

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Faculty of Social Sciences
Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies

Anastasiia Mirovednikova

**SHOULD THE GUARDIANS BE INDEPENDENT? ELECTORAL
MANAGEMENT BODIES AND ELECTORAL INTEGRITY**

MA thesis

Supervisor: Martin Mölder, PhD

Tartu 2020

Author's declaration

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

Anastasiia Mirovednikova / signature of author/

The defence will take place on / date / at / time /
..... / address / in auditorium number / number /

Opponent / name / (..... / academic degree /),
..... / position /

Non-exclusive license to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, Anastasiia Mirovednikova

(personal identification code: 49612280034)

1. herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive license) to reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making thesis public, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright, my thesis entitled

Should the Guardians be Independent? Electoral Management Bodies and Electoral Integrity,

supervised by Martin Mölder.

2. I grant the University of Tartu a permit to make the work specified in p. 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives, until the expiry of the term of copyright.

3. I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in pp. 1 and 2.

4. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons' intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

Done at Tartu on 18.05.2020.

Anastasiia Mirovednikova

(signature)

Table of contents

Introduction	6
Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework	10
1.1. Conceptualization of the main notions	10
1.2. Why Electoral management bodies matter for democratic governance	12
1.3. Electoral cycle, integrity and EMBs	13
1.4. EMBs design and their classifications	19
1.5. Independence of electoral administration and regime type	23
1.6. Do EMBs need parties?	25
Chapter 2. Research Design and Hypothesis	30
2.1. Hypothesis	30
2.2. Dependent variable. The electoral integrity and PEI index	35
2.3. Independent variables. Electoral management bodies design	38
2.4. Control variables	40
Chapter 3. Empirical Analysis and Results	43
3.1. Regression results: General effects	43
3.2. Regression results: EMB design and electoral cycle stages	51
3.3. EMB autonomy and EMB institutional type	60
Conclusion	64
References	67
Appendix 1	79

SHOULD THE GUARDIANS BE INDEPENDENT? ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODIES AND ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

Anastasiia Mirovednikova

Abstract

Fair elections are fundamental for democratic governance, they are the result of a complex process, the implementation of which requires the application and responsible execution of all procedures at all stages of the electoral cycle. In many non-democratic countries, the falsification of voting results is carried out regularly. Election results can also be rigged in democracies, which casts doubt on the legitimacy of the entire electoral process and democracy in general. The electoral administration is directly responsible for the development and implementation of electoral procedures to hold legitimate elections recognized by international society.

This thesis studies the electoral management bodies (EMBs) and their models and aims to reveal the relationship between the institutional characteristics of election commissions and electoral integrity. Based on the previous research, this study assumes that the establishment of independent election commissions contributes to improving the quality of elections in non-democratic countries, while in democracies the choice of an institutional model is not expected to be important. Data used in the study comes from Intentional IDEA and ACE Electoral Project, Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Project, and local EMBs' websites. Findings indicate that the institutional type of EMBs cannot predict the quality of elections. However, in the analysis of interactions, the variable of party participation in EMBs turned out to be significant.

Introduction

Contemporary studies show that democracy is the preferred choice of most residents in many countries (Chu et al. 2008; Norris 2011). Free and fair elections make democracy possible. This is one of the first and necessary conditions for democracy. The seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan said: "Elections are at the heart of democracy. When conducted with integrity, they allow citizens to have a voice in how and by whom they are governed". Today, the fundamental task of politicians and experts is to conduct elections, the results of which are trusted by the vast majority of voters and recognized by the international community, when both losers and winners are determined fairly. Violation of electoral integrity destroys the authority of the government and pushes a country to violent scenarios, mass protests, and even revolution (e.g. Bamgbose 2012; Bernhagen and Marsh 2007).

Experts emphasize about the need to improve the quality of elections in authoritarian regimes because if they want to move towards democracy, the quality of elections should be improved (e.g. Howard and Roessler 2006; Lust 2009). However, in established democracies, the level of quality of elections may also vary. In other words, although electoral integrity has always been perceived as a problem for the countries in a democratic transition, one cannot deny the possibility of intentional and unintentional procedural violations in old democratic countries either. For example, the US presidential election in 2000 is called one of the most controversial in the history of the country (The Guardian, 2001). In most cases, US elections end up with a significant difference in the votes for the candidates. But in some cases, the winner has a minimal advantage. This happened in the US presidential election of 2000. During the counting process, it became clear that the electoral results did not include all voters whose ballots were sent by post. Also, many absentee, military, and temporary ballots were not taken into account. As a result of repeated recounts, the elections ended up with the smallest difference in votes' percentage in the history of the country. The election results became publicly known much later, as the recounting process took five weeks and was completed only after the intervention of the Supreme Court. This incident made Americans and people in other countries think about the many administrative tasks associated with the electoral process and the importance of executing electoral procedures correctly.

A big procedural scandal happened during the ambiguous postal voting in the UK in 2005 (The Guardian, 2005). This type of voting was applied for the first time there, but fraud prevention systems were expected to work well. In reality, the system for registering applications for voting by mail turned out to be unsafe. The ballot papers were sent by standard mail and did not contain any identification signs indicating that the person who applied for the voting was a legitimate voter. Therefore, ballots could easily fall into the wrong hands. In some cities, it was found out that between 1,000 and 2,000 votes by mail were falsified. Today it is believed that this day became "a dark day for democracy" in the country. Indeed, these examples from the US and UK show that integrity can be a problem even in established democracies (Birch 2005).

For many years, researchers have been studying the question of how to make elections fair and transparent. At the moment we know a lot about the fact that the quality of elections depends on broader measures and the quality of government's work, incumbents' policy and the rules of the game that they set (barriers for parties, financing of candidates, features, and form of the electoral system) (Norris 2004). It also depends on economic stability (Lipset 1959) and the development of civil society and voter behavior as well (Birch 2010). Nevertheless, it is known relatively little about the "guardians" of elections who are involved in the direct organization of the whole electoral process. There are not many studies on electoral administration, their performance, and the quality of work.

Some scholars still turn their attention to the electoral management bodies (EMBs). In different states, they can be called differently: Electoral Departments, Election Commissions, Electoral Councils, Unions, or Boards. Nevertheless, all these terms describe the electoral administration that organizes the electoral process. EMBs are one of the main actors in the elections' conduct. They are considered as guardians of elections and people's right to vote. They establish the practical framework and conditions for elections to be held. They perform a supervisory function as well as educational and communicative functions. They help to build people's confidence in elections, which is also important. As each stage of the electoral process from the formation of the laws and to the announcement of results can be rigged, the task of the electoral authorities is to protect the integrity of the electoral process. In modern reality, three principles underlie the effective work of election commissions: independence, impartiality, and

professionalism (Baxter 1997). Therefore, it is important for officials and election administration to be impartial in making decisions, highly professional, and show independence from the external influence.

Before the 20th century, electoral management administration did not exist as a separate independent body. The process of organizing elections was run only by the executive authorities. But at the beginning of the 20th century, the new independent bodies appeared and became separated from the executive branch and were mainly based on party membership (Klein 1995). For a long time, independent electoral bodies have been associated with developing countries (Hounkpe and Fall 2011). After democratization states' authorities worked out strategies to improve the quality of election management practices. They created the institutional design of the electoral systems and electoral bodies and many EMBs of an independent type appeared in different countries. As a result, election control was transferred to parties, experts, and NGOs.

However, in developed democracies, the institution of EMBs was not established at all. The process of electoral governance still took place from above and governments had full control over it. In democracies, independent bodies began to spread rapidly only by the end of the last century. Today, there are independent election commissions in countries with different political regimes. Nevertheless, in many countries, there still are government-type electoral bodies, where control over elections is exercised by the executive branch. Some countries combine these two models.

The authors of more recent studies have proposed that an independent model of election commissions may have a positive effect on the quality of elections but mainly in authoritarian regimes or countries in transit (Hartlyn, McCoy, and Mustillo 2008, Kerevel 2009). Other scholars disagree and argue that only democracies can ensure the true independence of the electoral bodies (Birch and Van Ham 2017). In general, the layer of the existing literature on electoral bodies and their structure in different countries suggests that institutional characteristics matter and should be examined. However, conclusions from the previous literature seem inconsistent, which means that research in this area needs refinement.

This study focuses on the design of electoral management bodies and their impact on electoral integrity. Shortly, this research is an attempt to answer the following questions: How does the institutional design of electoral management bodies affect

electoral integrity? Besides, this thesis pays attention to how the institutional characteristics of the electoral administration correlate with the actual autonomy of EMBs, as well as with integrity at all stages of the electoral cycle. It is an attempt to look at the existing theory and empirical reality from the new perspective. A new variable is introduced in this study - the type of election commission membership, which can be based on party or expert participation. It may be also an important aspect of EMB design which has not been studied sufficiently. It seems intuitive that EMBs consisting mainly of experts are more unbiased and professionally grounded than bodies assembled based on party membership. Using the electoral cycle theory, it would be interesting to see how EMB design affects perceptions of electoral integrity at the different stages of the cycle since despite much care by EMBs is taken during voting, counting, and representation of the results, it is believed that electoral bodies assist at the all stages of the electoral cycle (Catt et al. 2014).

To prove given assumptions, this thesis employs the analysis of the 166 countries that were involved in Norris' Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) Project 7.0 from 2019. Deriving from the conclusions of the previous literature it is suggested that such factors as EMB institutional type and the type of EMB membership can be determinants of electoral integrity. The level of economic development, political regime type, and the duration of the democratic elections practice in the countries are considered as contextual factors.

The structure of the thesis is the following. The first chapter will be devoted to the analysis of literature and theory on the topic. The second chapter will provide the methodology and research design. In the last chapter, the empirical analysis and results will be presented. Some findings and further directions for research will be proposed in the conclusion. The linear regression method with the least squares (OLS) will be used in the analysis to investigate the associations between variables in the models within large-N data. The conclusions which may be drawn in this work are important, since the institutional design of EMBs may play an important role in ensuring the conduct of high-quality elections, and, therefore, in the process of democratization. Research in this field is practically oriented. Basing on the developed theoretical models, recommendations for governments, nonprofits, and practitioners can be prepared.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will review the existing literature on electoral integrity and electoral management bodies. In the beginning, there will be a brief description of the central concepts and why electoral integrity and EMBs are important for democratic governance, then there will be a paragraph on the electoral cycle theory. Next, there will be a section on the electoral bodies, their models, and types of EMB membership, how they relate to each other, and what effect it may have on electoral fairness.

1.1. Conceptualization of the main notions

Electoral integrity is a concept that refers to competition, respect for international standards, and global norms of governing and fair elections. Norris broadly defines it as standards endorsed by international community agencies such as the UN, the OSCE, and regional bodies. After recognition of these standards by these organizations, the principles are implemented for elections in all countries (Norris, Frank, and i Coma 2014: 790). The integrity of elections includes diligent work at all stages of the electoral cycle from laws formation to the result announcement.

Elections have become one of the methods of citizens' political activity on the way to democracy (e.g. Lindberg 2002, Topf 1995). In turn, the principles of electoral integrity developed by the international community help to evaluate the progress that non-democratic countries are making towards democratic governance. To keep a high level of electoral integrity, several conditions must be met. For example, there should be clear and fair legal procedures for the elections and referendums. Also, the execution of the electoral law should be necessarily monitored for the results to be reliable. As a result, it is expected that the quality of electoral procedures should contribute to democratic legitimacy. There are election management bodies responsible for administering elections in each country. They must carry out the procedures prescribed by law impartially and promote the values of fair elections and democracy as a result.

EMBs are the key actor in organizing and conducting elections of all levels. In this study, the electoral management body is defined as "the authority charged with administering the electoral process [...], a specific institution to be responsible for managing the

electoral activities" (Al Musbeh, 2011: 2). The definition does not fully disclose the variety of forms and specifics of the content of the activities of electoral bodies. However, this definition is broad and comprises the main task of EMBs - the conduct of elections. Undoubtedly, electoral bodies constitute a system, and the distribution of powers within this system in each country depends on various factors related to the particularities of political development and historical traditions. EMBs can be considered with concrete examples, referring to the experience of different countries and various historical eras.

How is the success of elections determined? Various actors can understand electoral success in diverse ways. On the one hand, for governments, electoral success implies ensuring a normal voting process without visible violations that will be recognized by internal and international society. When the majority of the population is interested in the elections, showing a high turnout, and post-election conflicts or protests do not take place. Electoral success also depends on the electoral strategy of authoritarian or democratic regimes. For example, for autocratic authorities, elections are beneficial if the current leader manages to stay in power without incurring heavy costs in the form of international sanctions or people's protests. On the other hand, for candidates, electoral success in a simple way means getting the desired number of votes and a fair resolution of any conflict arising.

However, there are common global norms established by organizations such as the UN and OSCE and adopted by local governments and supranational organizations. The success of elections in a global sense is the extent to which the electoral process is consistent with commitments and international standards for democratic elections, whether such commitments are reflected in national legislation and how this legislation is implemented ("OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe" n.d.). States' leaders need to maintain a high level of electoral fairness in terms of global norms.

The authors of the World Values Survey suggest that the public perceptions of electoral malpractices in the world should be monitored ("WVS: Public Opinion Data - The Electoral Integrity Project" n.d.). Firstly, the high expectations of electoral fraud create distrust and uncertainty about elected authorities. It decreases voter turnout and generates protests. (Norris, Frank, and i Coma 2014). As a result, a state will not be stable if citizens are not interested in the electoral process. Secondly, in an external context, the inability to hold elections recognized by the majority of political players as free and

fairleads to the great reputational and economic costs (limiting cooperation, economic sanctions). Scholars argue that the threat of sanctions is especially important in the transitional regimes of Central and East European countries, Latin American, Russia, and Africa (Park 2019, Treisman 2011, Coffey 2013).

Thereby, electoral success is understood in the context of the compliance of elections with international standards and norms of democratic governance. Electoral success is reached when elections are marked positively as "credible", "acceptable", "genuine" and 'free and fair'. On the contrary, such terms as "electoral malpractice", "flawed" or "manipulated elections" and "electoral fraud" describe irregularities in the administration of elections that violate the procedures adopted by the international community. They are applicable to determine the electoral failure, low quality of elections, and electoral integrity.

1.2. Why Electoral management bodies matter for democratic governance

Electoral management bodies (EMBs) play an important role in the process of developing democratic governance (Wall 2006, Catt et al. 2014, Matlosa 2004). The Global Electoral Quality Assessment Center "International IDEA" confirms that the formation of electoral management bodies is an important part of the electoral cycle (Democracy, I. I. & Assistance, 2002). EMBs are involved in the conduction of elections, their preparation, and the aftermath. The electoral system evolves, and the formation of electoral commissions evolves too (Lopez-Pintor, 2000). An EMB is "an institution or body founded for the sole purpose of managing some or all of the essential elements of electoral management" (Catt et al. 2014: 25). One of the main tasks of electoral bodies is to ensure independence in their decisions and that their activity is based on the law.

Why is it considered that electoral administrators are the engine of the democratic process? If one considers democratization as a creation of independent and competitive institutions, it can be said that the electoral bodies help to create this system. According to Lopez, EMBs "provide opportunities for all, including the most disadvantaged, to participate in and influence government policy" (López-Pintor 2000: 3). Electoral management departments serve as protectors of human rights for people to vote and to be elected. And the protection of human rights (such basic ones as freedom of speech,

freedom of assembly, the opportunity to participate in political life) is the foundation of any democratic government. Efforts to protect these interests are aimed at protecting democracy.

The organization of elections is a complex and multi-step process that is monitored by many actors at all stages. Electoral commissions take an important role in managing the conduct of elections, they are a part of a large electoral management mechanism. They help to raise public confidence in democratic institutions and in ensuring the rule of law. Thus, "the evolution of EMBs cannot be separated from that of democratization processes more generally" (López-Pintor 2000: 16). EMBs are guardians of democratic consolidation and play a large role in striding towards institutional progress. In turn, the promotion and development of good governance in the field of elections enhances democracy, openness, and accountability at all levels of the electoral cycle (Norris, Frank, and i Coma 2014). The capacity of electoral management bodies enhances the work of this cycle, and therefore of electoral integrity. The following section proposes a causal mechanism explaining how EMBs as a part of the electoral cycle may affect electoral fairness.

1.3. Electoral cycle, integrity and EMBs

It is known that electoral integrity is strengthened by democracy and development. "Long experience over successive contests <...> consolidates democratic practices, reinforces civic cultures, and builds the capacity of electoral management bodies" (Norris, Frank, and i Coma 2014: 796). Electoral bodies (or they are also called "commissions" or "departments") are part of the electoral cycle theory. This concept becomes the basis of the Norris' electoral integrity theory. According to Norris, electoral integrity is "shared international principles and standards of democratic elections which apply universally to all countries and which can occur at any stages during the electoral cycle, including the pre-electoral period, the campaign, and polling day and its aftermath" (Norris 2012: 2). Elections are a complex and multi-step process. Electoral cycle concept implies that 11 categories are consisting the whole electoral process:: the development of laws, electoral procedures, boundaries, voter registration, registration of parties and candidates, election campaigns and the media, campaign financing, voting procedure, vote-counting

procedure, results, electoral management bodies (or EMBs) (Norris, Frank, and i Coma 2014: 790). EMBs in this cycle occupy one of the stages. However, this does not mean that the activity of electoral administrators is limited to the voting day.

The institution of elections is one of the strongest elements of public governance (Pastor, 1999). And the task of EMBs is to ensure a transparent electoral process acceptable to all actors and parties in the electoral process. Electoral management bodies carry out a different set of tasks depending on each country's electoral legislation. In some countries, it is understandable and limited, and in some, it is much wider. In general, the electoral administration is engaged in both the registration of candidates and voters, counting of votes and the announcement of the results. Commissions may also be involved in financial control and allocation of annual subsidies. During the election campaign, EMBs monitor compliance with electoral financial laws and use money resources for the preparation of elections. In some countries, electoral administration has the power to issue normative acts based on the laws of the highest level and constitution.

Another duty of EMBs is the work with candidates and their constituencies. The commissions not only register candidates and (or) lists of candidates. "Successful election commissions regularly communicate with contestants on an even-handed basis, offering information on the process and listening to concerns. Transparency also involves informing voters of the electoral process and how they can participate" (Halff 2012: 24). Candidates and associations of voters supporting them can receive the necessary information at the representative offices of the electoral bodies. Also, these are electoral administration that distributes the funds allocated by the state for candidates and political parties, if direct state financing of candidates and political parties to cover the costs of the election campaign is provided (James 2019, Okoh 2005). Electoral authorities are responsible for the fair distribution of free airtime in state-owned media between candidates and political parties. It should be noted that all these powers belong exclusively to the electoral bodies, and no other state bodies work with candidates in this area (Musa 2001).

In some countries, electoral authorities have exclusive powers outside the elections and are directly related to the registration of political parties. For example, in Brazil, the Superior Electoral Court is responsible for registering political parties (Lawson 2010: 105). In Germany, when a political party enters federal elections for the first time

or after a long break the status of a political party is confirmed by the Federal Election Commission. Although for most countries, it is still not typical for the electoral bodies to be empowered to register political parties, these examples show that in modern democracies the activities of political parties are directly related to elections and electoral management structures can be granted extra powers.

EMBs also usually perform as an educational function, encouraging citizens to vote more actively and reasonably (José Miguel Insulza et al. 2009). This is no less important part of the work of the commissions than the previous ones. Further, the work with voters is not limited to compiling voter lists and providing access to them. Citizens can obtain the necessary information about the organization of elections from the election bodies. Electoral authorities can also help to provide citizens with methodological assistance to increase their awareness as voters. This is especially relatable for developing countries whose populations do not yet have an adequate level of education and knowledge of democratic procedures (Tsie 2003). For example, the Electoral Commission of Ghana collaborates with a special National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) which ensuring effective citizenship participation in elections by educating citizens educating the citizens on their constitutional rights as well as their responsibilities (Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey 2015). Elections cannot play the role of an effective mechanism of democratic governance without an active and competent voter.

Referring to formal procedures, EMBs are responsible for the timely preparation and updating of voter lists. However, approaches to voter registration differ from country to country. In many states, all citizens who have reached a certain age and meet the requirements established by law must be included in the voter lists. In some states (for example, the USA, Great Britain) only those citizens who have declared their desire to register as voters and have confirmed that they meet the requirements of the law for voters are entered in the voter lists (Milligan, Moretti, and Oreopoulos 2004).

The Council of Europe designates EMBs as a security guard of the electoral process and confirms that "the integrity of EMBs and public authorities at large is an essential component to ensure trust in elections" (European Conferences of Electoral Management Bodies, 2005). Therefore, the electoral administration is a direct actor involved in the decision-making and execution of procedures.

International IDEA states that electoral administrators perform various functions and it is sometimes difficult to determine what is suitable and what is not suitable for the “electoral management bodies” definition (Catt et al. 2014: 5). However, according to IDEA, the following responsibilities are common for all:

1. define the list of voters;
2. determine the list of candidates/political parties and register them for voting;
3. holding the election on Election day;
4. votes counting;
5. votes registration and reporting.

As can be seen from this list, EMBs fulfill their role at least at several stages of the electoral cycle (voters' registration, parties' registration, voting, vote counting, and results). However, there is no single regulation for the electoral administrations' work. Their area of responsibility varies depending on the election legislation of each country. The components listed above are necessary for a minimalistic definition of EMBs. The powers of electoral bodies are not limited to it. For example, The US Federal Election Commission (FEC) is involved in the development of campaign finance legislation (Catt et al. 2014) which is not typical to other countries. Also, what is interesting about the US is that in some states, the registration of political parties is vested in the Secretary of State (the head of the executive department of the state); in others, Secretary of State is charged with organizing and conducting elections.

Besides, in several countries, responsibilities may be distributed depending on the level of the electoral department. And if local departments are involved in smaller tasks as preparing ballots, the national administration is responsible for calculating seats in the districts and announcing the results at the national level. As examples, such a system exists in Sweden, Russia, and Spain. Thus, it is logical that the effect of the electoral authorities' performance can be extended to all the components of the electoral cycle.

An election outcome is not directly determined only by the day of voting. It must be taken into account that such methods of electoral fraud as manipulation of the rules of the game or suppressing the rights of candidates and voters take place long before the election day. The same applies to post-election processes: election results, dispute resolution in courts, mass protests. International organizations, as a rule, send observers staying in the country for several months to evaluate all processes during different periods

of the electoral cycle. However, on an election day, it is the electoral commissions that are under the highest scrutiny. The international community may put a question about the legitimacy of elections if it turns out that EMBs do not follow the procedures. Therefore, the election commissions have a very big responsibility.

It is also important to understand that the term "electoral management" is much broader than the concept of "electoral administration". Torres and Díaz say that researchers often associate the concept of electoral management with electoral administration (Torres and Díaz 2015). The activities of EMBs begin with proposals to amend legislation and end with the resolution of conflicts after announcing results. In their concept, the three main components of the EMBs responsibilities are:

1. the formation of norms and rules that determine the conduct of elections
2. application of these rules
3. resolution of conflicts arising before, during and after voting

The conscientious implementation of these three components ensures the normal and stable development of political life. Fair elections are partly a guarantee of low social tensions. This is a way to avoid mass unrest and riot by interest groups. However, if an incumbent tries to manipulate elections, sooner or later, opposition leaders may conclude that the only way to change a situation is through violence (Pastor 1999). Electoral bodies were created in response to a complex problem of interest. EMBs are a solution to this conflict and can influence the outcome of elections through politicians and competing parties. Scholars think that by creating inclusive and collaborative relationships EMBs help to reduce tensions between stakeholders and guide them in favor of choosing a non-violent strategy (Opitz, Fjelde, and Höglund 2013).

Executives use a wide range of electoral falsification methods. For example, incumbents can manipulate the rules and laws regulating elections, promote manipulation of voters' preferences, and the voting process (at the level of electoral commissions). According to Birch, direct fraud at polling stations is very expensive for authoritarian leaders (Birch 2011). Attempts to circumvent the existing law directly on the election day can provoke protests and protests of the opposition and supporters of disadvantaged candidates.

In this sense, it is much easier for the authorities to organize electoral legislation in such a way as to make it impossible for independent candidates to be elected. Such

measures include an increase in the threshold for candidates and parties to make it difficult for them to apply. Dishonest leaders can also manipulate voters' preferences through unethical and unfair campaigns, bribe groups of people dependent on the administrative resource before voting. This provides incumbents with a good result, and they do not directly engage in fraud.

It is important to understand that effective administrative management alone does not guarantee legitimate elections and the high quality of the electoral process. It can be assumed that it is a necessary but insufficient condition. For example, 1,300 representatives from 62 states and many representatives of international organizations attended the 1996 presidential election in Russia (López-Pintor 2000: 219). And although the international community did not raise questions about the voting process, Yeltsin's win during this election is still considered controversial. Yeltsin, as the current president, used the entirety of the administrative resource and ties with the business elite to eliminate his rivals. Thus, the 1996 presidential election launched the era of unfair elections in Russia (Gelman 2012).

Many nuances should be taken into account when assessing the integrity of EMBs' performance and the conduct of elections. One needs to pay attention to such things as one-sided coverage of election campaigns in the media, direct or indirect use of state resources to finance campaigns, biased consideration of disputes between election participants in favor of some parties or candidates. These aspects of elections are predominantly characteristic of some undemocratic elections in many Third World countries (Schedler 2002).

On the other hand, the studies show that even in developed old democracies, manipulation in electoral processes is possible (Hasen 2012; Escaleras, Calcagno, and Shugart 2012; Cottrell, Herron, and Westwood 2018). What is important, even if there is no evidence of real fraud, the spread of rumors around leads to a lack of confidence in the election institution (Norris 2019; McCann and Dominguez 1998; Simpson 2012). Some studies indicate that people's belief that an upcoming election will be deliberately dishonest reduces both turnout and democratic satisfaction. Electoral fraud or even rumors about it generate a high level of distrust in the government. In turn, this leads to lower involvement of people in politics and the inability to predict electoral preferences. Thus, it is more difficult for politicians to develop a more effective policy, for example,

in such important social areas as education, medicine, welfare, and others (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000). Researchers agree that a drop in people's confidence leads to direct devolution in decision-making by authorities (Hetherington and Nugent 2001).

To sum up, the lack of fairness of elections can be a result of a combination of two factors. One of them is the competition of elites in the struggle for votes. The second is the institutional structure of electoral processes, how electoral legislation is formed (Crawford and Ostrom 1995). In many ways, it can be emphasized that electoral management bodies design is one of these institutional characteristics.

1.4. EMBs design and their classifications

According to international standards, electoral management bodies must "demonstrate respect for the law; be non-partisan and neutral; be transparent; be accurate and be designed to serve the voters" (López-Pintor 2000: 104). This can be accomplished through different types of institutional design. According to International IDEA, the electoral administration design is how EMBs are structured. It includes 1. a model that is used during the formation and determination of the set of powers and 2. autonomy of electoral departments (Wall 2006). The existing body of literature on this topic is full of contradictions and counterintuitive conclusions. There is no consensus among researchers what the ideal model of an election commission should look like. Some also talk about the need to take into account the context where every election is held (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002).

According to the International IDEA classification, there are different organizational approaches to the electoral management bodies' design (Wall 2006). The main selection criterion is the method through which bodies are formed. In other words, who the members of the electoral body/commission/department are and how much they are accountable to the executive branch. The first is the governmental model when elections are wholly in the hands of the state. EMBs here are national structures that act as the main public administration bodies in the field of the electoral process and perform special functions of coordination and conduct of elections. In this case, commissions are completely subordinate to the executive branch. This model is common in some European countries (Scandinavia, Czech Republic, Germany) and in Russia. It is less

common in general. The second type is an independent model when elections are organized and controlled by an independent body. The third type is mixed. It means that elections are held by the government, but with the control of an independent body. For example, today such a system exists in the UK, Slovakia, and France.

The governmental model implies that the commission is formed from ordinary citizens without the participation of additional external monitoring bodies (López-Pintor 2000). As a rule, doctors, teachers, or any other citizens who would like to take part to become members of the commissions. Commissions are formed by executive bodies of the appropriate level or by the higher electoral commission. At the same time members of public associations and NGOs can also be registered. The election management body is accountable to officials, does not have a separate budget, and is not collegial.

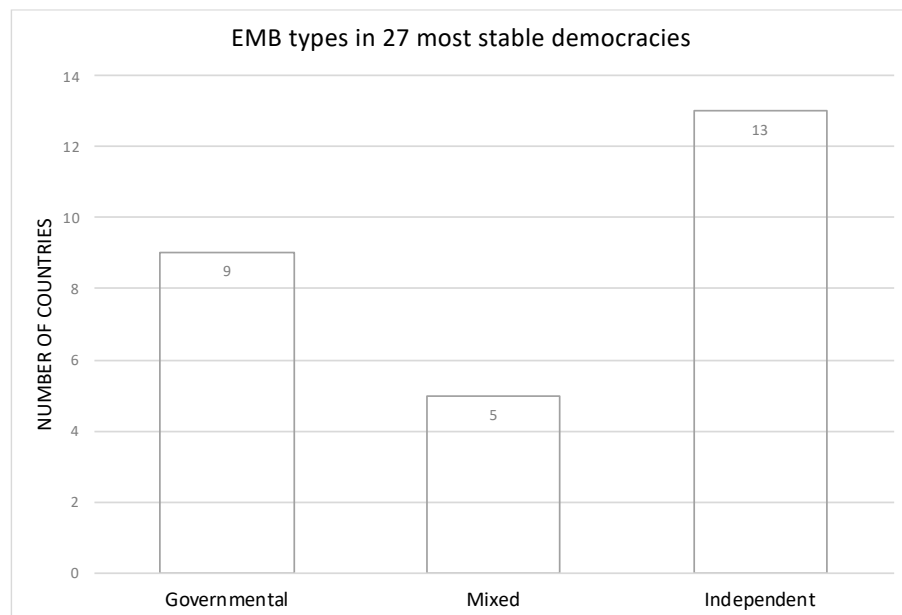


Figure 1. Source: *The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network Database*

The governmental model is not the most common in the world. According to the Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project, among the 27 most stable democracies in the world, the state model is applied only in 9 cases (see figure 1). Governmental commissions work in Western democracies such as the USA, Norway, Denmark. However, the governmental model also exists in Russia, Morocco, Kuwait, Singapore, Iran, and other authoritarian regimes.

The EMBs here are accountable to the executive branch and are in its full supervision. In federal countries, regional and local authorities are responsible for implementing electoral procedures. While, for example, in Sweden, all control lies on the central EMB, which has a coordinating role (Catt et al. 2014). Researchers say the hallmark of the governmental model is a high level of bureaucratization and hierarchy (Van Aaken 2009). The state provides the election authorities with instructions regarding the conduct of elections and legality and expediency of election events holding.

From figure 1 it can be seen that 13 countries of the 27 oldest and most stable democracies have independent EMBs. Often, under such a model, experts and representatives of political parties can be members of electoral commissions. This means that in this case, these bodies are completely independent of the executive branch. According to the International IDEA project, an independent management body "has and manages its budget and is not accountable to a government ministry or department. It may be accountable to the legislature, the judiciary or the head of state. EMBs under this model may enjoy varying degrees of financial autonomy and accountability, as well as varying levels of performance accountability" (Catt et al. 2014: 7). Also, the authors of the project emphasize that in some countries there may be two government-independent bodies that deal with different responsibilities. For example, such a system is implemented in Jamaica.

Some scholars convinced of the effectiveness of independent EMBs and their positive impact on the quality of the electoral process (Hartlyn, McCoy, and Mustillo 2008). They emphasize that professional politicians can perform their functions more independently than people who are often far from political life. It is intuitively assumed that the autonomy of the EMBs from the executive branch is a universal recommendation for democratic countries. This recommendation turned out to be relevant not only for beginning democracies but also for long-established ones.

Birch in her study states that "we would expect that greater electoral commission independence would be associated with higher levels of popular confidence in the electoral process, all else being equal" (Birch 2008: 313). However, an independent model is a relatively recent invention and it is also believed that independent EMBs are represented mainly in the new democracies (Massicotte, Blais, and Yoshinaka 2004). At

the same time, as can be seen, 13 of the 27 most stable democracies in the world use an independent model.

The mixed model combines both of the previous types. These are usually governmental electoral commissions, which are under the “the supervisory authority of a collective body, composed either of judges only or representatives of political parties” (López-Pintor 2000: 26). In such cases, the state often takes administrative functions and independent bodies take the role of policymaking (Van Aaken 2009). In this case, these supervisory authorities have the opportunity to observe electoral events and block some decisions.

On the one hand, this model sounds fairer, because in this way there is an additional opportunity to control the government and election events. For example, such a model is used in France, Japan, and the Netherlands. On the other hand, the mixed model likely creates additional uncertainty in the distribution of powers between bodies. Therefore, in the case of a mixed model, the powers and competencies must be clearly defined. Otherwise, chaos in the execution of procedures cannot be avoided.

However, according to some authors, electoral bodies are difficult to classify, and they should be separated into the fourth branch of power (Grishin 2018). Advocates of this idea argue that not all structures officially called election commissions (or bodies or departments) are such. For example, the US Federal Election Commission (FEC) is a funding control body that is not relevant to the elections’ conduct (Sheppard 2007). In Papua New Guinea the electoral management body, “independent Constitutional office, it is not subject to direction or control by any person or authority” (Electoral Commission of Papua New Guinea, 2020).

Conversely, some bodies are not called election commissions but perform their functions. for example, the Electoral Council in the Netherlands, the National Electoral Institute in Mexico, or the Electoral Service in Chile (since 2015). Also, there are countries where the judiciary is responsible for holding elections. For example, in Pakistan, the Central Election Commission consists of three judges, selected from among the chairpersons of the Supreme and other courts (Election Commission of Pakistan, 2020). At the beginning of the 20th century, electoral courts have become the first form of EMBs, separated from the executive branch. The biggest problem which may arise here is that the decisions of this "electoral branch of government" cannot be appealed in

other courts. As a result, this is a serious violation of the principle of separation of powers (Grishin 2015). The electoral branch of government is devoid of any external control. In the situation of a conflict between the candidate and the actions of the electoral court, the candidate may only apply a complaint only to the electoral court. In this aspect, the combination of the functions of the election commission and the court cannot be considered successful.

1.5. Independence of electoral administration and regime type

Impartiality of electoral institutions is a prerequisite for democratic governance (Schedler 2002; Mozaffar 2002). According to many researchers (Hartlyn et al. 2008; López-Pintor 2000; Magaloni 2010), an independent model was created to avoid manipulation and fraud and is best suited for these tasks. In not free and partially free countries, the electoral administrative bodies may still be developing and therefore be closely monitored and severely criticized. In addition to the problems inherent in the organization of elections, EMBs in these regimes may have institutional difficulties: inappropriate personnel, problems with financing, insufficient experience. The optimal solution, which will ensure the impartiality required for gaining more credibility, is to create an independent election management body that will be protected from any political influence.

However, Birch argues, "even when electoral management bodies are formally independent, *de facto* independence from political influence and impartial electoral administration is often difficult to achieve, particularly in new and fragile democracies and hybrid states" (Birch and Van Ham 2017: 487). Indeed, is there a guarantee that independent EMBs are independent as well? There may be a chance that the independent component is not much more than a formal element that does not work in essence.

The autonomy of commissions from the executive branch is one of the indicators that help to measure the actual independence of commissions. One of the previous studies suggests that in states with the medium-quality institution, "establishing an independent EMB may be a crucial intervention that can strengthen both *de facto* autonomy and capacity of EMBs to administer elections" (Van Ham and Lindberg 2015: 461). In other

words, in theory, independent commissions should help countries in transit to increase fairness and democracy.

Relatively recently the research area that considers the effects of democratic political institutions in undemocratic regimes has emerged (Schedler 2013; Levitsky and Way 2010; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). Scholars have found that formally democratic institutions in authoritarian regimes matter but perform different functions than they do in democracies (Magaloni 2006). The electoral engineering of authoritarian regimes has a special dynamic and is different from democracies. Previous research, aimed at studying the influence of the EMBs performance on electoral integrity, did not consider the effect of the formal independence in different regimes separately (Birch and Van Ham 2017; Van Ham and Lindberg 2015). Nevertheless, there are doubts about whether there is an effect of the formal independence of the commission in authoritarian regimes. Also, it remains interesting whether independent EMBs contribute to greater impartiality than governmental ones in democracies. Torres and Díaz assume that "with the aim of safeguarding internal governance, countries in democratic transition often establish independent bodies to oversee proper electoral conduct" (Torres and Díaz 2015: 36).

It can be assumed that the regime context affects. For example, there is an opinion that many countries where a regime change occurred during the Third wave of democratization remained in some kind of "limited subtype" of democracy, such as "illiberal democracy", or some version of electoral authoritarianism (Zakaria 1997). In this regard, is it correct to compare the independence of EMBs and the quality of elections in established democracies with those countries where transit occurred later?

Studies show that most people in almost every country in the world prefer democracy to any other type of regime (Chu et al. 2008; Norris 2011). One indicator of this widespread preference for democracy is that the number of autocracies holding multi-party elections has been increasing since 2005 - even in conditions of democratic stagnation or decline. This trend shows that authoritarian rulers, even in words, are forced to support democratic ideals.

Therefore, they have to come up with more complex algorithms of selective fraud to remain in power illegitimate way. For authoritarian leaders, it seems easier to falsify the results of the elections at the entrance of the political cycle, by preparing restrictive laws for parties and voter registration or by unfair district boundaries distribution. This logical

chain may explain that countries of the third wave of democratization adopted an independent model of the EMBs' formation to provide a facade of the impartiality of elections. It may turn out that the institutional characteristics of the electoral bodies do not matter if the electoral results are predetermined in advance. It confirms the idea that the independence of independent-type commissions in an undemocratic regime may be in question.

As for democracies, on the one hand, it is possible that in free regimes independent commissions can provide high impartiality and efficiency. Also, they may create conditions under which the state is limited in its ability to influence the performance of EMBs, and therefore, the outcome of elections. on the other hand, in conditions when the quality of institutions is high and the system of checks and balances works accurately, the likelihood of fraud remains low in any EMB system.

1.6. Do EMBs need parties?

Both independent and mixed models imply the possibility for parties to nominate their representatives to control electoral procedures. Party affiliation is applied in some few countries with governmental EMBs, but there are not many of them. According to the International IDEA definition, there are two main options for membership - expert and multi-party. In the first case, experts should have professional qualifications in the field of law, political science, jurisprudence, or media. In the second option, parties nominate their representatives to participate in the conduct and control of elections. The authors of the IDEA project claim: "an independent EMB comprising representatives of competing political parties and an independent EMB comprising non-aligned academics or others free of political association may both follow the Independent Model but are likely to operate differently" (Catt et al. 2014: 10). Practical research on the effects of parties' affiliation on voters' confidence in elections also finds support for this thesis. For example, Hall and Hyde and Wellman confirm that party affiliation is important for voters' confidence in the voting process and political institutions is a critical issue for countries undergoing democratic consolidation. They conclude that the issue of party membership is an important area for future research (Hall, Hyde, and Wellman 2015). Rosas contributed to the research and conducted public surveys in Latin America. They

show that EMB officials appointed by political parties reduce the trust of both elites and citizens in non-democratic or partly democratic countries. But party involvement raises the idea of electoral integrity in democracies (Rosas 2010). Therefore, when electoral management bodies design is addressed, it is believed that the dimension of party affiliation is worth considering.

There is an opinion that the level of access of party representatives to the internal decisions of EMBs also matters. Today party representatives in almost all countries can be registered as electoral observers. However, in this case, they are excluded from the decision-making process. In some countries, the inclusion of political parties in the decision-making process may contribute to greater approval of these programs by both citizens and other stakeholders of the electoral process. This is most apparent when these party representatives are famous persons or opinion leaders. "This point is particularly relevant when an election or referendum's results are recognized since political validation, which directly influences public opinion about the process, is provided by candidates and party leaders" (Organization of American States 2010: 2).

Parties play a key role in three aspects: they ensure participation (because they influence voters' mobilization), they can influence the agenda and decision-making (through negotiations with other actors of political processes), and, finally, they provide the rule of law in the exercise of voting rights (López-Pintor 2000). Logically, parties should be more aware of the problems of various districts, as well as of the composition of the electorate. On the one hand, parties can ensure a balance of power and control some stages of the electoral cycle. On the other hand, politicians and party representatives may not be impartial and be biased against other candidates.

The need for parties to participate in electoral management and oversight is a controversial issue. It can be observed how the role of parties in the vote has historically changed. If 2 centuries ago, electoral management was divided between two branches of government - the executive and the legislative, which were designed to balance each other and carry out mutual monitoring, then later, with the advent of parties, the classical theory breaks. Today, incumbents can try to use their powers to fill the legislature with their supporters, which can affect the legitimacy of the process and the quality of elections (Lehoucq 2002).

The authors of the ACE research project based on IDEA data claim that "an independent EMB comprised of competing for political parties and an independent EMB composed of non-aligned academics or others free of political association may both follow the Independent Model but are likely to operate differently" (The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). Experts also find logic in choosing a model depending on the characteristics of democratic transit in each case. For example, countries that have recently experienced the transition from authoritarianism (mainly Central and Eastern European countries) prefer a multi-party model, since, on the one hand, public servants were often discredited as people associated with the previous regime. On the other hand, it is rather difficult to find public figures or experts who would be considered impartial (The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020).

According to Lopez-Pintor, party participation is important for countries in transition. Transitional EMBs are a separate category in IDEA's typology. Such EMBs are created during the preparation and conduct of elections in the country if there are conflict and dialogue and mediation are necessary. They operated in such countries as Cambodia (1993), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996) and Timor-Leste (2000). EMBs often included representatives of national parties as well as international experts (Catt et al. 2014). Van Aaken also confirms this idea of importance party-based EMBs for transitive democracies. He says: "Countries in the transition to democracy, e.g., with a highly (ethnically or religiously) fractionalized population, might be better off to choose a representative EMB (containing party affiliates of all parties) instead of an expert EMB (containing non-partisan experts)" (Van Aaken 2009: 306). It is expected that the parties' participation may be more stable and conducive to democratic transition and electoral regulation in the long run. Some studies also lead us to this conclusion. For example, Eisenstadt argues that EMBs that involved party representatives often made more autonomous and non-governmental decisions than formally independent expert commissions (Eisenstadt 2004).

In many countries, multi-party participation is available for parties that are represented in a parliament and have a certain share of seats. For instance, in Albania, the number of EMB members from parties represents the distribution of seats in the legislature. While in the 90s in Venezuela only large parties had their representation, but small parties had collective representatives. Such a system can be a window of

opportunity for the ruling party to distort the voting results in its favor (The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020).

In such circumstances, can it be said that party membership leads to better electoral quality in all countries? The research of electoral officer positions in Armenia in 2013 shows that the participation of representatives of the ruling party in the election conduct leads to a decrease in electoral integrity (Sjoberg 2013). Another study by Tarouco considered the protests after the 1988 presidential election in Mexico as the non-recognition of the electoral results by the opposition. They linked the electoral fraud to the party method of appointing members of the central electoral body. Most of the members of the body were the representatives of the ruling party. Tarouco concludes that it is the ruling parties, not the executive branch, that pose the greatest threat to fair elections (Tarouco 2017).

Also, it remains unclear how party membership works in cases when parliamentary parties are technical and they are not involved in policymaking, but only serve as a "facade of democracy"? There is a point of view that party members can "negatively influence perceptions of the neutrality of election administration" (Boyko and Herron 2015: 33). For example, a study by Boyko and Herron of EMBs in Ukraine proves that in the context of falsifications, the participation of representatives from technical parties is necessary to improve the result of a patron-party. Scholars claim that "technical parties as a type of informal subsidiary that can be used to benefit the major party when needed. Alternatively, established political parties may permit their technical and personnel resources to be used by a more formidable competitor for a specific election in exchange for financial or other benefits" (Boyko and Herron 2015: 25).

There are more arguments about why party participation negatively affects electoral integrity. Some scholars believe that party participation can undermine the legitimacy and quality of the electoral process due to a lack of required professional qualifications (Lehoucq 2002). The participation of experts may be more neutral and professional, and as a result, such elections are more likely to be genuine. Electoral bodies, free from any influence, including party influence, cause greater trust both on the part of the elites and on the part of society as a whole. Surveys conducted by researchers in Latin America confirm this (Rosas 2010).

Furthermore, parties and candidates are the most interested stakeholders in controlling the electoral institution and the election process. It is believed that “having party representatives alone can lead to infighting and to gridlock dynamics in the decision-making process. This, in turn, can lead not only to long negotiations and a lack of efficiency but can also potentially contribute to a perception of disorganization and disorder in the EMB and on election processes themselves” (Otaola 2018: 9). Free from any influence (including party influence) EMBs cause greater trust both on the part of the elites and on the part of society as a whole.

At the same time, there are examples where the transition from a party to an expert EMB model did not improve the perceptions of electoral integrity. In Cambodia, such transformation did not lead to a weakening of accusations of society watchdogs and opposition parties of pro-government bias (Catt et al. 2014: 56). It has been suggested the idea of whether the participation of parties in the organization of the elections in authoritarian regimes matters. Can it be talked about the fairness and independence of experts in an environment where these experts can be appointed "from above"? It also remains a question of what to do in states where the electoral administration is more differentiated and in small provincial regions the so-called experts may have a lack of "competencies". What is also important here, in my opinion, is that in most studies concerning the effect of parties, focused on Latin American countries. This can certainly create some bias as these countries have their specifics and history. The authors themselves note that they are not sure whether the results can be generalized. Thus, it would be interesting to see if this could work in a worldwide sample.

Chapter 2. Research Design and Hypothesis

The existing studies are accompanied by contradictory and ambiguous conclusions. The use of various data, classifications, as well as research methods, maybe the reason for these discrepancies. This study employs a quantitative comparative research design. To be more precise, this study is based on a sample of 166 countries. If we use the classification of research typology by Lijphart (Lijphart, 1971), this paper will be focusing on large-N statistical study. 166 countries that were involved in Norris' Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Project from 2019 will be analyzed. The quantitative methods can be used here to test the hypotheses since the thesis is aimed to capture the results about the large number of elections based on a limited number of parameters. Using the sample of 166 countries and the least-squares regression analysis, this study tries to shed more light on the research question. In this chapter the hypotheses and their justification will be provided, then there will be a part of the dependent variable and PEI index which is used for its operationalization. Then the independent and control variables will be described. Also, the data sources are given in more detail.

2.1. Hypothesis

Considering the theoretical background from the first chapter and taking into account the characteristics of each type of electoral bodies, the hypotheses which can help to find out how EMB design affects the quality of electoral process have been developed. Thus, the first hypotheses to be tested is the following:

H1: Independent EMB model compared to governmental and mixed models leads to a higher quality of the electoral process in partly democratic and non-democratic regimes.

In democracies, elections serve as a real mechanism for the formation of government bodies and institutions. The electoral management bodies, in turn, provide the process of creating elected high-level and local bodies, without which the exercise of democracy is impossible. In this regard, in democracies, the role of elections is not in doubt. However, as the historical experience of many countries shows, non-democratic regimes hold

elections too. As a result, the elections turn into a simple formality, a ritual with previously known results. In the absence of democracy but to preserve the appearance of elections, the electoral authorities are under a certain pressure to ensure that the necessary results for the state's leaders are obtained.

Stating this hypothesis, it is assumed that in undemocratic regimes governmental commissions, where there is no even formal independence of electoral bodies from the executive branch, are more likely to experience electoral violations. Authoritarian countries are characterized by a high level of electoral clientelism. Clientelism is understood primarily as an informal relationship between a citizen and an incumbent that controls the necessary resources for the former (Kitschelt 2000). Clientelism is a legacy of a traditional society, but this phenomenon is transformed over time, acquiring more hidden forms. For example, it can be also done in the form of buying the loyalty of EMB members. Under the conditions of the corrupt system, a mutually beneficial exchange between the actors takes place: a member of the commission can turn a blind eye to violations in favor of the current leader or ruling party, receiving various kinds of benefits (pensions, cash, position, governmental contracts, etc.).

In governmental EMBs commissions' members are often civil servants, but not party members, community activists, experts, or other independent actors. It is supposed that government employees are directly dependent on the executive branch and therefore are forced to obey any instructions that come from above. Failure to comply with the instructions of the authorities on election fraud may threaten members of the commission with dismissal from their place of work or other sanctions. On the contrary, in systems with an independent election commission, where on the one hand more professionally competent people can become members, and on the other hand they are less dependent on the sanctions of the authorities, the likelihood that elections will be carried out more impartially should be higher. Given that in many countries the electoral bodies are independent and most of the members of election commissions are volunteers, legally this model may seem more democratic even in non-democracies.

Furthermore, according to the report prepared IDEA on Electoral Management, the use of an "ideal" model of independent election administration bodies that are separate from other branches of government is recommended to the non-democratic regimes to ensure better transit to democracy (Wall 2006). At the same time, it can be assumed that

the independence of election administration bodies from the executive branch is a temporary phenomenon, necessary only for the period of democratic transit.

As expected, both from theory and modern reality, compared to the undemocratic regimes, in democracies there is a high level of institutional quality. It is the quality of government and institutions, according to the findings of previous studies (e.g. Van Ham and Lindberg 2015; Torres and Díaz 2015), that determine the high level of electoral fairness. In the countries with a high level of transparency and accountability of institutions, with a functioning justice system and a clean separation of powers, the quality of elections is expected to be at a high level in all democratic countries with any EMB design. Therefore, the second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: The type of EMB design does not affect the integrity of elections in democracies.

The empirical reality also shows that many successful democracies of Western and Northern Europe use governmental election management model. It means that in many developed democracies with established traditions of holding free and fair elections, electoral management functions are still the responsibility of the executive branch. For example, in Germany, this is the function of the Ministry of the Interior. The Federal Returning Officer and his deputy are appointed by the Minister of the Interior for an indefinite period, which determines the scope of their duties (The Federal Returning Officer, 2020). The main functions of the Federal Returning Officer include: preparing and conducting, with the support of the electoral bodies of the lands, constituencies and polling stations, elections to the Bundestag and the European Parliament; control over constituent congresses of political associations following the Law on Political Parties. Accordingly, at the Land level, the head of the election and his deputy, the head of the constituency, and his deputy are appointed by the respective governments. There are other examples. In Sweden, the tax authorities play a crucial role in organizing elections and the administrative director of the central EMB is appointed by the government (The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020).

It is assumed that the activities of electoral administration in democracies are under strong public control as all their decisions are taken publicly during meetings and afterward announced in media. In democracies, due to the low level of corruption, the

probability of bribery of employees of even government election commissions, whose members are directly dependent on the government, is expected to be low. Also, due to the well-functioning judicial systems, the perpetrators of procedural manipulations will be held accountable. What cannot be said about undemocratic regimes, where often people involved in electoral fraud do not bear legal liability. Furthermore, it is believed that the staff of EMBs in democracies are more educated and professionally grounded to ensure objectivity in the results and avoid even occasional violations of the electoral process.

Since some authors mentioned in the first chapter address the issue of the influence of party participation on the electoral governance, it would be interesting to see if the type of EMB membership is important for electoral integrity. Although there are several types of appointments in independent electoral bodies (expert, party-based, and mixed), all countries were divided by the criteria of participation or non-participation of parties. Countries with a government model were included in the list of countries without party participation. It has been hypothesized that:

H3: Party-based membership compared to other types of EMB membership undermines electoral integrity.

Based on previous studies, it is suggested that parties are interested in controlling the election process and ensuring fair elections. At the same time, parties and their representatives are interested in obtaining more points in favor of their patron party because political parties and candidates are the main stakeholders. When representatives of parties participate in the elections, they have their interests and ideological preferences. In theory, it can lead to the fact that parties' members may not be objective concerning candidates of other parties. Furthermore, in undemocratic regimes with a multi-party EMB appointment system, it may be likely that party members are supporters of an authoritarian government. Autocrats can fill the parliament with loyal parties so that party representatives defend the interests of not even their parties, but of the incumbent. This can happen during the preparation and conduct of voting too. Party representatives will be interested in maintaining a high percentage of votes for the incumbent or loyal

parliamentary parties so that their parties continue to remain in parliament (Lehoucq 2002).

The presence of party representatives can create conflicts of interest and deadlocks in decision-making. This, in turn, can lead not only to lengthy negotiations and reduced efficiency but also potentially create the impression of disorganization and confusion in the work of the election commission. In the case of the participation of experts and people outside of the political struggle, this study expects more impartial assessment from their side.

Summing up, it is assumed that the choice of the model of EMB design in non-democratic countries is more significant than in democratic ones. In democracies, any EMB model can work efficiently because of the quality of institutions, a system of checks and balances, and the old tradition of democracy. While in not free and partly free countries, the independent model can become an additional control for the authorities.

In the case of the independent model, members of commissions are free from political influence and are appointed based on their professional qualities. Members may be judges, lawyers, political scientists, academics, and civil society representatives. Decisions, in this case, are more technical and legal in nature, to ensure a more efficient course of the election process (Catt et al. 2014). Commissions that are formally independent of executive or legislative power should be more able to function as independent impartial actors, rather than commissions consisted of government workers. Many countries undertook the EMBs' reforms to improve the quality of elections. In particular, the so-called countries of the third wave of democratization adopted an independent model of EMBs. Thus, they wanted to ensure greater impartiality and effectiveness, as well as create conditions under which the state is limited in its ability to influence the activities of the commission, and therefore, the outcome of the elections.

However, in many stable democracies, the governmental model is adopted and effectively works. Furthermore, in established democracies, there is a higher quality of the electoral process in general. The overall high quality of institutions and a long democratic tradition is expected to allow democracies to show highly fair elections, regardless of the type of election commission. At the same time, relying on the results of the previous researchers on the topic of party participation in electoral institutions, this

thesis suggests that it can be also an interesting variable to explain the impartiality of the commissions and perceptions about electoral integrity as a whole.

2.2. Dependent variable. The electoral integrity and PEI index

This study attempts to explain whether the institutional characteristics of EMBs affect electoral integrity. The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity index is chosen as the dependent variable for analysis. This index was developed by Norris and colleagues as part of The Electoral Integrity Project (The Electoral Integrity Project, 2020). The EIP project was developed and led by Pippa Norris together with a team of scholars from the University of Sydney and Harvard University along with many partner organizations and advisors from the international community. As part of the project, Norris and Swedish and American researchers developed an expert survey on "perceptions of electoral integrity." The collection and generalization of expert opinions is a normal practice in solving complex and controversial issues. The evaluation of electoral integrity is also such a case, as there are no open sources of comparative data. For example, Transparency International uses expert surveys for aggregation of their corruption perception index (Norris 2013).

PEI index is an assessment of the quality of elections around the world. PEI determines the integrity of elections following agreed international conventions and global norms that universally apply to all countries of the world and cover all the electoral process. The survey among experts in the field of elections includes questions on 49 indicators of comparison of elections covering 11 stages of the electoral cycle (Norris and Grömping 2019). Questions are evaluated by experts on a scale from 0 to 5, then added upon a 100-point scale for more convenient ranking and comparative analysis. The latest database from 2019 (PEI 7.0) covers the last elections held in 166 countries. Accordingly, the sample is limited and determined by this data. The PEI survey covers national presidential and legislative elections in all countries that hold multiparty contests (Norris 2013: 130).

PEI authors ask local experts to evaluate elections using 49 questions about perceptions of fairness in elections. These questions are grouped into 11 categories which form the whole electoral cycle. It includes such stages as drafting laws, electoral

procedures, boundaries delamination, voter registration, registration of parties and candidates, election campaigns and the media, election campaign financing, voting procedure, vote-counting procedure, results, and electoral management bodies (Norris 2013). The results for 49 indicators and 11 separate sub-indexes are summarized and the PEI index provides the overall integrity scores of elections in each country.

The PEI project index is comprehensive and wide and consists of a 100-point scale. The more points a country gains, the fairer elections are held. It covers all categories of the electoral process from the development of laws to the results announcement. The authors of the index think that it is the most reliable system for assessing the quality of elections since it allows us to evaluate the extent of fraud most deeply: "the notion of an electoral cycle suggests that shortcomings in even one step of the sequence, or one link in the chain, can undermine electoral integrity" (Norris 2013: 128). Indeed, evaluating the work on the polling stations and the results is not enough to speak about the quality of elections. Ballot-stuffing and the manipulation of results is only the last part of the electoral cycle. And for example, it is much easier for governments to rig elections before election day by, for instance, setting artificial restrictions and barriers for candidates than to manipulate results during voting itself under the scrutiny of media and international observers. Furthermore, the PEI indicator is most relevant for the research since, according to the definition and functions of EMBs, their performance can affect different stages of the electoral cycle. In other words, it can be taken into account how much EMB institutional design also influences the different stages of elections.

Other possible electoral integrity measurements and indicators from other sources are less differentiated. Also, the methodology for their assessment is not always clear. For example, the V-Dem electoral fairness indicator is a 4-point scale that is based on one question of how impartially elections are held in the country. In contrast, PEI project allows us to study the components the rating is made of. It also makes it possible not to take into account certain categories, which have been implemented for this study.

The study aims to explain how the design of electoral management bodies affects electoral integrity. PEI index already includes the assessments of EMBs' work. Evaluation of the work of electoral bodies is a separate category of the index in the database. It is necessary to take this fact into account as the assessment of EMBs performance already included in

the PEI index may create a multicollinearity problem. It was decided to rebuild the index to the new one without including the performance of the electoral management bodies.

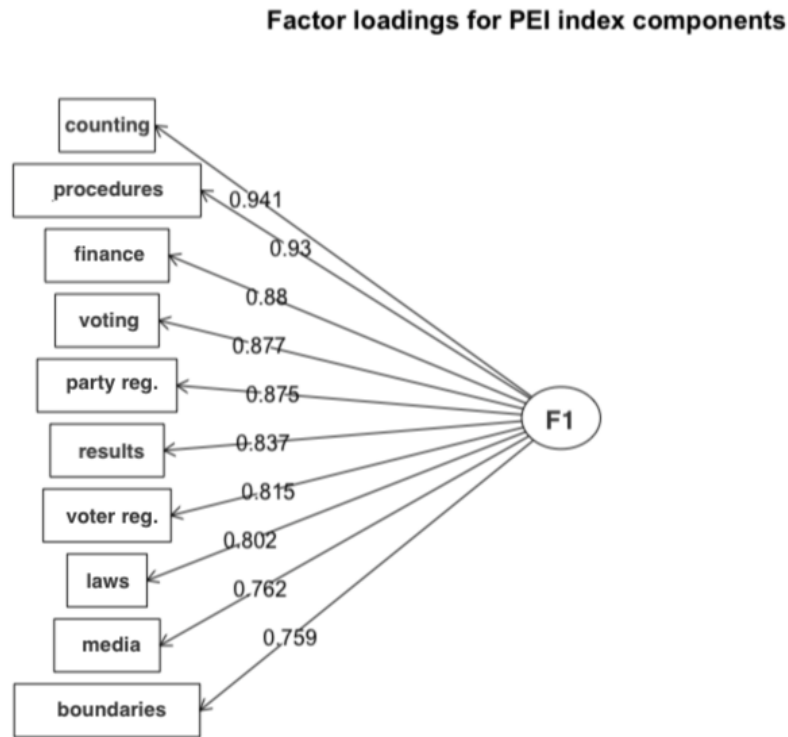


Figure 2. PEI index Factor Analysis

The authors of PEI Project calculated the index basing on averaging and summing of the components of equal weight. The factor analysis allows to improve their approach and determine how important each of the components is in measuring the level of electoral integrity. This study uses factor analysis with the allocation of one factor and using oblimin rotation of 11 PEI categories was conducted, since this type of rotation shows a solution that allows the components to be correlated. The loadings of each component were defined, factor scores were extracted from the model and excluded electoral management bodies component from the index. The factor loadings of each of the components of the PEI index are represented graphically on the diagram (Fig.2). These numbers show the correlation coefficients for the factor with each variable. The loadings account for the variance in the component. The higher factor loading represents a more significant variance. In theory, the loadings which are 0.50 or greater, are

considered practically significant (Peterson 2000). Since all the variables are the components of the same index, the factor extracts sufficient variance from all of them. Nevertheless, there is some difference. As it can be seen from the diagram, the most important components are counting, procedures, and finance. Significantly less variance the factor extracts from the media and boundaries variables.

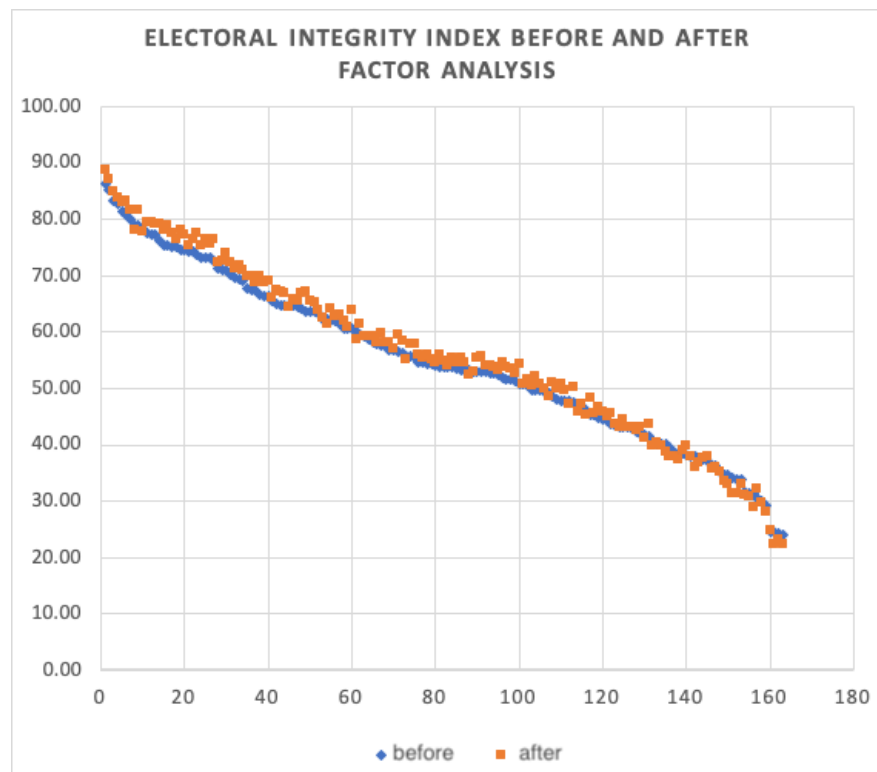


Figure 3. *PEI index values before and after Factor Analysis*

The plot in Figure 3 shows the values for the electoral integrity index before and after factor analysis. The index scale is located on the y-axis, and there are the numbers of countries in descending order of index values on the x-axis.

2.3. Independent variables. Electoral management bodies design

The model of EMB formation was taken as the first independent variable. There are several approaches to the separation of electoral management bodies according to their formation method and accountability:

- Elections are run by the government

- Elections run by the government, but with the control of an independent body
- Elections run by fully independent electoral bodies

The ACE Project and IDEA use this typology, dividing the models into governmental, mixed, and independent. The ACE Project database will be used, as it includes all world states and provides a convenient search system for electoral bodies parameters (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). The variable is categorical, and the governmental model was taken as a referent category.

The governmental model involves the organization and conduct of elections by the state through ministries (for example, the Ministry of Internal Affairs), or through separate bodies that are accountable to the executive branch. Under the independent model, elections are organized by an independent body that is autonomous and institutionally independent of the executive branch. It can be either independent of the executive branch department, or a third-party organization or union. The mixed model involves the organization of elections by a governmental body while delegating the functions of supervision and monitoring to an independent body. In this case, the authority and power of an independent entity may vary within a mixed model.

The second independent variable is the type of EMB membership. In countries with independent and mixed models of EMB formation, electoral laws regulate the appointment of electoral bodies members. The main difference is made between the so-called model of checks and balances (multi-party model, watchdog model), and the expertise model. In the first case, the work of EMBs includes members and representatives of political parties. It is assumed that despite the interest of each party in a certain outcome, the overall goal is to ensure the independence of the decisions. Many Central and Eastern European countries use multiparty-based systems after democratization (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). However, more experts say about the possible negative influence of the parties' membership in electoral institutions on the electoral integrity.

In the case of the second model, members of the commission are experts (judges, lawyers, political scientists, academics, and civil society representatives). It is considered that they are free from political influence and are appointed based on their professional qualities. Decisions, in this case, may be more technical and legal in nature. Some scholars believe they ensure a fairer election process (e.g. Catt et al. 2014). In addition to

the models mentioned above, there is a mixed model that combines the features of the first two. According to the ACE Project, such a model is often adopted in different variations. On the one hand, it combines the advantages of party and professional models, which makes it more impartial. On the other hand, such a model can be considered as more complex, which can also negatively affect the quality of the electoral process as the distribution of powers may be sometimes confusing.

The combined and expert types of EMB membership are not taken into account in this study since they represent a small sample. The entire sample of 166 countries was divided into states with party participation and without party participation, since the factor of party membership that is of interest for this paper. This is a dummy variable encoded as 0 and 1, where 1 is EMB with party membership. In all the models nonparty-based method of EMB appointment was a reference category.

Furthermore, to increase the reliability and credibility of the results the variable autonomy of EMBs from the V-Dem database is taken. The variable is a scale and the question from the codebook was "Does the Election Management Body (EMB) have autonomy from the government to apply election laws and administrative rules impartially in national elections?" (Coppedge et al. 2019: 54), where 0- no, 4-yes. This study is intended to test how it affects the integrity of elections individually and how it correlates with the EMB models. It is also possible to check how much the perceived autonomy of EMBs by V-Dem depends on their institutional type. Also, the variable will be included in the general model.

2.4. Control variables

Like other democratic institutions, electoral administration bodies do not appear from a vacuum and do not operate in a vacuum (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002: 13). It is history and context that determine the structure in which actors make strategic choices. Therefore, control variables also need to be considered when analyzing relationships. In this study the following indicators will be used as control variables:

1. The regime status (Free, Partly Free, Not Free) as an indicator of the democratic regime. It is expected that in established democracies the model used is not as important as in authoritarian and transitional countries, where

the participation of the state, perceived as corrupt and biased, can negatively affect the legitimacy and perception of elections. The variable combined average ratings for Political Rights and Civil Liberties (Puddington and Dunham 2018). Since the study needed a classification according to the types of regimes into free and not free ones, the Freedom House index was chosen, as it represents the most convenient scale of the regime types. And although the index is reasonably criticized by scholars, it was considered to be useful for determining a broad typology of countries by non-free and free ones.

2. The duration of democratic elections. The source for the analysis is the database by Boix, Miller, and Rosato and their dichotomous coding of democracy for all countries in the world from 1800 to 2015 (Boix, Miller, and Rosato 2018). The scholars measure the duration of democracy in each country from the date of the first democratic election. The data have been adjusted until 2020, as the index was lastly updated in 2015. This indicator reflects the minimalist concept of democracy. In this concept, it is enough for the political leadership struggle to occur only through regular elections without predetermined results. In the framework of this study, such a measurement of democracy is acceptable since it is important to measure the duration of democratic traditions in the countries in general. And holding elections with more than one candidate can be attributed to an element of the democratic tradition. It is assumed that the older the democratic traditions in the country lead to the higher the fairness of the elections.
3. The level of economic welfare. The variable is measured through GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity. GDP is gross domestic product converted to international dollars. It is assumed that a higher level of welfare leads to higher fairness of the election. Data were taken from the World Bank database (World Bank, 2020). Since GDP indicators are growing exponentially and represent large values, it is not easy to see how GDP affects smaller scale variables. Therefore, the variable is logged and the relationship in the models with the variable becomes clearer.

As the sample is not very large (166 and fewer cases taking into account missing data), the use of many control variables can decrease the explanatory quality of some

independent variables. Therefore, this study was limited to the only three but main independent variables.

Chapter 3. Empirical Analysis and Results

After the delineation of valid and reliable measures for the dependent variable -electoral integrity the study can proceed to the empirical analysis. Such measures as EBM institutional type, the presence or absence of party membership in EMBs, and EMB autonomy measured by V-Dem are used. The most recent PEI Project dataset from 2019 for the worldwide sample is used in the analysis. In this chapter, the results of the quantitative analysis of the relationship between the electoral integrity and EMB institutional design will be presented. Next, it will be analyzed how institutional design can affect different categories of the electoral cycle and provide additional analysis of these relations. The thesis pays attention to the relationship between the autonomy of electoral bodies and their type. Basing on the results, the interpretations of the differences in the field of electoral management between non-democratic countries and established democracies are provided. Finally, the results of the analysis and some possible ways for further research are outlined in the last part.

3.1. Regression results: General effects

In total, the paper presents 3 main models of multiple linear regression (Table 1). The first model provides a complete sample for all the world countries. It includes all the independent and control variables. In the second and third models, it was decided to divide the sample into two groups: partially free & non-free regimes and free regimes only. Although the first model includes regime status variable, it would be interesting to measure the strength of multiple effects for different regime statuses separately, since in hypotheses it is assumed that there can be fundamentally different results under different regime contexts. Also, the effect of the status of the regime is a rather strong predictor for describing the quality of elections and its inclusion in the model much reduces the explanatory ability of the other variables. According to our assumptions, the effect of institutional design is not equal for the one in democracies and authoritarian regimes. It is supposed that in authoritarian regimes it is more significant than in democracies, and also that party participation can undermine the purity of the electoral process.

The second model (Tab.1) is a multiple regression for not free and partially free countries. The third model shows the coefficients for democracies. The number of observations in the models varies depending on the missing data in each case. According to the assumptions outlined in the second chapter, the effect of institutional design is not equal for democracies and non-democratic regimes. It is supposed that in authoritarian regimes EMB design is more significant than in democracies, and also that party participation can undermine the purity of the electoral process. However, the results of the empirical analysis are manifold.

The first model tests the effects on the quality of the electoral process in a sample of 152 countries (considering missing values). All the elections were held at the national level (parliamentary or presidential). The government model was chosen as the reference category for all three models. It follows from the first multiple regression model that, other things being equal, the institutional type of electoral bodies does not have an impact on electoral integrity in authoritarian regimes. As a separate effect, the type of EMBs is significant, but taking into account such strong predictors as welfare, and the type of political regime, the significance of the variable disappears. The b-coefficients for Independent and Mixed parameters are not significant at any level. It means that the first hypotheses regarding the effect of EMB type on electoral integrity in authoritarian countries was not confirmed.

EMB design and Electoral integrity			
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Integrity all (1)	Integrity non-dem (2)	Integrity dem (3)
EMB: independent*	-3.240 (2.161)	-3.623 (3.781)	-3.911 (2.454)
EMB: mixed*	-1.863 (2.962)	-5.227 (5.686)	0.288 (2.995)
Parties	-9.838* (5.855)	-0.589 (9.153)	-18.607** (7.122)
EMB autonomy (V-Dem)	4.671*** (1.016)	5.770*** (1.092)	4.992** (2.192)

Not democratic	-15.481*** (2.948)		
Partly democratic	-10.350*** (2.012)		
Democratic elections duration	0.044** (0.022)	0.109* (0.057)	0.021 (0.025)
GDP log	2.070*** (0.740)	1.033 (0.954)	4.610*** (1.435)
EMB independent *Parties	10.744* (6.141)	1.265 (9.469)	20.241** (7.734)
EMB mixed*Parties	6.620 (7.140)	-7.461 (13.376)	13.474 (8.206)
Constant	35.025*** (8.363)	29.690*** (10.229)	10.025 (14.718)
Observations	152	92	60
R ²	0.776	0.384	0.570
Adjusted R ²	0.760	0.325	0.502
Residual Std. Error	7.681 (df = 141)	8.628 (df = 83)	6.095 (df = 51)
F Statistic	48.779*** (df = 10; 141)	6.465*** (df = 8; 83)	8.439*** (df = 8; 51)
<i>Note:</i>		***p<0.01	

*governmental EMB model is a reference category

Table 1. EMB design and electoral integrity linear regression results

According to the regression coefficients, the commissions of an independent type in authoritarian regimes do not affect the improvement of elections. This contradicts the argument of some scholars (e.g. Hartlyn, McCoy, and Mustillo, 2008) about the possible positive impact of independent commissions on electoral outcomes. This negative result can be explained by the fact that generally, elections under authoritarian regimes are not completely fair and commissions of even conditionally independent type still comply with the decisions of the current government. And despite IDEA's recommendations for improvement of electoral quality in non-democracies through the introduction of independent election administration bodies, it does not guarantee actual autonomy of electoral management institutions.

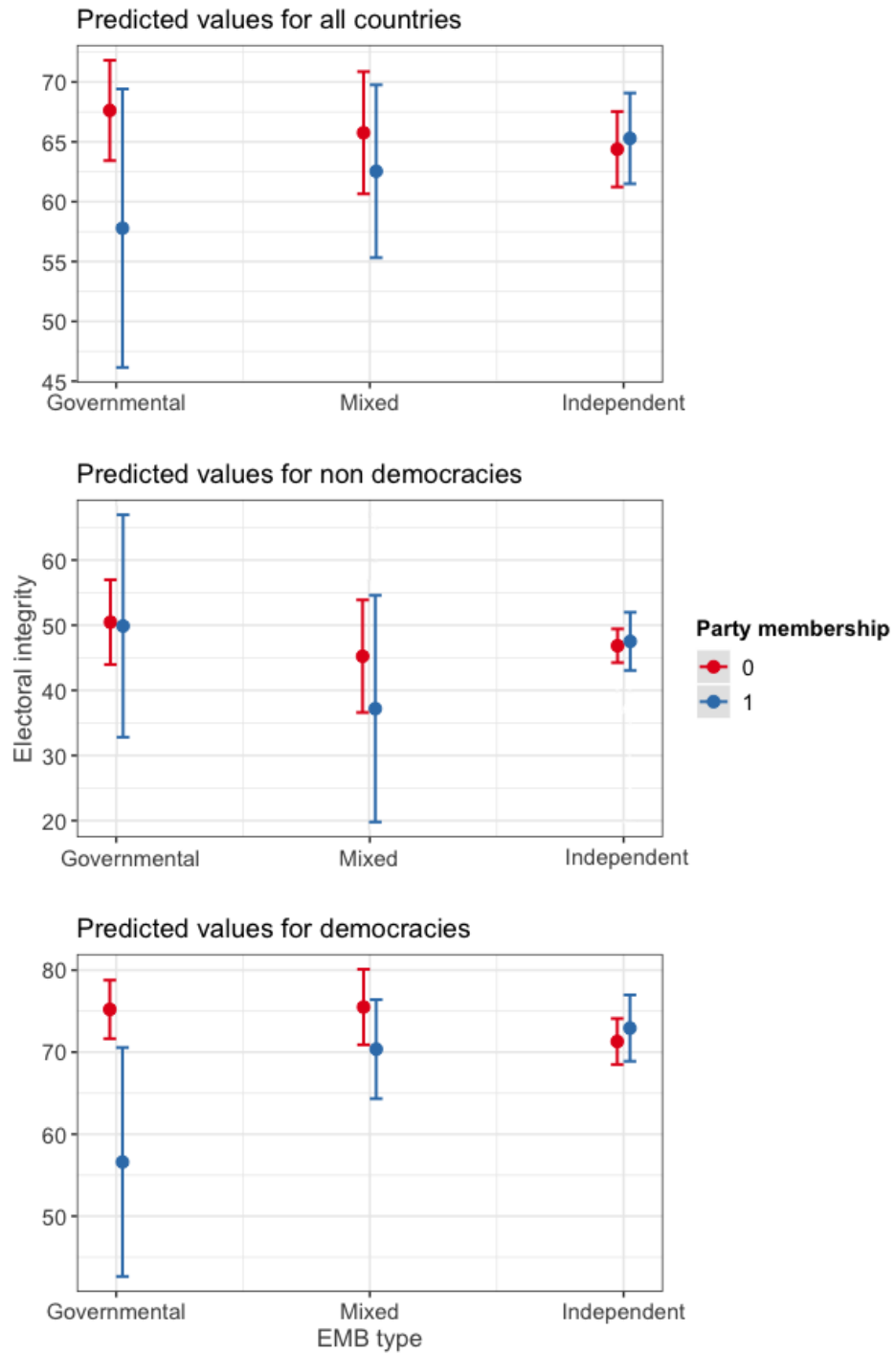


Figure 4. Predicted values of PEI index with interactions of EMB type and party membership

However, as predicted, the EMB institutional type is insignificant for democratic regimes. The data from the third model reveal that none of the types of election commissions improves or undermines the quality of elections in democratic regimes.

Thus, it can be stressed that *the second hypothesis is confirmed, but with some limitations* which are described further.

Although the variable of the EMB type turned out to be insignificant, it is possible to have a look at the predicted values of the index in interactions with other variables. Since the model includes interactions with categorical variables, it makes the interpretation of these values based only on the regression output more complex. Therefore, the results are more visible on the graphs. Figure 4 shows the predicted values for the PEI index for all models depending on the EMB types and the factor of party affiliation. Along with independent and mixed models, some countries with a government model may also include the participation of party representatives in elections. These countries are the United States, Vietnam, and Russia. According to ACE project (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020), in the USA under the governmental model expert and party participation is also possible. Therefore, the USA was assigned to the countries with possible party representation. The United States is an example of a complex election management system. In general, experts give the United States low perceptions of electoral integrity in comparison to other democracies. The authors of ACE report that in many ways it happens because the USA system strongly relies on local authorities in the process of preparing elections and there is no without serious supervision and appropriate oversight from above (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). This creates great difficulties for maintaining stability, quality, and unconditional fairness of elections. Perhaps, the complex mixed membership procedure of the electoral authorities also complicates the ability to control elections at the local level. In some states, most members of EMBs belong to certain political parties. Some other states follow the bi-party system for appointing EMB officials, and in other regions, party representatives are not affiliated at all. It leads to a wide variety of technical and administrative procedures in different American states.

From the graphs in figure 4 it can be seen that in non-democratic countries, independent bodies with both party participation and non-party participation lead to a small variation in the values of electoral integrity: from about 42 to 52 points. Governmental models with both party and non-party membership show the highest predicted median index value. Mixed model with party participation predicts the lowest index values and the median, in this case, is approximately 40 points.

However, it is observed that, as a separate effect, the factor of party participation is not statistically significant for non-democratic regimes (Table 1). It also does not become significant when it is included in the interaction with the type of EMB model. The graph in Figure 5 also shows that both in non-democratic countries with party membership and in countries without party participation, elections can be of more or less high quality.

On the contrary, for both the general sample and for democratic countries the factor of party membership is statistically significant. It is seen from the first plot (Fig.5) that in the general sample the lowest predicted results of electoral integrity are represented in the countries where governmental and mixed models where party participation exists. However, in the countries with independent EMBs and allowed party affiliation, the predicted index values are still higher than in those where parties are excluded from the process. The same picture on the third graph for democratic countries is observed. Party participation improves the quality of elections only in the countries with independent EMBs. Examples of such countries are Lithuania and Slovenia. They have independent EMBs and party-based membership. And despite these states have a relatively short democratic tradition, they show high electoral integrity. According to the index, countries are among the top 15 countries in terms of electoral quality.

From the plot, it can be found out that governmental and mixed models, interacted with party membership, do not lead to better elections. On the contrary, EMBs of governmental and independent type with party membership in commissions predict lower index values. Thus, it can be stressed that *the hypothesis of the negative influence of party participation is partially confirmed*, but with important limitations. Indeed, as a separate effect, in the countries with party membership, the quality of elections is worse than in countries without it. However, as the results show, the participation of parties may become an additional incentive to improve the electoral process for independent-type election administrations in democracies. It is likely that in the countries with independent models that have recently conducted democratic transit and which have not yet developed long democratic tradition, party representatives have additional control to provide more fair elections.

As can be seen, the EMB institutional type still does not play a role as a separate effect for democracies, but the significant effect of party participation on electoral quality is observed here. The party membership in EMBs decreases the level of electoral fairness

by 18 units (Tab.2). But more important is the significance of this variable with interactions with particular types of EMBs. For example, the countries with independent model and party membership show higher predicted indicators of PEI index than governmental EMBs with party membership (Fig.5). In the sample of democratic countries, the states with the governmental model and without the participation of parties turn out to be the most effective in terms of electoral integrity.

The variable of party participation, as well as the EMB type, is not statistically significant for non-democratic regimes. This indicates that any type of electoral management bodies' design neither prevents electoral malpractices nor improves election quality. Therefore, the models cannot give an unambiguous answer to the question of the positive or negative direct impact of party membership on electoral integrity for the general population. Some authors' assumptions that the party membership, in general, undermines the integrity of the election, discussed in the first chapter, are insufficiently developed. The effect of party membership in EMBs depends on the conditions and the context where it is applied. However, in general, among democracies with independent models, where countries use the party-based principle of EMBs formation, party participation leads to a higher quality of elections. The figures reveal that there is a strong relationship with the V-Dem variable characterizing the autonomy of commissions from external influence and electoral integrity. This is a strong independent predictor in all three models that should be explained as well.

The effect of interactions between the autonomy of the electoral bodies and EMB types did not turn out to be statistically significant, therefore it was excluded from the regression models. The interactions for the type of EMBs, level of autonomy, and party membership are presented graphically in Appendix 1. Nevertheless, the variable of EMB autonomy is very significant as a separate effect and the general picture of how it relates to the electoral quality can be observed. Figure 5 shows the association between electoral integrity index and V-Dem variable on the autonomy of the election commissions for all countries. The direct positive trend is observed here, the better quality of the electoral process is predicted for the countries with high autonomy of electoral bodies. The data would seem to suggest that the institutional characteristics of election commissions do not correlate with real autonomy. This is discussed in more detail in a separate section below.

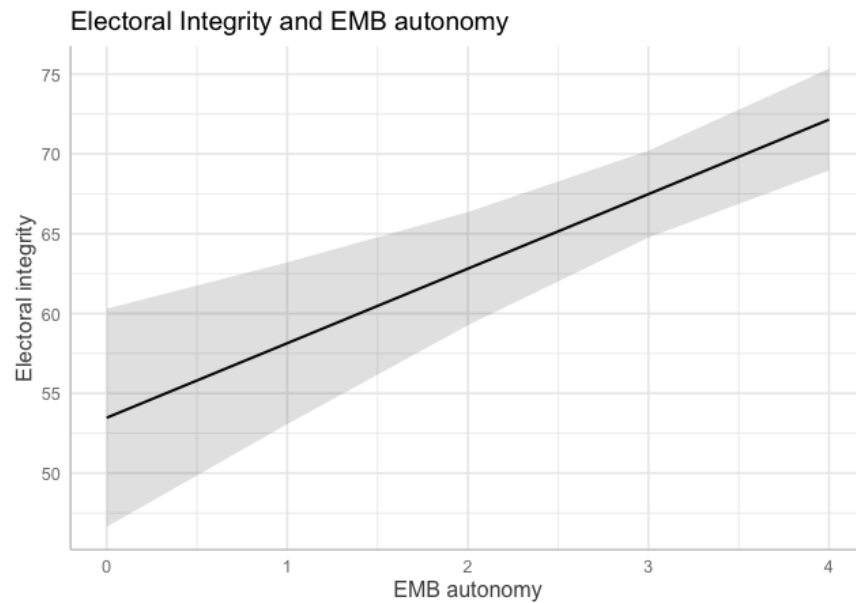


Figure 5. *PEI index and EMB autonomy*

Within the table 1 is contained the high importance of the relationship between the quality of elections and the type of regime. The same strong relationship with the variable characterizing economic well-being is examined, which is also expected. However, it can be seen from the table that for the sample with non-democratic countries, economic characteristics are not important for electoral fairness. And although fair elections are more likely in rich than in poor countries in the overall sample, the welfare effect is not relevant if the sample is limited by the authoritarian countries only. There are such economically rich but non-democratic countries as Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman or Singapore. Despite the high level of well-being, they provide an extremely low quality of the electoral process. It is well known that these countries are rich due to oil production. This allows authoritarian rulers to simply bribe their people, exchanging a high level of wealth for the absence of political freedoms. Despite the fact that the oil curse theory has been debated and criticized for many years (Ross 2013, Gelb and Grasmann 2009), it can be assumed that the resource factor in these authoritarian countries contributes to such an insignificant result for the welfare variable. Therefore, it is impossible to say that for authoritarian countries, the economy has a positive effect on the integrity of elections.

From the results, it is also clear that the duration of democratic elections' practice (Democratic elections duration in Tab.1) shows no significant positive effect on electoral integrity in democracies. It means that highly fair elections can also be conducted in the countries without a centuries-old democratic tradition. This does not coincide with the assumptions given in the work earlier. Examples of countries with a short democratic election's tradition but the high quality of elections are such countries as Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia.

However, looking at the second model with non-democratic countries, it can be examined that the duration of the tradition of competitive elections has an impact on electoral integrity and is significant. We see that an increase in the period for formally competitive elections in the country improves the quality of elections. It can be assumed that there is a difference between the fairness of elections in authoritarian regimes where elections with more than two candidates have been held for a long time and where they were introduced relatively recently. On the other hand, this may not indicate a real improvement in the electoral process. For example, this may be typical for some CIS countries which hold elections for 30 years, but the quality of the election is not getting better. It is difficult to say that in authoritarian countries such as Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, or many others, electoral integrity does improve over the years. It may turn out that authoritarian rulers simply learned to hide electoral fraud and organize them more covertly for the past years. For instance, if ten years ago in Russia open ballot box stuffing was actively used during the voting process, by today some new and more hidden methods of falsification were developed.

3.2. Regression results: EMB design and electoral cycle stages

If the first three models from Table 1 were built to form an overall picture of the quality of the elections depending on EMB characteristics, the models from Table 2 suggests investigating the institutional design effect on the quality of elections more deeply. According to the theory discussed in the first chapter, electoral bodies influence almost all stages of the electoral cycle. The PEI index allows us to divide the electoral process into the categories that correspond to its stages. Table 2 presents the output for

multiple regressions for the particular electoral integrity categories.¹ All these 10 categories represent the separate stages of the electoral process.

As can be seen from the table below, the institutional type of EMBs without taking into account interactions with party participation is significant in models with voter registration, media, and finance and has a negative effect on the values in these categories. Regarding the variable of party affiliation, as a separate effect is significant for such stages of the electoral cycle as laws, boundaries, and voter registrations. Variables in these categories are also statistically significant when considering the effect of interactions, which is most important for this study. The figures represent the graphs of predicted values for index categories in which the combination of these effects is important.

From Figure 8 it can be viewed that independent commissions with the participation of parties have a positive impact on the integrity of electoral **Laws**. The distribution of the predicted values for this category is close to traditional governmental commissions without party participation. "Laws" category implies the formation of the electoral system - a set of rules and procedures that determine the conditions for the participation of parties and candidates. This category of PEI index measures if the electoral legislation in the country is formulated most effectively and fairly towards candidates and political parties. The legislation defines how the entire legal framework for the further stages of the cycle is prescribed. How votes are counted, how candidates are registered, what design voting ballots have, etc.

The graph (Fig.6) shows that in the countries with governmental and mixed EMBs and party affiliation, the integrity of electoral laws is lower than in the countries without party membership. It is notable that in many stable democratic countries the choice of the electoral system has developed essentially accidentally and does not change over the years (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). And the changes in the electoral system and electoral laws are more relevant for the new democracies which established independent EMBs. According to ACE, the poor quality of the prescribed laws may be a result of political actors' using their knowledge of electoral systems to promote ideas that they believe will work for their partisan benefits (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). The key role of EMBs in the preparation of laws is to provide recommendations to lawmakers after elections. It can be assumed that if elections are organized by experts

¹ See models with PEI categories for the general sample and not and partly free regimes in Appendix 2.

EMB design and Electoral integrity categories in all countries

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>									
	Laws (1)	Procedures (2)	Boundaries (3)	Votereg (4)	Partyreg (5)	Media (6)	Finance (7)	Voting (8)	Counting (9)	Results (10)
EMB: independent*	-4.726 (3.821)	-2.808 (3.114)	0.279 (2.883)	-9.244** (3.591)	-0.265 (2.111)	-5.638** (2.529)	-4.979* (2.797)	-0.973 (2.238)	-3.328 (2.932)	-2.891 (3.076)
EMB: mixed*	-2.970 (5.237)	-0.630 (4.268)	-2.601 (3.951)	-5.392 (4.921)	-1.382 (2.893)	-4.658 (3.467)	-1.246 (3.833)	-0.236 (3.068)	-2.270 (4.018)	-2.416 (4.216)
Parties	-18.200* (10.352)	-8.686 (8.438)	-24.159*** (7.809)	-17.022* (9.728)	0.329 (5.719)	-5.975 (6.853)	-8.136 (7.577)	-1.624 (6.064)	-11.947 (7.942)	-8.707 (8.333)
Not Free	-26.713*** (5.211)	-15.949*** (4.248)	-10.590*** (3.932)	-12.357** (4.898)	-20.123*** (2.879)	-14.360*** (3.450)	-7.343* (3.815)	-9.639*** (3.053)	-19.247*** (3.999)	-8.277* (4.195)
Partly Free	-13.707*** (3.557)	-10.130*** (2.900)	-8.135*** (2.684)	-10.950*** (3.343)	-10.800*** (1.966)	-7.429*** (2.355)	-9.047*** (2.604)	-7.870*** (2.084)	-11.381*** (2.729)	-12.925*** (2.864)
EMB autonomy (V-Dem)	4.081** (1.796)	6.901*** (1.464)	3.192** (1.355)	3.543** (1.688)	3.202*** (0.992)	2.667** (1.189)	4.072*** (1.314)	3.039*** (1.052)	5.776*** (1.378)	4.885*** (1.446)
Democratic elections duration	0.064* (0.038)	0.019 (0.031)	0.055* (0.029)	-0.014 (0.036)	0.065*** (0.021)	0.063** (0.025)	0.083*** (0.028)	0.032 (0.022)	0.031 (0.029)	0.018 (0.031)
GDP log	-3.330** (1.309)	3.845*** (1.067)	-0.186 (0.987)	6.697*** (1.230)	0.797 (0.723)	-2.593*** (0.866)	2.593*** (0.958)	4.840*** (0.767)	2.012** (1.004)	4.049*** (1.054)
EMB independent*Parties	22.432** (10.857)	8.216 (8.850)	28.293*** (8.191)	17.357* (10.204)	2.002 (5.999)	3.971 (7.187)	10.173 (7.947)	0.011 (6.360)	11.707 (8.330)	8.620 (8.740)
EMB mixed*Parties	7.516 (12.624)	5.661 (10.290)	19.911** (9.524)	1.191 (11.864)	2.488 (6.975)	3.840 (8.357)	7.400 (9.240)	-2.723 (7.395)	9.397 (9.686)	11.044 (10.163)

Constant	87.370*** (14.785)	22.247* (12.052)	52.313*** (11.154)	-4.082 (13.895)	48.956*** (8.169)	74.676*** (9.788)	9.918 (10.822)	6.763 (8.662)	46.336*** (11.344)	23.930** (11.903)
Observations	152	152	152	152	152	152	152	152	152	152
R ²	0.552	0.713	0.468	0.621	0.768	0.515	0.655	0.719	0.709	0.641
Adjusted R ²	0.520	0.693	0.430	0.594	0.751	0.481	0.630	0.699	0.688	0.615
Residual Std. Error (df = 141)	13.580	11.070	10.245	12.763	7.504	8.990	9.940	7.956	10.420	10.933
F Statistic (df = 10; 141)	17.364***	35.078***	12.396***	23.078***	46.603***	15.001***	26.739***	36.113***	34.304***	25.162***

Note:

*governmental EMBs is a reference category

*p<0.1
**p<0.05
***p<0.01

Table 2. EMB design and electoral integrity categories linear regression results

or formal governmental officials, then their interest in the formulation of laws is not that direct. The influence of parties on the preparation of the laws' reviews may cause a certain bias which may not be the best for political health in the long-run.

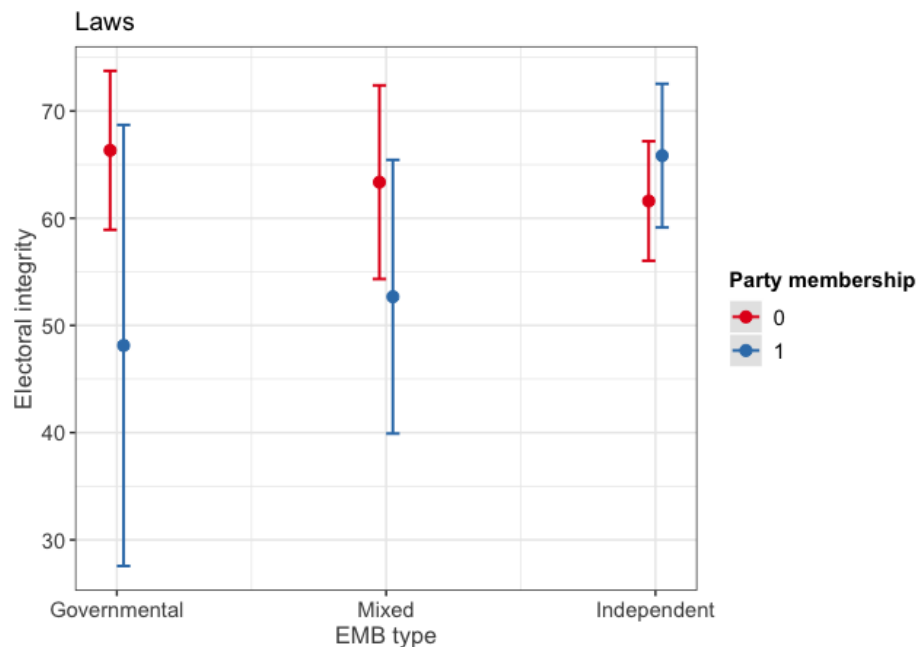


Figure 6. Predicted values for Laws category with interaction effects

However, there is the opposite effect for electoral legislation in countries with independent electoral bodies and party-based membership. Firstly, party participation has a positive effect on the quality of laws here. In the distribution of the Laws sub-index countries with an independent model and party, participation shows a median by about 5 values higher than other countries in the sample with independent commissions. Secondly, on the graph (Fig.6) the distribution of predicted values for independent models is very close to the results shown by government EMBs without party affiliation. And if in the overall index analysis described in the first section, proves that the countries with an independent model demonstrate the worse quality of elections, the figures on the Laws category suggest otherwise.

This may be the result of the fact that in the old democracies (e.g. Belgium, Norway, Sweden) the legislation itself needs to be improved, but due to tradition, it does not change for years. At the same time, in many newer democracies with an independent type, the legislation is formally better, since it was created under modern realities. In this

case, according to the results, one might assume that the new commissions organized by an outside actor (i.e. a civil society group) with party affiliation can adapt to modern conditions and positively affect the improvement of electoral legislation. And the quality of electoral laws can also be at a high level.

For example, Lithuania shows one of the highest indicators of the quality of electoral legislation. There is an independent type of EMBs and party members can be the members of the electoral bodies. Since independence, over the past few decades, Lithuanian electoral law has considerably changed many times. Perhaps one of the reasons for such a high assessment of Lithuanian legislation in 2019 by PEI was that the Lithuanian Seimas lowered the parliamentary election threshold to 3 percent for political parties and 5 percent for coalitions in 2019 (Baltic News Network, 2019).

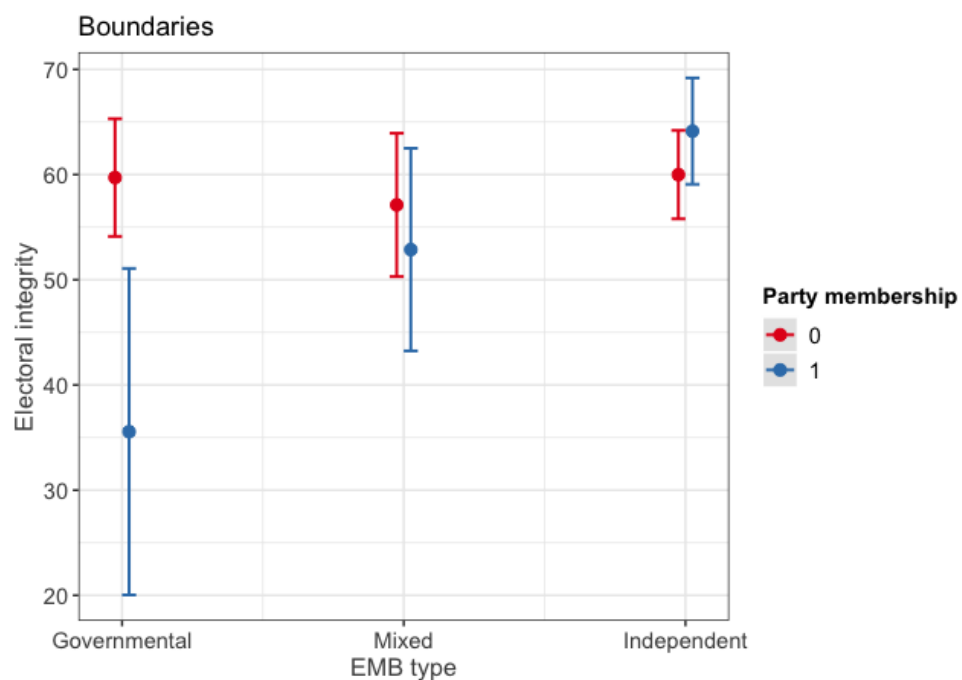


Figure 7. Predicted values for Boundaries category with interaction effects

Figure 7 shows the predicted values for the sub-index of electoral **Boundaries**. In this PEI category, the interactions between party participation and the type of electoral integrity were also statistically significant. Here it can be found the greatest positive relationship between independent EMBs with party membership and the fairness of the constituencies' delimitation. It can be assumed that independent from government

structures and party representatives can provide additional control during the delimitation of constituencies.

EMBs are directly responsible for boundary delimitation. Electoral boundaries can and should be changed depending on the outflow and inflow of the people in certain areas. In turn, the fair distribution of constituencies can guarantee equal value for each citizens' vote. The unequal electoral districts violate the principle of equal suffrage since it means that all voters participate in elections on an equal footing and their votes are considered equal. In fact, unequal participation in elections may be the result of the impossibility of defining equal electoral districts by the number of voters participating in elections. In regions (or states or lands, etc.) with a small number of voters, the weight of one vote is greater than that of the vast majority of voters in large constitutional units. The unequal size of constituencies also determines the unfair conditions for candidates. For example, in some electoral systems candidates need to collect a different number of signatures in their support which makes it more difficult to be registered and elected. The procedure of constituencies' division, as this is one of the most important parts of the election cycle for parties and in some countries has a crucial effect on the electoral outcome.

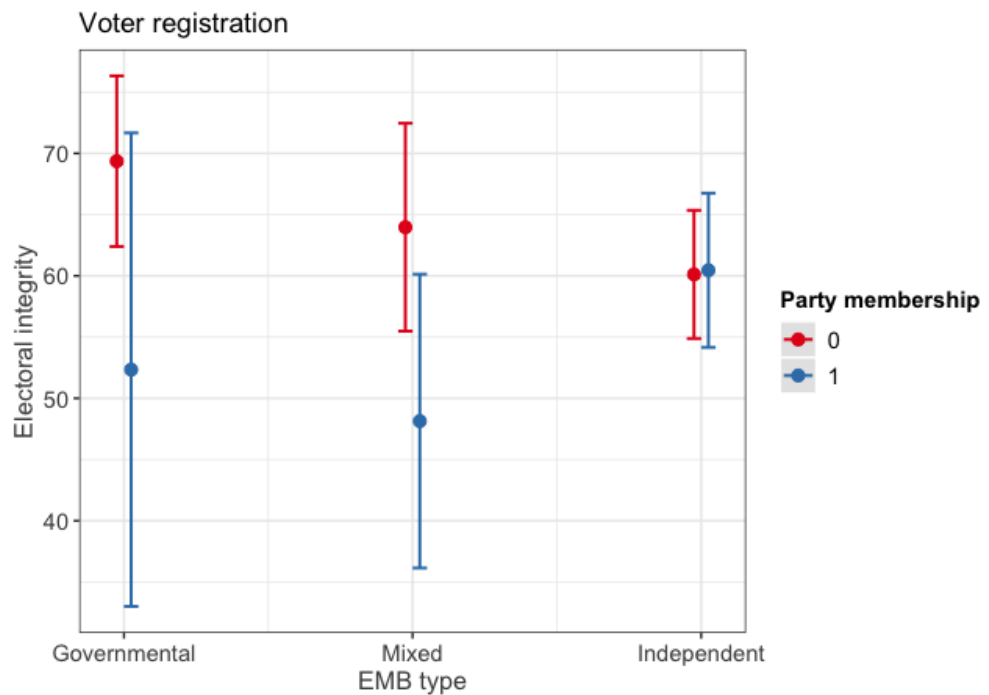


Figure 8. Predicted values for Voter registration category with interaction effects

Additionally, the effect of the interactions of party participation and the type of electoral management bodies turned out to be significant for one of the direct functions of the commissions — **Voter registration**. The predicted values for this PEI category are presented in the third graph (Fig.8). According to the ACE project, voter registration conducted by an EMB of the independent model may provide electoral registers more public credibility than those derived from or compiled by government authorities (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). However, this statement does not find confirmation. Independent EMBs, whether party-based or not, do not lead to high values for this sub-index. The best quality of voter registration is still demonstrated by state and mixed models without party affiliation.

It should be noted that at this stage of the electoral process, it is especially simple to falsify the voting results. It is believed that political parties and candidates may resort to manipulation to ensure the registration of their supporters. They may offer services, such as transportation to the places of registration, or promise benefits to the regions where they will win the election. People who do not meet the criteria of citizenship or age minimum can register and vote for the necessary party in exchange for some benefits. This is especially common in the countries where there is no credibility in the electoral process and there is an experience of rigging elections. For example, Russia is among the countries of the government model with party participation. The quality of elections and the performance of the Central Electoral Commission in the country have long raised questions both from within the country and from the international community. Of course, one cannot say that this is the result of the work of the election commission only. However, it might be assumed that the participation of representatives of the ruling party in election commissions, which is often practiced, can only contribute to large violations of the electoral law and voters' registration in particular.

Regression results suggest that in the countries with independent EMBs the quality of some electoral cycle stages is worse if EMB types are considered as separate effects. For example, **Media** and **Finance** stages. However, if we look at the effects for independent and mixed commissions with interaction with party membership, the significance of the relationship disappears. The absence of a clear EMB design effect was expected since the activities of election commissions at this stage are usually of a

technical nature. As a rule, EMB responsibilities here consists of issuing accreditations to journalists to cover the electoral process. The task EMBs at this stage is to provide all candidates with an equal amount of free airtime in state media because using media platforms can be expensive, and not all political parties have the same resources. To assess the quality of media fairness during an election, it is not enough to evaluate such technical characteristics as the amount of airtime. Equal time in media can often mean only a formality and may not be equal to the equal treatment of candidates by the media, which is even more important.

Also, there is no significant effect on the final stages of the electoral cycle such as **Counting** and **Results**. It can be seen that for many categories of the electoral cycle, the formal independence EMBs and party participation factor is not significant. These stages require the maximum attention of the EMBs' members. The correct calculations likely depend on the context of the country, the quality of elections' preparation, and the qualifications of the electoral officials. In any system, manipulation of electoral results and misinterpretation of ballot marks is a crime. It is important to ensure that the counting is properly managed and EMB staff is trained. Also, the role of observers in the process of voting and vote counting may be significant. Qualified and independent domestic or international observers can prevent intentional fraud, which is more common in non-democratic countries.

Also, if one looks at the explanatory power of 10 models from table 2 in general, the **Procedures** category model is one of the most statistically significant here ($R^2=0.69$). Although the institutional characteristics do not play a role here, the strongest positive effect is examined for the variable of EMBs' autonomy. The execution of electoral procedures is a direct responsibility of the electoral officials. They usually define the forms and samples of electoral documentation (ballot papers, protocols, etc.) and the procedures for their filling and storing. It is detected that the high autonomy of EMBs positively affects the quality of all the electoral cycle stages. However, there is the most significant relationship in the category of procedures. An increase in the autonomy of commissions by 1 point leads to an increase in the electoral integrity index by almost 7 points.

3.3. EMB autonomy and EMB institutional type

Regression results in both table 1 and table 2 show that the degree of autonomy of the electoral authorities from external influence measured by V-Dem, the capacity, and ability of EMBs to make independent decisions is most important for electoral integrity. The electoral integrity is higher in the countries with the highest autonomy of election commissions. From the regression models from table 1 it follows that other things being equal, the rise in the autonomy of EMBs increases the quality of elections in the world by about 4.6 units and by 5.7 units in non-democratic countries.

The assumption of whether the formal autonomy of the commissions correlates to their conventional independence is not confirmed. The type of institutional model of electoral administration and the real autonomy of electoral bodies from the executive branch measured by V-Dem are not related to each other neither for democracies nor for authoritarian countries. These findings contradict Birch's conclusions regarding the conventional independent model and its positive effect on real autonomy and cleaner elections in democratic countries. This negative result may be also the consequence of the operationalization of the "autonomy" variable. Also, the V-Dem scale is not strongly differentiated and represents a rather limited scale from 0 to 4. These conclusions can be tested out also on a wider sample with elections for each year as a measuring unit.

Figure 9 illustrates the distribution of the values for the electoral integrity in all the world countries, taking into account the autonomy of commissions and their institutional type. On the whole, the countries with governmental and mixed types of EMBs have a better quality of elections. However, there are countries with governmental EMBs that show lower results of autonomy and electoral integrity (Singapore, Syria, Russia, etc.). Some states with mixed EMB models such as Pakistan, Mali, Hungary, and others also perform worse than some of the countries with an independent model.

From Table 1 it can be observed that the variable of autonomy of EMBs is less sufficient when explaining electoral integrity in democracies. The autonomy of electoral administrative bodies is more significant for non or partly democratic countries. One possible interpretation is that the election administration bodies should be more autonomous in non-democratic regimes because of the low level of trust in government institutions in a society. Probably, electoral bodies will be able to fulfill their function and

increase confidence in the institution of elections and the level of perceptions about the integrity of elections among voters. At the same time, it is debatable how much the commissions can be truly autonomous in non-democratic regimes and whether they can lead to the improvement of the quality of elections. As the results show, even EMBs of a formally independent type do not improve the quality of elections in authoritarian regimes.

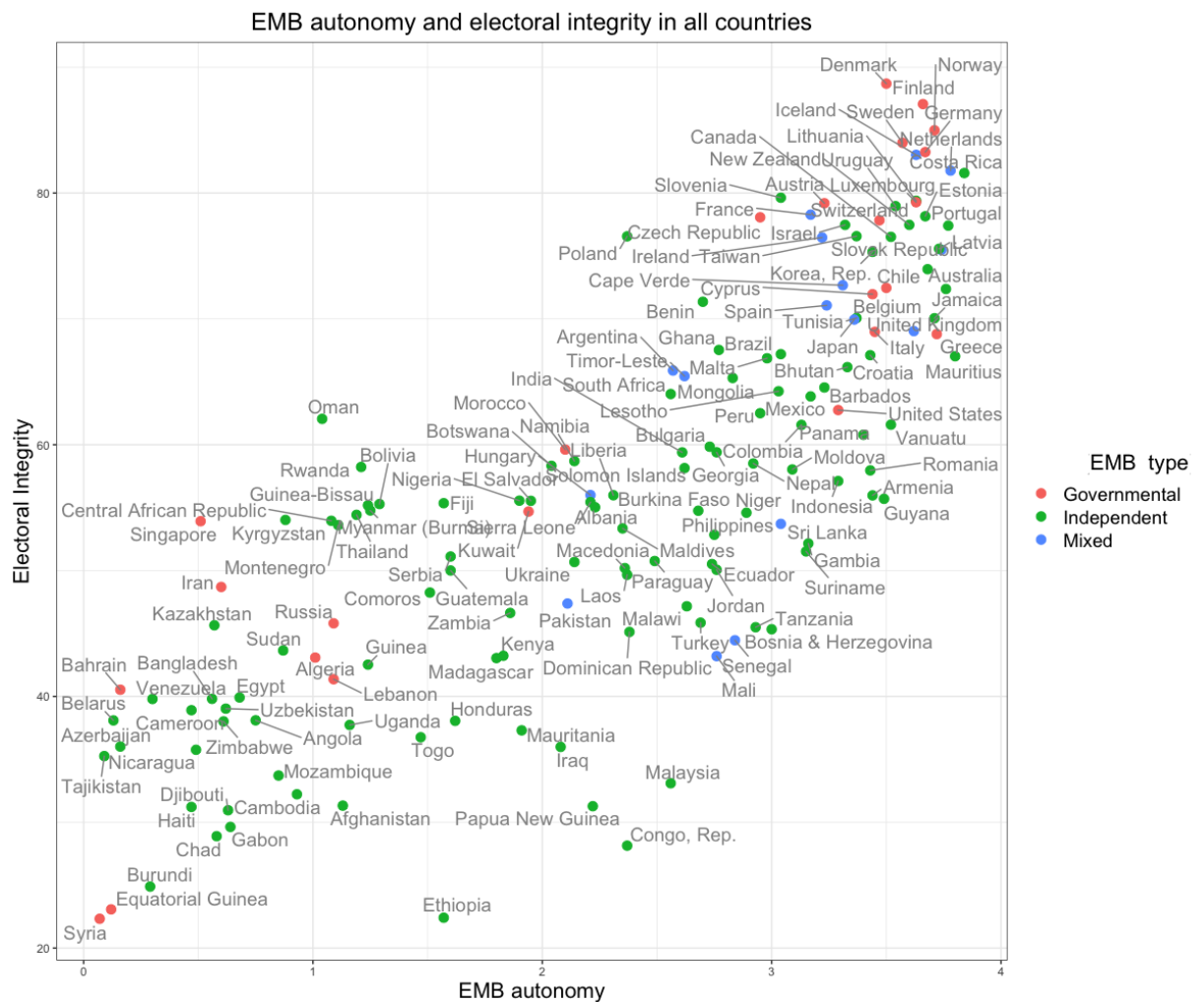


Figure 9. EMB autonomy, electoral integrity, and EMB type²

The absence of correlation between the types of commissions with actual autonomy can be explained by the fact that in the countries with an old democratic system,

² The non-linear association was tested here but did not find confirmation as a strong effect in the multiple regression model.

the electoral administration body is usually taken for granted. These bodies hold elections for many generations of voters, and if there are problems and some miscalculations, it, as a rule, do not put into question the legitimacy of the EMBs itself. In the countries with a long democratic tradition, the electoral body is usually a part of the government structure, and therefore there are many government-based commissions there. The EMB members who involved in election management are civil servants. In contrast, in new democracies or partially democratic countries, the electoral management body may still be under development. It may be strongly criticized both by citizens and by the international community. Therefore, low ratings of electoral integrity in the countries with independent EMBs may also be associated with more criticism towards them than for the countries with an established democracy and governmental EMBs. Moreover, in the new democracies, which established independent commissions, there may be also problems such as the lack of qualified personnel or developed procedures or the lack of electoral management experience.

However, there are some outlier cases where the autonomy of the commissions does not guarantee the high quality of elections. Figure 9 shows some confirmations that the level of actual autonomy of EMBs may be not important. For example, Poland has a high rating of the quality of elections. However, the level of EMBs autonomy is around 2.5 which is relatively low. At the same time, there is the opposite situation for the countries that show a high level of autonomy of election commissions but a low level of election quality in general. Along with some not stable democracies with an independent model, there is the USA with the governmental model. Although the level of EMB autonomy in the country is high, the expert evaluations of the integrity of the last national elections in the US did not appear to be high. Such low estimates are probably associated with the last presidential election, which caused a lot of critics. It would be interesting to look at the values of the index and its relationship with EMB autonomy on a sample with panel data and how the relationship between the variables changed over time.

Thus, the autonomy of election management is an important guideline for the democratic organization of the voting process. This variable is most important for the general sample of countries along with non-free countries and partly free regimes. However, it does not negate the significance of the variable for developed democracies. It is seen from Table 2 that the autonomy of EMBs especially affects such stages of the

electoral cycle as procedures and votes' counting. More autonomous commissions in democracies can best ensure the integrity of elections in these areas. Further, it would be interesting to study individual cases that demonstrate these findings in practice.

Conclusion

To sum up, this paper was started by noting that electoral management bodies' design including the institutional type and the factor of party membership affects electoral integrity. The results demonstrate that, when analyzing the general sample of all the world countries, the type of EMB institutional design does not significantly affect the quality of elections. However, if interactions between institutional type and party membership are included, the models show that countries with a party-based model in the governmental and mixed EMBs have a lower quality of the electoral process. Whilst party participation has a positive effect in the countries with the independent EMB model, and this effect is statistically significant only for democracies. Considering the influence of the institutional characteristics on certain categories of the electoral cycle, it can be seen that in the general sample the quality of elections at some stages such as voters' registration, media, and finance is lower in the countries with formally independent EMBs.

The hypotheses were tested with the data covering all the world countries in the last Perceptions of Electoral Integrity project. The regression analysis was carried out for the worldwide sample and for non-democratic and democratic regimes separately. The first hypotheses regarding the effect of EMB type on electoral integrity in authoritarian countries was not confirmed. Despite that institutionally independent EMBs prevail in authoritarian regimes they do not affect the improvement of elections. However, for authoritarian or semi-democratic regimes, the level of actual autonomy of EMBs, which is less significant for democracies, is most important.

The second hypothesis on the nonsignificance of EMB type on electoral integrity in democratic regimes was confirmed but with some important limitations. Firstly, as it was found out, the institutional type of EMBs turned out to be also insignificant for the general integrity of the elections both for authoritarian regimes and for the world sample as a whole. Secondly, in democracies, the effect of the autonomy of the electoral bodies turned out to be less important. In countries with high autonomy of the electoral authorities, such as the USA, the United Kingdom, or Australia, the quality of elections may still not be the highest.

The third hypothesis about the negative influence of party members on electoral integrity was confirmed but only for democratic countries and the overall sample.

However, the sample of 60 democratic countries does not provide sufficient variation in party membership, since many countries with a governmental EMB type do not have a party affiliation and were assigned to a group of countries without party participation. It is important to note that among independent EMBs in democracies, party participation can improve the quality of elections. It may be assumed that parties become an additional source of control and increase confidence in the procedures and the electoral process. At the same time, the effect of parties increases the fairness of elections not very significantly there. The choice of party membership maybe not the reason for the high integrity of the elections, but its consequence. The present investigation does not enable us to test this assumption.

It is important to emphasize that the level of the actual autonomy of the electoral commissions does not correlate to their institutional type. Nonetheless, the analysis showed the ambiguity of such an indicator as EMB autonomy. The variable influences the overall electoral integrity. An increase in EMBs autonomy leads to significant changes in the PEI integrity index on the overall sample and in non-democratic regimes. At the same time, the autonomy of election commissions matters less for the developed democracies.

This study was an attempt to enhance academic understanding of the influence of institutional factors of electoral management bodies on electoral fairness. What is important, the formal institutional design and method of appointing members of election commissions is only the tip of the iceberg. There are a large number of other, narrower criteria that may determine the functioning of EMBs – for example, the method of financing, the term of appointment, the number of responsibilities. Finally, one can not exclude the possibility of a technical flaw or a human factor, which cannot be avoided even in established democracies. The personal professionalism and qualifications of individual officials may also be an important criterion for assessing the quality of electoral procedures. Thus, it is concluded that several factors cannot be measured by institutional factors. One could look at the individual characteristics of EMB officials presented, for example, in the form of surveys. Most likely, they are more important in investigating the impartiality of the commissions' officials. However, this requires a lot of work because of the absence of cross-national comparative data.

Also, many previous studies of EMBs focus on Latin America, which may cause bias in the results and following theoretical assumptions. Independent commissions are a relatively new and unexplored type of election management bodies. Further research on electoral integrity and malpractice should create a more nuanced and complex typology of electoral institutions. It is expected to help to assess the impact of EMBs on the quality of elections more accurately.

References

- Adu-Gyamfi, S., & Yartey, H. T. (2015). *The role of the National Commission for civic education in citizenship education during and after elections: A focus on the 2012 Elections in Ghana*.
- Al Musbeh, M. (2011). *Managing Elections: Definition and Classification of Election Management Bodies*.
- Andreas, S. (2002). The menu of manipulation. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), 36–50.
- Bangbose, J. A. (2012). Electoral violence and Nigeria's 2011 general elections. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4(1), 205–219.
- Baxter, J. (1997). Techniques to effective election management. *Elections: Perspectives on Establishing Democratic Practices*.
- Bernhagen, P., & Marsh, M. (2007). Voting and protesting: Explaining citizen participation in old and new European democracies. *Democratisation*, 14(1), 44–72.
- Birch, S. (2005). Explaining confidence in the conduct of elections. *Elections, Public Opinion and Political Parties Conference, University of Essex*.
- Birch, S. (2008). Electoral institutions and popular confidence in electoral processes: A cross-national analysis. *Electoral Studies*, 27(2), 305–320.
- Birch, S. (2010). Perceptions of electoral fairness and voter turnout. *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(12), 1601–1622.
- Birch, S. (2011). *Electoral malpractice*. Oxford University Press on Demand.
- Birch, S., & Van Ham, C. (2017). Getting away with foul play? The importance of formal and informal oversight institutions for electoral integrity. *European Journal of Political Research*, 56(3), 487–511.

- Blaydes, L. (2010). *Elections and distributive politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Cambridge University Press.
- Boyko, N., & Herron, E. S. (2015). The effects of technical parties and partisan election management bodies on voting outcomes. *Electoral Studies*, 40, 23–33.
- Brinks, D., & Coppedge, M. (2006). Diffusion is no illusion: Neighbor emulation in the third wave of democracy. *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(4), 463–489.
- Catt, H., Ellis, A., Maley, M., Wolf, P., & Wall, A. (2014). *Electoral management design*. Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.
- Chanley, V. A., Rudolph, T. J., & Rahn, W. M. (2000). The origins and consequences of public trust in government: A time series analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 64(3), 239–256.
- Chu, Y., Bratton, M., Lagos, M., Shastri, S., & Tessler, M. (2008). Public opinion and democratic legitimacy. *Journal of Democracy*, 19(2), 74–87.
- Coffey, E. (2013). Pain tolerance: Economic voting in the Czech Republic. *Electoral Studies*, 32(3), 432–437.
- Concept paper*. (n.d.). European Conferences of Electoral Management Bodies. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/electoral-management-bodies-conference/concept-paper>
- Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C. H., Lindberg, S. I., Teorell, J., Altman, D., Bernhard, M., Fish, M. S., Glynn, A., & Hicken, A. (2019b). *V-dem codebook v9*.
- Cottrell, D., Herron, M. C., & Westwood, S. J. (2018). An exploration of Donald Trump's allegations of massive voter fraud in the 2016 General Election. *Electoral Studies*, 51, 123–142.

- Crawford, S. E., & Ostrom, E. (1995). A grammar of institutions. *American Political Science Review*, 89(3), 582–600.
- Democracy, I. I. for, & Assistance, E. (2002). *International Electoral Standards: Guidelines for Reviewing the Legal Framework of Elections*. International Idea.
- Doorenspleet, R. (2005). *Democratic transitions: Exploring the structural sources of the fourth wave*. Lynne Rienner Publishers Boulder, CO.
- ECP - Election Commission of Pakistan. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2020, from <https://www.ecp.gov.pk/frnGenericPage.aspx?PageID=21>
- Eisenstadt, T. A. (2004). Catching the state off guard: Electoral courts, campaign finance, and Mexico's separation of state and ruling party. *Party Politics*, 10(6), 723–745.
- Escaleras, M., Calcagno, P. T., & Shughart, W. F. (2012). Corruption and voter participation: Evidence from the US states. *Public Finance Review*, 40(6), 789–815.
- Florida "recounts" make Gore winner. (2001, January 29). the Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jan/29/uselections2000.usa>
- Frye, T. (2019). Economic sanctions and public opinion: Survey experiments from Russia. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(7), 967–994.
- Gandhi, J., & Lust-Okar, E. (2009). Elections under authoritarianism. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, 403–422.
- Gelb, A., & Grasmann, S. (2009). Confronting the oil curse. *Population and Natural Resources*.
- Gelman, (2012). The rise and fall of electoral authoritarianism in Russia. *Journal of Political Philosophy and Sociology of Politics* "Politia. Analysis. Chronicle Forecast", 4 (67).

- Golosov, G. V. (2017). Electoral integrity and voter turnout in contemporary autocracies. In *Electoral Integrity and Political Regimes* (pp. 77–99). Routledge.
- Grishin, (2018). The history of the election commissions. *Journal of Political Philosophy and Sociology of Politics* “Politia. Analysis. Chronicle Forecast”, 2 (89).
- Grishin, (2015). Institutionalization of state electoral policy. *Political Expertise: POLITEX*, 11 (1).
- Halff, M. (2012). *Confidence in elections and the acceptance of results* (Policy brief No.1).
- Halff, M. (2017). The United Nations approach to electoral management support. *Annual Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) Oslo*.
- Hall, T. E., Hyde, S., & Wellman, B. (2015). Election quality and public confidence in political institutions: Revisiting the orange revolution. *Unpublished Manuscript*.
- Hartlyn, J., McCoy, J., & Mustillo, T. M. (2008). Electoral governance matters: Explaining the quality of elections in contemporary Latin America. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(1), 73–98.
- Hasen, R. L. (2012). *The voting wars: From Florida 2000 to the next election meltdown*. Yale University Press.
- Hetherington, M. J., & Nugent, J. D. (2001). Explaining Public Support for Devolution. *What Is It about Government That Americans Dislike?*, 134.
- Hounkpe, M., & Fall, I. M. (2011). *Electoral commissions in west africa: A comparative study*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Regional Office Abuja.
- Howard, M. M., & Roessler, P. G. (2006). Liberalizing electoral outcomes in competitive authoritarian regimes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2), 365–381.

- James, T. S. (2019). *Comparative Electoral Management: Performance, Networks and Instruments*. Routledge.
- José Miguel Insulza, Albert R. Ramdin, Víctor Rico Frontaura, Pablo Gutiérrez. (2009). *Strengthening Electoral Processes: The Role of Electoral Management Bodies between Elections, Voter Registry, and International Electoral Observation*. Secretary General of the Organization of American States (SG/OAS).
- Kerevel, Y. (2009). Election management bodies and public confidence in elections: Lessons from Latin America. *Washington, DC: International Foundation for Electoral Systems*.
- Kiesraad. (2016, April 22). *History of the Electoral Council—About us—Kiesraad* [Webpagina]. Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties. <https://english.kiesraad.nl/about-us/history-of-the-electoral-council>
- Kitschelt, H. (2000). Linkages between citizens and politicians in democratic polities. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33(6–7), 845–879.
- Klein, K. (1995). Approaches to Conducting Elections: Why an Electoral Commission? *Paper Prepared at IFES for Presentation to the Constitutional Assembly of the Republic of South Africa. Cape Town*.
- Lawson, K. (2010). *Political Parties and Democracy [5 volumes]*. ABC-CLIO.
- Lehoucq, F. E. (2002). Can parties police themselves? Electoral governance and democratization. *International Political Science Review*, 23(1), 29–46.
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1971). Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American Political Science Review*, 65(3), 682–693.

- Lindberg, S. I. (2002). *The power of elections: Democratic participation, competition, and legitimacy in Africa*.
- Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*, 53(1), 69–105.
- López-Pintor, R. (2000a). *Electoral management bodies as institutions of governance*.
- Lower election threshold in Lithuania – more democracy or chaos?* (2019, December 12). Baltic News Network - News from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. <https://bnn-news.com/lower-election-threshold-in-lithuania-more-democracy-or-chaos-208405>
- Lust, E. (2009). Democratization by elections? Competitive clientelism in the Middle East. *Journal of Democracy*, 20(3), 122–135.
- Magaloni, B. (2006). *Voting for autocracy: Hegemonic party survival and its demise in Mexico* (Vol. 296). Cambridge University Press Cambridge.
- Magaloni, B. (2010). The game of electoral fraud and the ousting of authoritarian rule. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(3), 751–765.
- Makulilo, A. B. (2009). Independent electoral commission in Tanzania: A false debate? *Representation*, 45(4), 435–453.
- Massicotte, L., Blais, A., & Yoshinaka, A. (2004). *Establishing the rules of the game: Election laws in democracies*. University of Toronto Press.
- Matlosa, K. (2004). *Managing Democracy: A review of SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections*.
- McCann, J. A., & Dominguez, J. I. (1998). Mexicans react to electoral fraud and political corruption: An assessment of public opinion and voting behavior. *Electoral Studies*, 17(4), 483–503.

- McFaul, M. (1996). Russia's 1996 presidential elections. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 12(4), 318–350.
- Milligan, K., Moretti, E., & Oreopoulos, P. (2004). Does education improve citizenship? Evidence from the United States and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Public Economics*, 88(9–10), 1667–1695.
- Morris, S. D. (1999). Corruption and the Mexican political system: Continuity and change. *Third World Quarterly*, 20(3), 623–643.
- Mozaffar, S. (2002). Patterns of electoral governance in Africa's emerging democracies. *International Political Science Review*, 23(1), 85–101.
- Mozaffar, S., & Schedler, A. (2002). The comparative study of electoral governance—Introduction. *International Political Science Review*, 23(1), 5–27.
- Musa, S. (2001). Regional workshop on capacity building in electoral administration in Africa: Nigeria's experience in electoral management. *A Paper Presented at CAFRAD, Tangier, Morocco (24th-28th September, 2001)*.
- Norris, P. (2004). *Electoral engineering: Voting rules and political behavior*. Cambridge university press.
- Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens revisited*. Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, P. (2012). Are There Global Norms and Universal Standards of Electoral Integrity and Malpractice? *Comparing Public and Expert Perceptions. Challenges of Electoral Integrity. Madrid*, 4–6.
- Norris, P. (2013). The new research agenda studying electoral integrity. *Electoral Studies*, 32(4), 563–575.
- Norris, P. (2014). *Why electoral integrity matters*. Cambridge University Press.

- Norris, P. (2019). Do perceptions of electoral malpractice undermine democratic satisfaction? The US in comparative perspective. *International Political Science Review*, 40(1), 5–22.
- Norris, P., Frank, R. W., & i Coma, F. M. (2014). Measuring electoral integrity around the world: A new dataset. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 47(4), 789–798.
- Norris, P., & Grömping, M. (2019). *Electoral Integrity Worldwide*.
- Office for Democratic Institutions and Human. (2003). *Existing commitments for democratic elections in OSCE participating states*. OSCE/ODIHR.
- Okoh, A. O. (2005). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and election management in Nigeria: The April 2003 general elections in perspective. *The Constitution*, 5(4), 23–48.
- Opitz, C., Fjelde, H., & Höglund, K. (2013). Including peace: The influence of electoral management bodies on electoral violence. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 7(4), 713–731.
- Organization of American States. (2010). *Seventh inter-American meeting of electoral management bodies “Increasing access to electoral processes.”*
- OSCE / Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. (n.d.). Retrieved April 23, 2020, from <https://www.osce.org/gsearch>
- Otaola, M. L. (2018). To include or not to include? Party representation in electoral institutions and confidence in elections: A comparative study of Latin America. *Party Politics*, 24(5), 598–608.
- “Overview of the PNGEC”. *Electoral Commission of Papua New Guinea*. (n.d.). <http://www.pngec.gov.pg/irc/about-pngec/about-us>

- Park, B. B. (2019). How Do Sanctions Affect Incumbent Electoral Performance? *Political Research Quarterly*, 72(3), 744–759.
- Pastor, R. A. (1999). The role of electoral administration in democratic transitions: Implications for policy and research. *Democratization*, 6(4), 1–27.
- Peterson, R. A. (2000). A meta-analysis of variance accounted for and factor loadings in exploratory factor analysis. *Marketing Letters*, 11(3), 261–275.
- Przeworski, A. (1991). *Democracy and the market: Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge University Press.
- Puddington and Dunham. (2018). *Freedom in the World 2018 The Annual Survey of Political Rights & Civil Liberties*. ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.
- Responsibilities—The Federal Returning Officer*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2020, from <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/ueber-uns/aufgaben.html>
- Rosas, G. (2010a). Trust in elections and the institutional design of electoral authorities: Evidence from Latin America. *Electoral Studies*, 29(1), 74–90.
- Ross, M. L. (2013). *The oil curse: How petroleum wealth shapes the development of nations*. Princeton University Press.
- Russian officials call for governor's suspicious election to be annulled*. (2018, September 19). The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/19/russia-outcry-widespread-voter-governor-election-annul>
- Schedler, A. (2002). The nested game of democratization by elections. *International Political Science Review*, 23(1), 103–122.
- Schedler, A. (2013). *The politics of uncertainty: Sustaining and subverting electoral authoritarianism*. OUP Oxford.

- Sheppard, M. C. (2007). *The Federal Election Commission: Policy, Politics, and Administration*. University Press of Amer.
- Simpser, A. (2012). Does electoral manipulation discourage voter turnout? Evidence from Mexico. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(3), 782–795.
- Sjoberg, F. M. (2013). Political Parties and Election Fraud. Available at SSRN 2274873.
- Snapshot. (n.d.). Retrieved April 23, 2020, from [https://www.osce.org/gsearch?qr=FEDERAL%20REPUBLIC%20OF%20GERMANY%20ELECTIONS%20TO%20THE%20FEDERAL%20PARLIAMENT%20\(BUNDESTAG\)](https://www.osce.org/gsearch?qr=FEDERAL%20REPUBLIC%20OF%20GERMANY%20ELECTIONS%20TO%20THE%20FEDERAL%20PARLIAMENT%20(BUNDESTAG))
- Sweden: Governmental in Form, Independent in Practice: A Decentralized Election Management System—. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2020, from <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/em/annex/electoral-management-case-studies/sweden-governmental-in-form-independent-in>
- Tarouco, G. (2017). Electoral governance in Latin America and the behaviour of oppositions 1. In *Electoral Integrity and Political Regimes* (pp. 44–59). Routledge.
- Topf, R. (1995). Beyond electoral participation. *Citizens and the State*, 1, 52–91.
- Torres, L. E. M., & Díaz, E. C. R. (2015). ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE: MORE THAN JUST ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION. *Mexican Law Review*, 8, 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mexlaw.2015.12.002>
- Tsie, B. (2003). The role, functions and performance of Botswana's Independent Electoral Commission. *Journal of African Elections*, 2(1), 145–151.
- Van Aaken, A. (2009). Independent Electoral Management Bodies-Any Impact on the Observed Level of Democracy? A Conceptual Framework. *Constitutional Political Economy*, 20(3/4), 296–322.

- Van Ham, C., & Lindberg, S. (2015). When Guardians Matter Most: Exploring the conditions under which electoral management body institutional design affects election integrity. *Irish Political Studies*, 30(4), 454–481.
- Wall, A. (2006a). *Electoral management design: The international IDEA handbook*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
- Warehouse was electoral fraud factory*. (2005, April 5). The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/apr/05/uk.localgovernment>
- WVS: Public opinion data - The Electoral Integrity Project. (n.d.). Retrieved May 14, 2020, from <https://sites.google.com/site/electoralintegrityproject4/projects/mass-survey>
- Zakaria, F. (1997). Illiberal Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*, 76(6), 22–43.

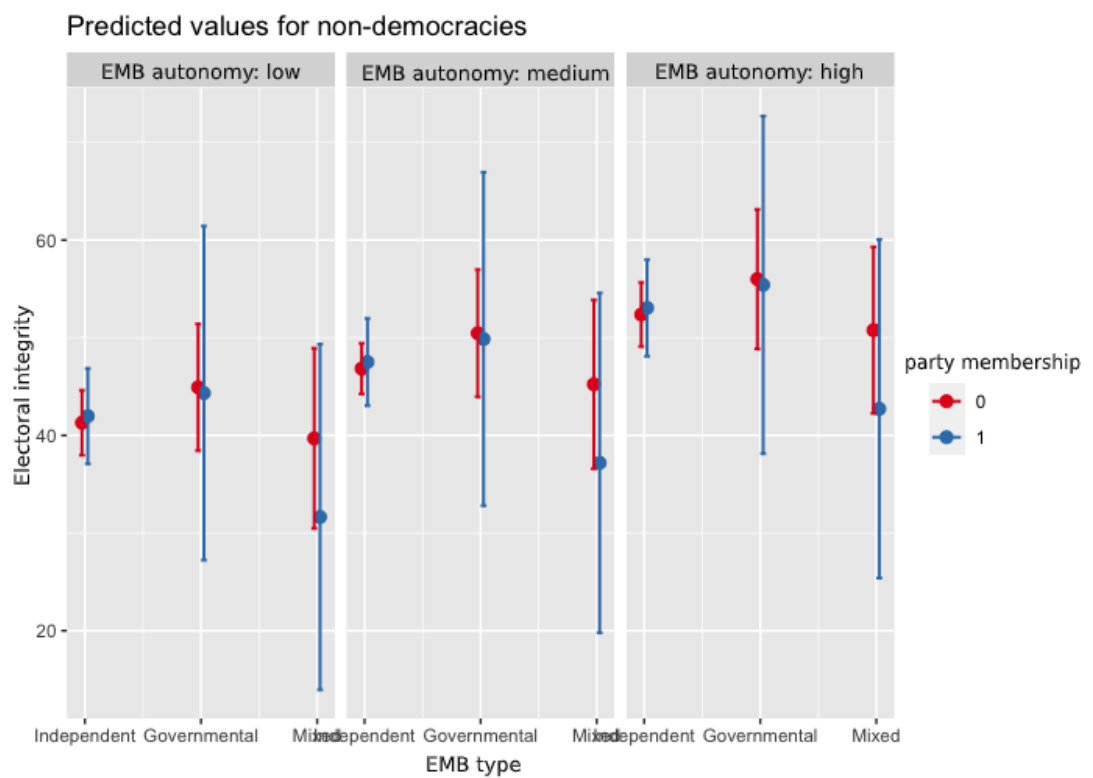
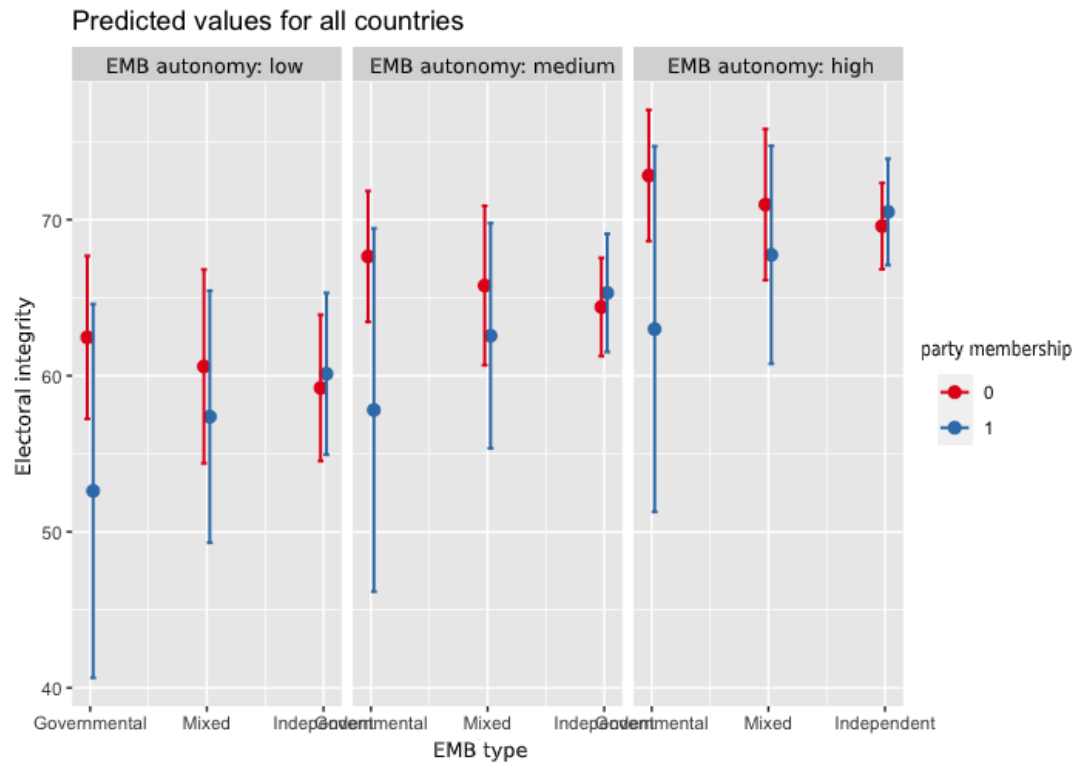
Data sources

- ACE Electoral Knowledge Network—. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2020, from <http://aceproject.org/>
- Boix, C., Miller, M., & Rosato, S. (2018). *Boix-Miller-Rosato Dichotomous Coding of Democracy, 1800-2015* [Data set]. Harvard Dataverse. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FJLMKT>
- Freedom House. (n.d.). Retrieved January 19, 2019, from <https://freedomhouse.org/>
- Home / V-Dem. (n.d.). Retrieved January 19, 2019, from <https://www.v-dem.net/en/>
- Norris, P., Wynter, T., & Cameron, S. (2018). *Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-6.5)* [Data set]. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/VEWJQI>

The Electoral Integrity Project *The Electoral Integrity Project*. (n.d.). The Electoral Integrity Project. Retrieved April 12, 2020, from <https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com>

World Development Indicators / DataBank. (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2020, from <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

Appendix 1



Appendix 1 (continued)

