide, on 1st July 2012 the Electoral Integrity Project launched an expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity. The first PEI-US-2014 survey gathered expert perceptions of electoral integrity in a sample of 21 states and all 50 states and DC were covered in subsequent surveys in 2016 and 2018. Similar state-level surveys have also been conducted in several other countries, such as Mexico, Russia, India, and the United Kingdom.

Respondents: For each US state, the project identified a minimum of election experts, defined as a political scientist based at a US university, who had demonstrated knowledge of the electoral process (such as through publications, membership of a relevant research group or network, or university employment). Experts were asked to complete an online survey. In total, 574 completed responses were received in the survey, representing a response rate 17%, although this varied by state (see Table A2).

Concepts and Measurement: The idea of electoral integrity is defined by the project to refer to agreed international conventions and global norms, applying universally to all countries worldwide through the election cycle, including during the pre-election period, the campaign, on polling day, and its aftermath.¹⁶ To measure this concept, the PEI survey questionnaire includes 49 items on electoral integrity (see Table A1) ranging over the whole electoral cycle. These items fell into eleven sequential sub-dimensions. Most attention in detecting fraud focuses upon the final stages of the voting process, such as the role of observers in preventing ballot-stuffing, vote-rigging and manipulated results. Drawing upon the notion of a 'menu of manipulation',¹⁷ however, the concept of an electoral cycle suggests that failure in even one step in the sequence, or one link in the chain, can undermine electoral integrity. The electoral integrity items in the survey were recoded, where a higher score consistently represents a more positive evaluation. Missing data was estimated based on multiple imputation of chained equations in groups composing of the eleven sub-dimensions. The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) Index is then an additive function of the 49 imputed variables, standardized to 100-points. Sub-indices of the eleven sub-dimensions in the electoral cycle are summations of the imputed individual variables.¹⁸ The mean scores and confidence intervals are presented in Table A2.

Validity and reliability tests: The results of the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index may be used for validity tests. These data were tested for external validity (with independent sources of evidence), internal validity (consistency within the group of experts), and legitimacy (how far the results can be regarded as authoritative by stakeholders). The analysis, presented elsewhere, demonstrates substantial external validity when the PEI data is compared with many other expert datasets, as well as internal validity across the experts within the survey, and legitimacy as measured by levels of congruence between mass and expert opinions within each country.¹⁹ For *external* validity tests, the cross-national 2016 PEI Index was significantly correlated with other standard independent indicators contained in the 2016 version of the Quality of Government cross-national dataset. This includes the combined Freedom House/imputed Polity measure of democratization ($R=.762^{**}$, $N. 151$), and the Varieties of Democracy measure of electoral democracy (polyarchy) ($R=.824^{**}$, $N.140$).²⁰ For *internal* validity purposes, several tests were run on the cross-national PEI using OLS regression models to predict whether the PEI index varied significantly by several social and demographic characteristics of the experts, including sex, age, education, domestic and international institutional location, and familiarity with the election. The additive procedure of calculating the overall PEI Index variable has a very high reliability (Cronbach alpha= 0.9203) and the obtained scale is very strongly correlated ($R= 0.9873^{*}$) with the first underlying dimension extracted with Principal Component Analysis. The PEI-US-2018 Codebook provides detailed description of all variables and imputation procedures. A copy and all the data is available from: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/PEI>

TABLE A1: PEI SURVEY QUESTIONS

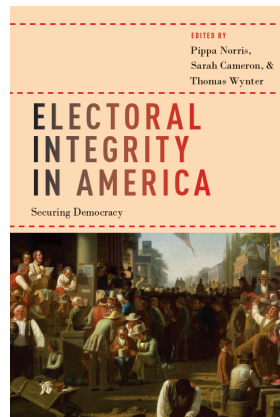
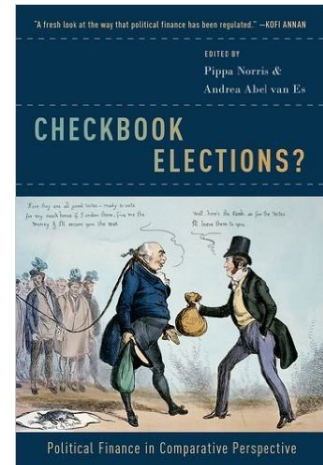
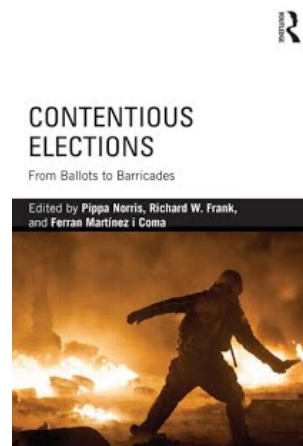
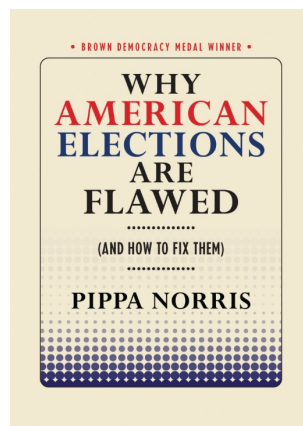
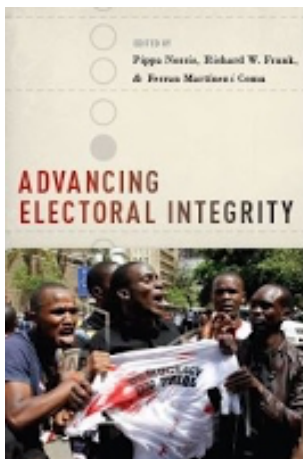
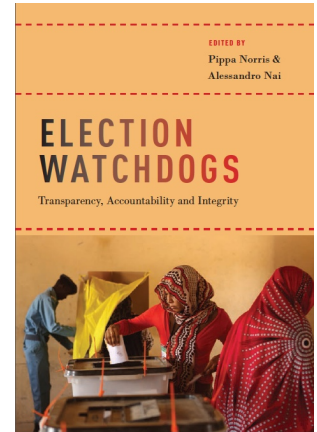
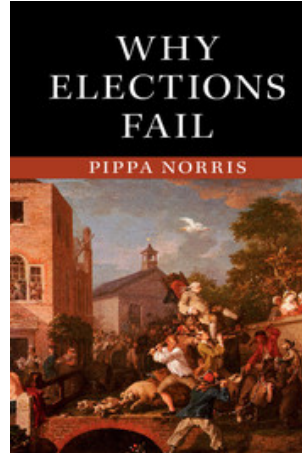
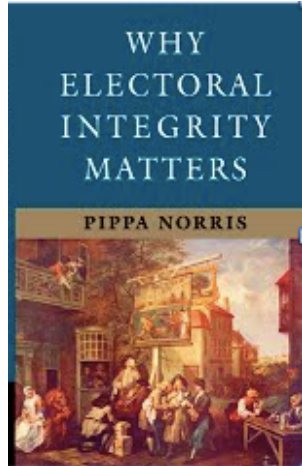
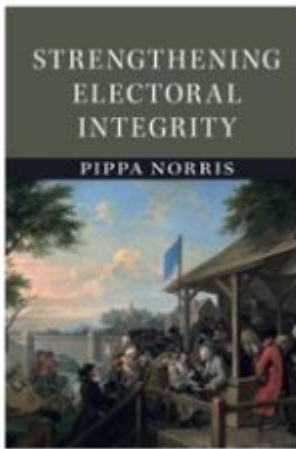
	Sections	Performance indicators	Direction
PRE-ELECTION	1. Electoral laws	1-1 Electoral laws were unfair to smaller parties	N
		1-2 Electoral laws favored the governing party or parties	N
		1-3 Election laws restricted citizens' rights	N
	2. Electoral procedures	2-1 Elections were well managed	P
		2-2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

Note: Direction of the original items P=positive, N=negative. Full questionnaire from: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/YXUV3W>

Table A2: Mean and confidence intervals by state

State	PEI index imputed	PEI Index (imputed), low ci	PEI Index (imputed), high ci	PEI expert responses, by state	PEI response rate, by state
Alabama	61	56	66	10	29%
Alaska	64	40	87	3	15%
Arizona	62	56	68	7	19%
Arkansas	62	56	67	4	20%
California	68	66	71	66	15%
Colorado	71	67	75	6	11%
Connecticut	65	57	73	12	12%
Delaware	70	61	78	4	13%
DC	72	67	78	11	8%
Florida	55	51	59	16	13%
Georgia	49	44	53	14	16%
Hawai'i	66	61	72	6	17%
Idaho	66	59	72	5	25%
Illinois	69	66	71	24	12%
Indiana	56	52	59	16	15%
Iowa	75	71	80	9	27%
Kansas	65	58	71	6	15%
Kentucky	60	53	67	2	9%
Louisiana	71	64	77	5	12%
Maine	79	76	82	14	37%
Maryland	71	67	75	10	11%
Massachusetts	72	69	75	20	9%
Michigan	63	60	66	15	12%
Minnesota	76	73	79	11	21%
Mississippi	61	53	69	4	20%
Missouri	63	56	70	13	20%
Montana	65	62	69	9	23%
Nebraska	60	54	66	7	16%
Nevada	74	71	77	5	26%
New Hampshire	74	65	83	5	22%
New Jersey	66	62	69	9	7%
New Mexico	71	69	74	6	16%
New York	61	58	64	40	11%
North Carolina	58	53	62	22	20%
North Dakota	63	55	71	5	17%
Ohio	62	59	64	19	18%
Oklahoma	64	60	68	6	15%
Oregon	70	65	74	7	25%
Pennsylvania	62	58	66	20	11%
Rhode Island	68	63	73	4	15%
South Carolina	56	51	62	9	23%
South Dakota	69	64	75	7	18%
Tennessee	62	55	70	8	17%
Texas	60	56	64	27	12%
Utah	68	63	73	11	28%
Vermont	83	78	88	5	25%
Virginia	65	62	68	13	11%
Washington	79	74	85	2	4%
West Virginia	58	53	63	7	23%
Wisconsin	63	57	69	6	8%
Wyoming	66	41	91	2	10%
Total	66	60	72	574	17%

V: Selected EIP publications



More details are available at: www.electoralintegrityproject.com

VI: Notes and References

The dataset and report would not have been possible without the contribution of all the experts who kindly spent time and effort in responding to our requests for information. The EIP has been generously supported by the award of the Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate from the Australian Research Council (ARC ref: FL110100093). The editors are most grateful for contributions from the EIP team, including Thomas Powell, Elias Christofi, and Laura Welty, as well as visiting fellows who provided input into the research.

¹ Charles Stewart. 2017, *SPAE Final Report: 2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections*, <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/Y38VIQ>.

² For a detailed discussion, see Pippa Norris, Sarah Cameron and Thomas Wynter. Eds. 2019. *Electoral Integrity in America*, NY: OUP.

³ Michael Isikoff, and David Corn. 2018. *Russian Roulette: The Inside Story of Putin's War on America and the Election of Donald Trump*. New York: Twelve Books; Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 2018. *Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President What We Don't, Can't, and Do Know*. NY: OUP.

⁴ Pippa Norris. 2019. 'Do perceptions of electoral malpractice undermine democratic satisfaction? The US in comparative perspective.' *International Political Science Review* 40(1): 5-22.

⁵ The Gallup World Poll <http://www.gallup.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/analytics/213704/world-poll.aspx>

⁶ Office of the Director of National Intelligence 2017. *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections*. Unclassified Version, 6 January, available at: https://www.scribd.com/document/335885580/Unclassified-version-of-intelligence-report-on-Russian-hacking-during-the-2016-election#from_embed.

⁷ In Georgia, the Gubernatorial race proved highly controversial with Stacy Abrams questioning the legitimacy of the outcome and accusing the GOP of stealing the election. Secretary of State Brian Kemp, oversaw the state's 'exact match' law, which flagged any registration application if the identifying information didn't exactly match the state's records. Kemp stayed in his post as Secretary of State, administering the election while also being a candidate, raising a clear conflict of interest. If she had won, Abrams would have been the first African-American woman governor of Georgia, but the Republican candidate, Kemp, was declared winner with 54,000 more votes.

⁸ See <http://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/electoral-management/electoral%20cycle.JPG/view>

⁹ See Ferran Martínez i Coma and Ignacio Lago. 2016. 'Gerrymandering in comparative perspective.' *Party Politics* DOI: 1354068816642806; Laura Royden, Michael Li and Yuriy Rudensky, March 2018. *Extreme Gerrymandering and the 2018 Midterm*. NY: Brennan Center. <https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/extreme-gerrymandering-2018-midterm>.

¹⁰ See David Magleby et al. 'Gerrymandering' In Pippa Norris, Sarah Cameron and Thomas Wynter. Eds. 2019. *Electoral Integrity in America*, NY: OUP.

¹¹ <https://www.brennancenter.org/blog/state-redistricting-litigation>

¹² For details of current developments, see <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/voting-laws-roundup-2019>

¹³ See Richard Hasen. 'Electoral Laws' In Pippa Norris, Sarah Cameron and Thomas Wynter. Eds. 2019. *Electoral Integrity in America*, NY: OUP.

¹⁴ See Pippa Norris and Andrea Abel van Es, eds. 2016. *Checkbook Elections. Political Finance in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press. For the global PEI, see Pippa Norris and Max Grömping. 2019. *The Year in Elections*, 2018. Sydney, University of Sydney.

¹⁵ See Leticia Bode et al. 'Fake News' In Pippa Norris, Sarah Cameron and Thomas Wynter. Eds. 2019. *Electoral Integrity in America*, NY: OUP.

¹⁶ Pippa Norris. 2013. 'The new research agenda studying electoral integrity.' Special issue of *Electoral Studies* 32(4).

¹⁷ Andreas Schedler. 2002. 'The menu of manipulation.' *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 36-50.

¹⁸ See the codebook for further information. <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/PEI>

¹⁹ Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez i Coma and Richard Frank. 2013. 'Assessing the quality of elections.' *Journal of Democracy*. 24(4): 124-135; Ferran Martínez i Coma and Carolien Van Ham. 2015. 'Can Experts Judge Elections? Testing the Validity of Expert Judgments for Measuring Election Integrity'. *European Journal of Political Research* doi:10.1111/1475-6765.12084; Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank and Ferran Martínez i Coma. 2014. 'Measuring Electoral Integrity around the World: A New Dataset' *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 47(4): 789-798.

²⁰ Jan Teorell, Stefan Dahlberg, Sören Holmberg, Bo Rothstein, Felix Hartmann and Richard Svensson. January 2019. *The Quality of Government Standard Dataset*. University of Gothenburg: The Quality of Government Institute, <http://www.qog.pol.gu.se>.