

Technology in the election process

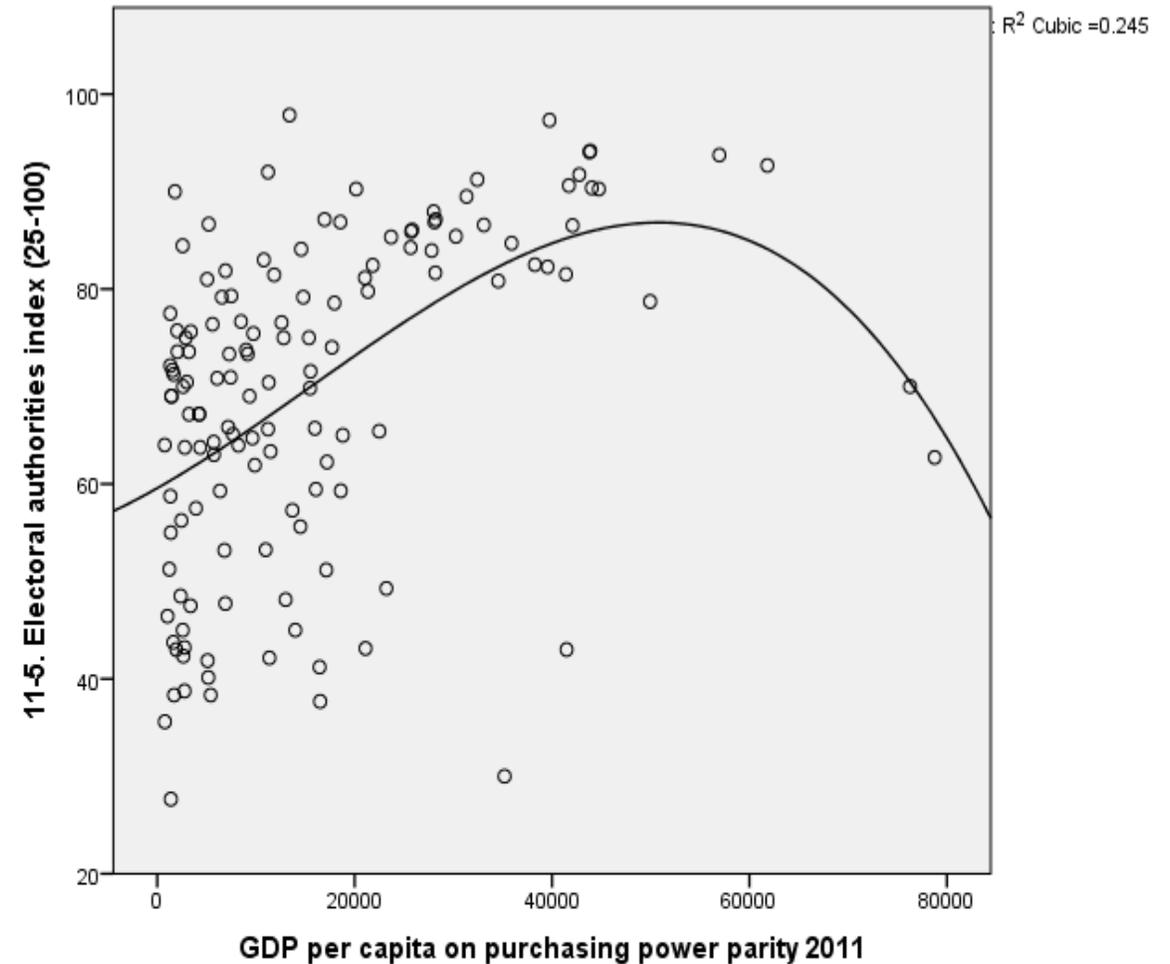
Who governs?

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Variation in electoral management board performance

- ▶ While many elections are conducted across the world to very high standards, it is an enormous logistical task.
- ▶ It is no surprise that there is variation in the quality of electoral management board delivery.



Electoral Authorities performance (2013-5) and GDP per capita (2011). Source: James based on Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Database

Electoral Management Bodies

- ▶ EMBs necessary to guarantee trust in the process
- ▶ Trust important for all parties to accept the outcome of elections

What do we know about EMBs

- ▶ What works?
 - ▶ Independence (Birch, 2013, Norris, 2015, van Ham and Lindberg, 2015)
 - ▶ Use of performance monitoring (James, 2013)
 - ▶ Funding (Clark 2014, James 2014)
 - ▶ New challenges (James, 2014, Loeber 2017)
- ▶ Limited data on EMBS:
 - ▶ International IDEA classifications
 - ▶ Surveys of electoral officials in the UK and USA, but no cross-national comparisons.

Technology in the Election process

- ▶ Not just e-voting but many more possibilities
- ▶ From software to register candidates and voters to voting computers and internet voting
- ▶ Use of technology has advantages for the election process
- ▶ Requires a re-thinking of choices that were made with regard to the process
- ▶ Not enough to just replace paper with technology

IT projects and government

- ▶ Often lack of IT skills within government
- ▶ Cannot compete with salaries offered in private sector
- ▶ Thus reliance on private IT providers
- ▶ Outsourcing can lead to uneven relationship

Use of private companies

- ▶ Not necessarily bad
- ▶ However, risk is that private companies dictate what is possible
- ▶ Reliance can also lead to less knowledge in government
- ▶ Example: Dutch case
- ▶ What are the interests of the private company in the outcome of the elections?

Ownership of technology

- ▶ If government buys the technology: danger of lock-in with rapidly old-fashion technology (think Microsoft upgrades)
- ▶ Ownership in hands private company leads to problems with proprietary protections (source code)
- ▶ Who has enough knowledge to check correctness
- ▶ EMBs often very small bodies, lack of knowledge?

Research question

What are the effects of the use of technology in the election process for the independence of EMBs?

The surveys

- ▶ A structural survey of *one senior official* in each EMB:
 - ▶ The organisational design of the EMB
 - ▶ The volume of staff
 - ▶ The tasks and responsibilities of the EMB
 - ▶ The decision making process within the EMB
 - ▶ The budget and resources of the EMB
 - ▶ The EMBs involvement with the international community
 - ▶ Use of ICT in the electoral process
- ▶ An online survey of *all personnel*, to identify:
 - ▶ Role within the EMB
 - ▶ Perceptions of the quality of elections in their own country
 - ▶ Perceptions of the human resource practices and their workplace
 - ▶ Training and professional development
 - ▶ Demographic information

Data

- ▶ EMS survey: all Council of Europe countries
- ▶ Collected between July 2016 and September 2017
- ▶ Structural survey contains questions on technology used, role of EMB in decision-making process, ownership and providence of technical support on Election Day

Preliminary findings

- ▶ All countries that responded use a form of technology with exception of Belarus, Slovakia and Sweden: E-enabled elections have become the norm
- ▶ However only 9 countries use devices that are traditionally labelled as e-voting: voting machines, internet voting or devices for electronic counting
- ▶ Means that public might be unaware of most of the use of technology

Role of EMB in decision-making process

Role	Frequency	Percentage
Decisive	15	44
Advisory	8	24
No involvement	3	9
Mixed	4	12

15 EMBs decisive role, 9 countries national legislature, 5 countries national executive and 3 countries another body. No countries leave this to the local government.

Ownership of technology

Ownership	Frequency	Percent
EMB	21	61,8
Body of central government	6	17,6
Body of local government	4	11,8
Private company	9	26,5
Other	5	14,7

Technical support on Election Day

Technical support	Frequency	Percentage
EMB staff	14	28
Employees central government	7	14
Employees local government	4	8
Employees private company	19	39
Other	5	10

Preliminary conclusions

- ▶ Use of technology in elections is now rule and not exception
- ▶ Raises questions on consequences for independence of EMBs that so far have been understudied
- ▶ Results show large dependency on private companies both in terms of ownership and technical support
- ▶ Question who governs elections when technology is used

Next steps

- ▶ Add data from other parts of the world, ELECT survey and recent additions to EMS survey (approximately 50 more countries so far)
- ▶ Further analysis of the data
- ▶ Data will be made available to other researchers
- ▶ www.electoralmanagement.com

Questions?

Thank you