

Pippa Norris, Sarah Cameron, and Thomas Wynter, eds. *Electoral Integrity in America: Securing Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. xvii, 258 pp. (\$99.00 cloth, \$39.95 paper).

Norris, Cameron, and Wynter's edited volume examines a timely and important issue facing American politics: the integrity of our electoral system. Connected with the Electoral Integrity Project (<https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/>), the volume puts forth an argument for electoral integrity that link areas of the electoral cycles often thought of as separate, but show, in reality, these areas are an intricately linked feature of electoral democracy. This volume establishes a sobering reality of elections in America. As witnessed in the 2016 presidential election, the American system faces problematic issues that often plague struggling democracies around the world. From orchestrated misinformation campaigns and "fake news" to a lack of a bipartisan consensus on the basic ground rules of the electoral playing field, the United States election system is facing both new issues that have emerged in recent years and old ones that have never really gone away.

This volume starts by developing a theoretical framework that captures the complexity and interconnectedness of the concept of electoral integrity in eleven stages of the electoral cycle. The subsequent chapters cover most of these steps with campaign finance being one noticeable missing component from the volume. This framework and measurement of electoral integrity is based around international standards from the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) expert rolling survey. The PEI has been used since 2012 to provide a comparison of election performance of not only countries with presidential and parliamentary elections but also within countries that use a federal system. This provides a good setup for the book as the first chapter establishes not only how the United States compares globally but also how states within the U.S. compare to one another. This added comparative perspective is something many scholars of American politics often ignore. Chapter 4 deals with the methodological issues related to trying to boil down the complexities of electoral integrity into a single measure and the advantages and disadvantages of the measure. Most notably, the PEI is a measure of perception, with the potential biases involved in individual perception that go along with it, rather than actual impact. This allows for greater inclusion in the data of countries around the world where administrative data are not, in some cases, as accessible as in the United States. While voting and election data are generally (with some exceptions specifically at the state and local level) more readily available and detailed in the United States, as chapter 4 points out, the result is often that the challenges to electoral integrity in the American context have become subtler and often more difficult to discern.

Most chapters focus on individual aspects of the eleven stages of the electoral cycle established in the introduction. These chapters provide a variety of approaches to the individual questions that range from overviews of current practices and laws to empirical analyses. Additionally, the chapters range in coverage of the United States electoral system at the federal

level to the state and local level while some provide a comparative comparison of the United States to other countries. Overall, most of the chapters relate the findings directly back to the electoral cycle and integrity framework providing a cohesiveness to the argument throughout the volume about electoral integrity in the United States. The areas covered range from well-known topics related to elections (i.e. gerrymandering) to newer areas emerging as relevant to the health of electoral systems (i.e. misinformation and fake news), and other topics cover areas most Americans probably associate with emerging democracies, such as electoral transparency and the use of electoral observers.

Taken together, the examinations of these individual stages of the electoral cycle presents a serious consideration of a variety of trade-offs found in electoral systems (i.e. the law v. implementation, security v. access) and shows understanding the full breadth of electoral systems goes beyond simply knowing what happens on Election Day. The findings show there must be careful consideration paid to the costs and benefits of all aspects of administering elections. Perhaps one of the most obvious paths for consideration that emerges is the need for greater cooperation among election officials at and between all levels throughout the country. However, this is not something the American federal system or current partisan climate easily lends itself to.

Overall, the American system appears to suffer from many of the same concerns facing democracies around the world. While outright voter fraud is a rare occurrence in U.S. elections, Vickery and Szilagyi (Chapter 10) note that systemic manipulation, such as gerrymandering, and malpractice, such as various voter registration maintenance standards, present the biggest concerns in the American system. However, Americans appear to have a blind spot when it comes to recognizing electoral struggles within their own country that they often notice in others. Without acknowledging this blind spot, any true reforms will most likely not be attempted or be unsuccessful.

The arguments presented in this volume do not paint a rosy picture of the health of elections in the United States, and do not provide any easy answers to right past and ongoing wrongs. However, the volume closes by presenting a sequence of four reforms that should be part of any comprehensive movement to strengthen electoral integrity in the United States. This sequence includes: 1) improving legal regulations regarding registration and ballot access, 2) building greater capacity for implementing the laws and managing the administration of elections, 3) expanding transparency through greater use of electoral observers, and 4) strengthening accountability and oversight of elections. Given the American federal system with its patchwork set of electoral laws and administration and the general apathy of many Americans towards electoral reform in the country, this sequence would seemingly face an uphill battle towards implementation.

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