

Political Science 485-001: Election Forensics

Fall 2026

Monday, Wednesday 1–2:30 (1339 MH)

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Office hours: Tue 1–3 or other times by appointment.

Course web page: in Canvass; syllabus also at <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/ps485.html>

Assignment Due Dates

due date	description	weight
Oct 14	midterm exam	25%
Nov 16	eforensics exercise	10%
Nov 20	proposal for final paper (see file fpaper.pdf)	5%
Dec 11, 11:30pm	final paper (see file fpaper.pdf)	30%
—	participation	5%
Dec 15, 4:00pm–6:00pm	final exam	25%

Reading Availability

The primary source for reading and lectures in this course is a working paper, “Measuring Realized Election Frauds,” which is in **EFpaper.pdf** (version of August 30, 2026) and my book MS, same title, which is in **EFbook2ss.pdf** (version of August 20, 2026), both posted at the Canvas course site. The versions posted at the beginning of the semester will be updated with revisions, as I will announce.

Other material provides background, elaborations and alternatives to the material in the previously mentioned work. Much of this material is in journal articles and papers posted on the Canvas course site. Other articles are easily found via Google or in <https://www.jstor.org/> (use University of Michigan Ann Arbor login) or <https://lib.umich.edu/>. In the following listing, required reading is preceded by a bullet. Other items are recommended.

Class meeting and reading schedule

1. introduction (Sept 2 and 9)

- Lehoucq, Fabrice. 2003. “Electoral Fraud: Causes, Types, and Consequences,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (June): 233–256.
(in file **lehoucq.annurev.polisci.6.121901.pdf**)
- Mebane. 2026. “Measuring Realized Election Frauds,” **EFpaper.pdf**, Introduction.
- Francisco Cantú. 2019. “The Fingerprints of Fraud: Evidence from Mexico’s 1988 Presidential Election.” *American Political Science Review* 113 (3): 710–726. (in file **fingerprints_of_fraud_evidence_from_mexicos_1988_presidential_election.pdf**)
- Matt Bishop, Sean Peisert, Candice Hoke, Mark Graff and David Jefferson. 2009. “E-Voting and Forensics: Prying Open the Black Box.” 2009 Electronic Voting Technology Workshop/Workshop on Trustworthy Elections, Montreal, August 10–11.
(in file **bishop.pdf**)

- Michigan Bureau of Elections. 2020. “Election Security in Michigan.” (in file `Security_best_practices_693420_7.pdf`) and at https://www.michigan.gov/documents/sos/Security_best_practices_693420_7.pdf

Challú, Cristian, Enrique Seira and Alberto Simpser. 2020. “The Quality of Vote Tallies: Causes and Consequences.” *American Political Science Review* doi:10.1017/S0003055420000398, pp. 1–15. (in file `quality_of_vote_tallies_causes_and_consequences.pdf`)

2. the US in 2000 (Sep 14–16)

- Jonathan N. Wand, Kenneth Shotts, Jasjeet S. Sekhon, Walter R. Mebane, Jr., Michael Herron and Henry E. Brady. 2001. “The Butterfly Did It: The Aberrant Vote for Buchanan in Palm Beach County, Florida.” *American Political Science Review* 95 (December): 793–810. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/butterfly.pdf>
- Henry E. Brady, Michael Herron, Walter R. Mebane, Jr., Jasjeet S. Sekhon, Kenneth Shotts and Jonathan Wand. 2001. “Law and Data: The Butterfly Ballot Episode.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34: 59–69. (in file `brady.etal.ps2001.pdf`)
- Mebane. 2004. “The Wrong Man is President! Overvotes in the 2000 Presidential Election in Florida.” *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (September): 525–535. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/mebane.pop2004.pdf>

Hasen, Richard L. 2004. “A Critical Guide to Bush v. Gore Scholarship,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 297–313. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=491326>

Toobin, Jeffrey. 2001. *Too Close to Call*. New York: Random House.

Kirk Wolter, Diana Jergovic, Whitney Moore, Joe Murphy, Colm O’Muircheartaigh. 2003. “Reliability of the uncertified ballots in the 2000 presidential election in Florida.” *The American Statistician* 57 (1): 1–14.

Walter R. Mebane, Jr., and Jasjeet S. Sekhon. 2004. “Robust Estimation and Outlier Detection for Overdispersed Multinomial Models of Count Data.” *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (April): 392–411.

3. strategic behavior (Sep 21–28)

- Gary W. Cox. 1994. Strategic Voting Equilibria Under the Single Nontransferable Vote. *American Political Science Review* 88 (Sep): 608–621. (in file `cox.apsr1994.pdf`)
- Riker, William H. 1982. *Liberalism Against Populism: A Confrontation Between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland. Chapter 5 and sections 6A, 6B, 6F. (in file `Riker56.pdf`)
- Alesina, Alberto, and Howard Rosenthal. 1995. *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy*. New York: Cambridge UP. Chapter 3. (in file `AlesinaRosenthal3.pdf`)
- Mebane, Walter R., Jr. 2000. “Coordination, Moderation, and Institutional Balancing in American Presidential and House Elections.” *American Political Science Review* 94 (March): 37–57. MS version available at <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/covote.pdf>

- Riker, William H. 1982. “The Two-Party System and Duverger’s Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science.” *American Political Science Review*, 76 (Dec.): 753–766. (in file `riker.apsr1982.pdf`)
- Craven, John. 1992. *Social Choice: A Framework for Collective Decisions and Individual Judgements*. Cambridge UP. Chapters 2 and 3 and pages 67–74 (sections 5.1–5.2). (in file `Craven23.pdf`)
- Cox, Gary. 1996. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World’s Electoral System*. Cambridge.
- Riker, William H. 1986. *The Art of Political Manipulation*. Yale UP.
- Riker, William H. 1982. *Liberalism Against Populism: A Confrontation Between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.
- Saari, Donald. 2001. *Decisions and elections: explaining the unexpected*. Cambridge.
- Alesina, Alberto, and Howard Rosenthal. 1995. *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy*. New York: Cambridge UP.
- Alberto Alesina, John Londregan and Howard Rosenthal. 1993. A Model of the Political Economy of the United States *American Political Science Review* 87 (Mar): 12–33.
- Mebane, Walter R., Jr., and Jasjeet S. Sekhon. 2002. “Coordination and Policy Moderation at Midterm.” *American Political Science Review* 96 (March): 141–157. MS version available at <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/midterm.pdf>
- Walter R. Mebane, Jr., Samuel Baltz and Fabricio Vasselai. 2019. “Using Agent-Based Models to Simulate Strategic Behavior in Elections.” (in file `pm19.pdf`).

4. eforensics basics (Sep 30–Oct 7)

- Mebane. 2026. “Measuring Realized Election Frauds,” `EFpaper.pdf`. Sections 1–3.
 - Mebane. 2026. `EFbook2ss.pdf` section 2.6, chapters 3 (section 3.1), 4 (sections 4.1 and 4.4).
- Klimek, Peter, Yuri Yegorov, Rudolf Hanel, and Stefan Thurner. 2012. Statistical detection of systematic election irregularities. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 109 (41): 16469–16473. <http://www.pnas.org/content/109/41/16469.full> (in file `PNAS-2012-Klimek-16469-73.pdf`)
- Diogo Ferrari, Kevin McAlister, Walter R. Mebane, Jr., and Patrick Y. Wu. 2019. **eforensics R** package. https://github.com/UMeforensics/eforensics_public.git (also in file `eforensics_0.0.4.tar.gz`)

5. the US in 2004: lost votes and strategic behavior (Oct 12)

- Mebane. 2026. “Measuring Realized Election Frauds,” `EFpaper.pdf`. Section 4.
 - Mebane. 2026. `EFbook2ss.pdf` chapter 8 (section 8.1)
- Bawn, Kathleen. 1999. “Voter Responses to Electoral Complexity: Ticket Splitting, Rational Voters and Representation in the Federal Republic of Germany.” *British Journal of Political Science* 29(3): 487–505. (in file `Bawn-VoterResponsesElectoral-1999.pdf`).

- Shikano, Susumu and Michael Herrmann and Paul W. Thurner. 2009. "Strategic Voting under Proportional Representation: Threshold Insurance in German Elections," *West European Politics* 32(3): 634–656. (in file `shikano.herrmann.thurner.wep2009.pdf`).
- Herrmann, Michael and Franz Urban Pappi. 2008. Strategic Voting in German Constituencies. *Electoral Studies* 27 (June 2): 228–244. (in file `herrmann.pappi.es2008.pdf`)
- Blais, Andre, Richard Nadeau, Elisabeth Gidengil and Neil Nevitte. 2001. Measuring Strategic Voting in Multiparty Plurality Elections. *Electoral Studies* 20 (May 3): 343–352. (in file `blais.nadeau.gidengil.nevitte.es2001.pdf`)
- Mark Lindeman. 2006. "Beyond Exit Poll Fundamentalism: Surveying the 2004 Election Debate." Paper prepared for presentation at the 61st Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Montreal, Canada, May 18-21, 2006. (in file `beyond-epf.pdf`)
- Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International. 2005. "Evaluation of Edison/Mitofsky Election System 2004." (in file `EvaluationJan192005.pdf`)
- House Judiciary Committee Democratic Staff. 2005. *Preserving Democracy: What Went Wrong in Ohio*. (in file `final.status.report.pdf`).
- Diane Feldman and Cornell Belcher. 2005. "DNC Voting Experience Survey." Section III of *Democracy at Risk: The 2004 Election in Ohio*. Democratic National Committee, Voting Rights Institute, June 22, 2005. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/Ohio2004/OhioReportCover2Cover.pdf>
- Diane Feldman and Cornell Belcher. 2005. "DNC Provisional Ballot Survey." Section IV of *Democracy at Risk: The 2004 Election in Ohio*. Democratic National Committee, Voting Rights Institute, June 22, 2005. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/Ohio2004/OhioReportCover2Cover.pdf>
- Tanner, John. 2005. Letter to Nick A. Soulas, Jr., Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Franklin County, Ohio. June 29, 2005. (in file `franklin.oh.pdf`)
- Mebane. 2005. "Voting Machine Allocation in Franklin County, Ohio, 2004: Response to U.S. Department of Justice Letter of June 29, 2005." <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/franklin2.pdf>
- Mebane. 2005. "Inferences from the DNC Provisional Ballot Voter Survey." Section V of *Democracy at Risk: The 2004 Election in Ohio*. Democratic National Committee, Voting Rights Institute, June 22, 2005.
- Walter R. Mebane, Jr., and Michael C. Herron. 2005. "Ohio 2004 Election: Turnout, Residual Votes and Votes in Precincts and Wards" and "Ohio 2004 Election: New Registrants, Provisional Ballots, Voting Machines, Turnout and Polls Open Elapsed Times in Franklin County Precincts." Section VI of *Democracy at Risk: The 2004 Election in Ohio*. Democratic National Committee, Voting Rights Institute, June 22, 2005. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/Ohio2004/OhioReportCover2Cover.pdf>
- Bob Fittrakis, Steve Rosenfeld and Harvey Wasserman. 2006. *What Happened in Ohio: A Documentary Record of Theft and Fraud in the 2004 Election*.

7. lost votes and **eforensics** underestimates realized frauds (Oct 21–28)

- Mebane. 2026. **EFbook2ss.pdf** chapter 6, chapter 11
- Enikolopov, Ruben, Vasily Korovkin, Maria Petrova, Konstantin Sonin and Alexei Zakharov. 2013. “Field experiment estimate of electoral fraud in Russian parliamentary elections.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110 (2): 448–452. <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/12/19/1206770110.full.pdf> or <http://www.pnas.org/content/110/2/448.full> (in file **PNAS-2013-Enikolopov-448-52.pdf**).
- Democracy International, Inc. 2013. “GOLOS Impact Evaluation Final Report,” February 2013. Contract No.: AID- DFD-1-00-05-00198-00 Order No.: AID-OAA-TO-11-00062. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pbaae653.pdf (in file **pbaae653.pdf**).

8. more **eforensics**: magnitudes and multimodality; **eforensics** materials work (Nov 2–9)

- Mebane. 2026. **EFbook2ss.pdf** sections 4.3, 7.4, 9.5.

Paul Mwangi & Company. 2022. “Republic of Kenya in the Supreme Court of Kenya at Nairobi, Presidential Election Petition No. of 2022.” (particularly notice pp. 51–52) (in file **PETITION-1_odinga.pdf**)

9. mixture probabilities on the boundary (Nov 11–16)

- Mebane. 2026. **EFbook2ss.pdf** chapter 10.
- Mebane. 2025. **EFbook.pdf** section 14.3.3.

Peter Klimek, Raúl Jiménez and Manuel Hidalgo and Abraham Hinteregger and Stefan Thurner. 2018. “Forensic Analysis of Turkish Elections in 2017–2018.” *PLOS One* 13(10): e0204975. (in file **pone.0204975.pdf**).

Peter Klimek, Ahmet Aykaç and Stefan Thurner. 2023. “Forensic analysis of the Turkey 2023 presidential election reveals extreme vote swings in remote areas.” *PLOS One*, 18(11): e0293239. (in file **journal.pone.0293239**).

Marcus Mietzner. 2024. “Jokowi’s Pyrrhic Victory: Indonesia’s 2024 Elections and the Political Reinvention of Prabowo Subianto.” *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 46(2): 187–215. (in file **Mietzner Pyrrhic CSEA 2024.pdf**).

10. **eforensics** exercise due (Nov 16)

11. project work (Nov 18)

election monitoring organizations (examples).

<http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/ps485/monitoring.html>

12. proposal due for final paper (see file **fpaper.pdf**) (Nov 20)

13. president elections in the US in 2000, 2016, 2020 and 2024 (Nov 23 and 30)

- Mebane. 2026. **EFbook2ss.pdf** chapter 8.
- Mebane. 2025. **EFbook.pdf** section 9.1.

- Robert M. Stein, Christopher Mann, Charles Stewart III, Zachary Birenbaum, Anson Fung, Jed Greenberg, Farhan Kawsar, Gayle Alberda, R. Michael Alvarez, Lonna Atkeson, Emily Beaulieu, Nathaniel A. Birkhead, Frederick J. Boehmke, Joshua Boston, Barry C. Burden, Francisco Cantu, Rachael Cobb, David Darmofal, Thomas C. Ellington, Terri Susan Fine, Charles J. Finocchiaro, Michael D. Gilbert, Victor Haynes, Brian Janssen, David Kimball, Charles Kromkowski, Elena Llaudet, Kenneth R. Mayer, Matthew R. Miles, David Miller, Lindsay Nielson, Yu Ouyang, Costas Panagopoulos, Andrew Reeves, Min Hee Seo, Haley Simmons, Corwin Smidt, Farrah M. Stone, Rachel VanSickle-Ward, Jennifer Nicoll Victor, Abby Wood, and Julie Wronski. 2019. “Waiting to Vote in the 2016 Presidential Election: Evidence from a Multi-county Study.” *Political Research Quarterly* 1–19. (in file `Stein et al. 2019 waiting to vote.pdf`)
- Stephen Pettigrew. 2017. “The Racial Gap in Wait Times: Why Minority Precincts Are Underserved by Local Election Officials.” *Political Science Quarterly* 132(3):527–547 (in file `polq.12657.pdf`)
- M. Keith Chen, Kareem Haggag, Devin G. Pope, and Ryne Rohla. 2020. “Racial Disparities in Voting Wait Times: Evidence from Smartphone Data.” https://www.kareemhaggag.com/f/Racial_Disparities_in_Voting_Wait_Times.pdf (in file `Racial_Disparities_in_Voting_Wait_Times.pdf`)
- Walter R. Mebane, Jr., and Matthew Bernhard. 2017. “Effects of Voting Technologies and Recount Methods on Votes in Wisconsin and Michigan.” Working paper. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/recount2016.pdf>
- Hannah Klain, Kevin Morris, Max Feldman, and Rebecca Ayala. 2020. “Waiting to Vote: Racial Disparities in Election Day Experiences”(at https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/6_02_WaitingtoVote_FINAL.pdf).
- Barry C. Burden, David T. Canon, Kenneth R. Mayer, Donald P. Moynihan and Jacob R. Neihsel. 2017. “What Happens at the Polling Place: Using Administrative Data to Look Inside Elections.” *Public Administration Review* 77(3): 354–364. (in file `burden.etal.PAR2017.pdf`)

14. other tests (Dec 2–9)

- Allen Hicken and Walter R. Mebane, Jr. 2015. “A Guide to Election Forensics.” Working paper. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/USAID15/guide.pdf>
 - Walter R. Mebane, Jr. 2015. “Election Forensics Toolkit DRG Center Working Paper.” <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/USAID15/report.pdf>
- Arturas Rozenas. 2017. “Detecting Election Fraud from Irregularities in Vote-Share Distributions.” *Political Analysis* 25 (1): 41–56. (in file `fraud_detectionPA2017.pdf`)
- Pericchi, Luis Raúl and David Torres. 2011. “Quick Anomaly Detection by the Newcomb-Benford Law, with Applications to Electoral Processes Data from the USA, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.” *Statistical Science* 26 (Nov, 4): 502–516. (in file `STS0703-006R4A0.pdf`).
- Mebane, Walter R., Jr. 2014. “Can Votes Counts’ Digits and Benford’s Law Diagnose Elections?” In Steven J. Miller, *The Theory and Applications of Benford’s Law*, Princeton UP, 206–216. (in file `millier13.pdf`).

- Mebane. 2010. “Fraud in the 2009 Presidential Election in Iran?” *Chance* 23 (Mar.): 6–15. (in file CHANCE 23.1 - Mebane.pdf).
- Hyde, Susan D. 2007. “The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment.” *World Politics* 60 (Oct.): 37–63. (in file hyde.wp2007.pdf)
- Walter R. Mebane, Jr., and Kirill Kalinin 2015. “Election Forensics Toolkit.” <http://electionforensics.ddns.net:3838/test/> ; see also <https://electionforensics.cps.isr.umich.edu/>
- Francisco Cantu and Sebastian M. Saleigh. 2011. “Fraudulent Democracy? An Analysis of Argentina’s *Infamous Decade* using Supervised Machine Learning.” *Political Analysis* 19 (4): 409–433. (in file Political Analysis-2011-Cantú-409-33.pdf)
- Rundlett, Ashlea and Milan W. Svolic. 2016. “Deliver the Vote! Micromotives and Macrobehavior in Electoral Fraud.” *American Political Science Review* 110 (1): 180-197. (in file rundlett.svolic.apsr2016.pdf)
- Mebane. 2007. “Election Forensics: Statistics, Recounts and Fraud,” Presented at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 12–16. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/mw07.pdf>
- Beber, Bernd and Alexandra Scacco. 2012. What the Numbers Say: A Digit-Based Test for Election Fraud *Political Analysis* 20 (2): 211–234. (in file Political Analysis-2012-Beber-211-34.pdf)
- Kirill Kalinin and Walter R. Mebane, Jr. 2017. “Worst Election Ever in Russia?” Presented at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 6–9. (in file mw17C.pdf)
- Wendy K. Tam Cho and Brian J. Gaines. 2007. “Breaking the (Benford) Law: Statistical Fraud Detection in Campaign Finance.” *The American Statistician*, 61 (August): 218–223.
- Mebane. 2008. “Election Forensics: The Second-digit Benford’s Law Test and Recent American Presidential Elections.” In R. Michael Alvarez, Thad E. Hall and Susan D. Hyde, eds., *Election Fraud: Detecting and Deterring Electoral Manipulation*. Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 2008, pp. 162–181. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/fraud06.pdf>
- Mebane. 2006. “Election Forensics: Vote Counts and Benford’s Law,” Presented at the 2006 Summer Meeting of the Political Methodology Society, UC-Davis, July 20–22. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/pm06.pdf>
- Kirill Kalinin. 2017. “The Essays on Election Fraud in Authoritarian Regimes: III. Theory of Loyalty: Signaling Games of Election Frauds,” Ph.D. dissertation. (in file dissc_final_Walter.pdf)
- Mali Zhang, R. Michael Alvarez and Ines Levin. 2019. “Election Forensics: Using Machine Learning and Synthetic Data for Possible Election Anomaly Detection.” *PLOS ONE* 14(10):e0223950. <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/12/19/1206770110.full.pdf> (in file Election_forensics_Using_machine_learning_and_synt.pdf)
- Inès Levin, Gabe A. Cohn, Peter C. Ordeshook, and R. Michael Alvarez. 2009. “Detecting Voter Fraud in an Electronic Voting Context: An Analysis of the Unlimited Reelection Vote in Venezuela.” 2009 Electronic Voting Technology Workshop/Workshop on

- Trustworthy Elections, Montreal, August 10–11. (in file `levin.pdf` and at http://www.usenix.org/event/evtvote09/tech/full_papers/levin.pdf)
- Peter Ordeshook, Mikhail Myagkov and Dmitry Shakin. 2009. *The Forensics of Election Fraud*.
- Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov. 2012. “Which Elections Can Be Lost?” *Political Analysis* 20 (2): 191–210. (in file `Political Analysis-2012-Hyde-191-210.pdf`)
- Susan D. Hyde. 2011. *The Pseudo-Democrat’s Dilemma: Why Election Observation Became an International Norm*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.
- Bjornlund, Eric C. 2004. *Beyond Free and Fair: Monitoring Elections and Building Democracy*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Judith G. Kelley. 2012. *Monitoring Democracy: When International Election Observation Works, and Why It Often Fails*. Princeton UP.
- Pippa Norris. 2014. *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*. Cambridge.
- Ali Ansari, Daniel Berman and Thomas Rintoul. 2009. *Preliminary Analysis of the Voting Figures in Iran’s 2009 Presidential Election*. Chatham House, London. June 21, 2009. (in file `14234_iranelection0609.pdf`)
- Reza Esfandiari and Yousef Bozorgmehr. 2009. “A Rejoinder to the Chatham House report on Iran’s 2009 presidential election offering a new analysis on the results.” (in file `Iranian election.pdf`)
- Walter R. Mebane, Jr., and Jonathan Wall. 2015. “Election Frauds, Postelection Legal Challenges and Geography in Mexico.” Presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA, September 3–6, 2015. <http://www.umich.edu/~wmebane/apsa15.pdf>
- Joseph L. Klesner. 2007. The July 2006 Presidential and Congressional Elections in Mexico. *Electoral Studies* 26 (Dec 4): 803–808. (in file `klesner.es2007.pdf`)
- McCann, James A. and Jorge I. Domínguez. 1998. Mexicans React to Electoral Fraud and Political Corruption: an Assessment of Public Opinion and Voting Behavior. *Electoral Studies* 17 (Dec 4): 483–503. (in file `mccann.dominguez.es1998.pdf`)
- European Union Election Observation Mission. “Mexico Final Report, Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 2 July 2006.” November 23, 2006. (in file `2006_24_11_final_report_mexico.pdf`)