



THE ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PROJECT

WHY ELECTIONS FAIL AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

---CALL FOR PAPERS: PLEASE CIRCULATE---

INTERNATIONAL IDEA/ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PROJECT AWARD

2016 GRADUATE STUDENT ESSAY ON ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Monday 29 February 2016

Co-organizers: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA); Electoral Integrity Project (EIP; Harvard University & University of Sydney)

Description: Submissions are invited for the **2016 Electoral Integrity** graduate student essay competition.

The award will be presented to the author (or authors) of an outstanding graduate student essay written in English based on the paper's significant contribution to the theory and practice of electoral integrity.

Theme: Global concern about contentious elections has risen as elections have spread worldwide, becoming a standard part of the initial phases of peace-building and state-building processes even in inhospitable conditions, such as in Afghanistan, Libya, Nepal, and Iraq.

When does such conflict strengthen processes of democratization, such as where an outcry over election fraud and corruption destabilizes the old regime? When does it trigger a backlash or coup d'état which sets back democratic transitions? And when does conflict fizzle out without achieving any substantive reforms or opposition gains?

The theme for this year's essay competition is in line with a workshop on electoral integrity held prior to the 2016 IPSA World Congress in Istanbul. This workshop is titled "Contentious elections, conflict and regime change".

- This competition welcomes papers that *seek to examine and explain the consequences of contentious elections and election-related conflict for regime stability and change.*

Synopsis: Contentious elections are conceptualized as contests involving major challenges to the legitimacy of electoral actors, procedures, or outcomes, with different degrees of manifest severity in outbreaks of conflict and violence.

Despite a growing body of case-study research, little consensus surrounds the importance of particular underlying *causes*, and even less is known about the *consequences* of electoral conflict.

Outbreaks of violent conflict involving civilian casualties and even deaths during contentious elections can trigger widespread bloodshed, exacerbate inter-communal mistrust, and destabilize societies. Election-related violence and severe legitimacy challenges can undermine fragile democracies and reduce the capacity of the state to manage the delivery of effective welfare services and pro-poor growth.

At the same time, one of the most striking observations about election-related conflict is that this phenomenon has generated several divergent outcomes for regime stability and change.ⁱ Some notable cases have led to *regime transitions* and revolutionary change strengthening processes of democratization (exemplified by the color revolutions in Eurasia).ⁱⁱ Alternatively, many cases of repeated, violent, or prolonged electoral-related conflict have failed to catalyze any reform concessions or process of regime change (exemplified by the relatively peaceful Hong Kong 'umbrella' protests).ⁱⁱⁱ Finally, some cases of electoral-related conflict have led to anti-democratic *reversals* through a repressive backlash or, in some dramatic cases, military coups (such as in the February 2014 election in Thailand).

The reasons for these divergent outcomes are complex and may be context-dependent. Scholars and policymakers need to identify the risks of contentious elections and understand their impact more fully. This competition will therefore welcome contributions focusing on the causes and impacts of election-related conflict for regime stability and change in countries around the world.

Method and design: Essays can be based on any methods, including comparative cross-national time-series evidence and/or case-studies of historical processes within particular countries. Applicants can be from any social science discipline.

Previous work on electoral violence often focused on Sub-Saharan Africa. By contrast, this workshop would welcome papers comparing countries around the world, including cases in Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Sub-Saharan Africa.

Application instructions: Submissions must be received by **Monday 29 February 2016**. The award recipient will be notified in April 2016.

Papers are welcome from students enrolled in a graduate program (at Masters Level, Doctoral Level, or equivalent) at any time from 1 January to 31 December 2016 at an accredited university, regardless of gender, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, or citizenship.

To be considered, all applications must include:

- I. A paper written in English should be between 25 to 50 double-spaced pages, inclusive of reference matter;
- II. A cover page listing all the authors, contact details, title and a short 100 word abstract;
- III. A curriculum vitae; and,
- IV. A photocopied document demonstrating your student affiliation during 2016.

Co-authored papers will be considered for the award, but only if all authors were graduate students during 2016. The winning paper will be selected by a three-person award committee.

Award details: The author (or authors) of the winning paper will receive an award of US\$750 and a further award (up to US\$1,000) for the costs of attending the award ceremony at the pre-IPSA Workshop on Electoral Integrity in Istanbul in July 2016. The award recipient will also have the opportunity to present their paper at a relevant policy-makers conference (to be determined in consultation with International IDEA).

Application submission: Please submit applications by email to electoralintegrity@gmail.com.

Websites: <http://www.idea.int> / www.electoralintegrityproject.com

More information about the theme here: <http://bit.ly/1MB9bM0>

ⁱ Kuntz, Philipp and Thompson, Mark R. 2009. 'More than just the final straw stolen elections as revolutionary triggers.' *Comparative Politics* 41(3): 253-+; Pippa Norris. 2014. *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

ⁱⁱ Bunce, Valerie J. and Sharon L. Wolchik. 2006. 'Favorable conditions and electoral revolutions.' *Journal of Democracy* 17: 5-18; Tucker, Joshua. 2007. 'Enough! Electoral fraud, collective action problems, and post-communist colored revolutions.' *Perspectives on Politics* 5(3): 535-551; Bunce, Valerie J. and Sharon L. Wolchik. 2011. *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Post-Communist Countries*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Bunce, Valerie J., and Sharon L. Wolchik. 2010. 'Defeating dictators: Electoral change and stability in competitive authoritarian regimes.' *World Politics* 62(1): 43-86.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kalandadze, Katya and Orenstein, Mitchell A. 2009. 'Electoral protests and democratization beyond the color revolutions.' *Comparative Political Studies* 42(11): 1403-1425.