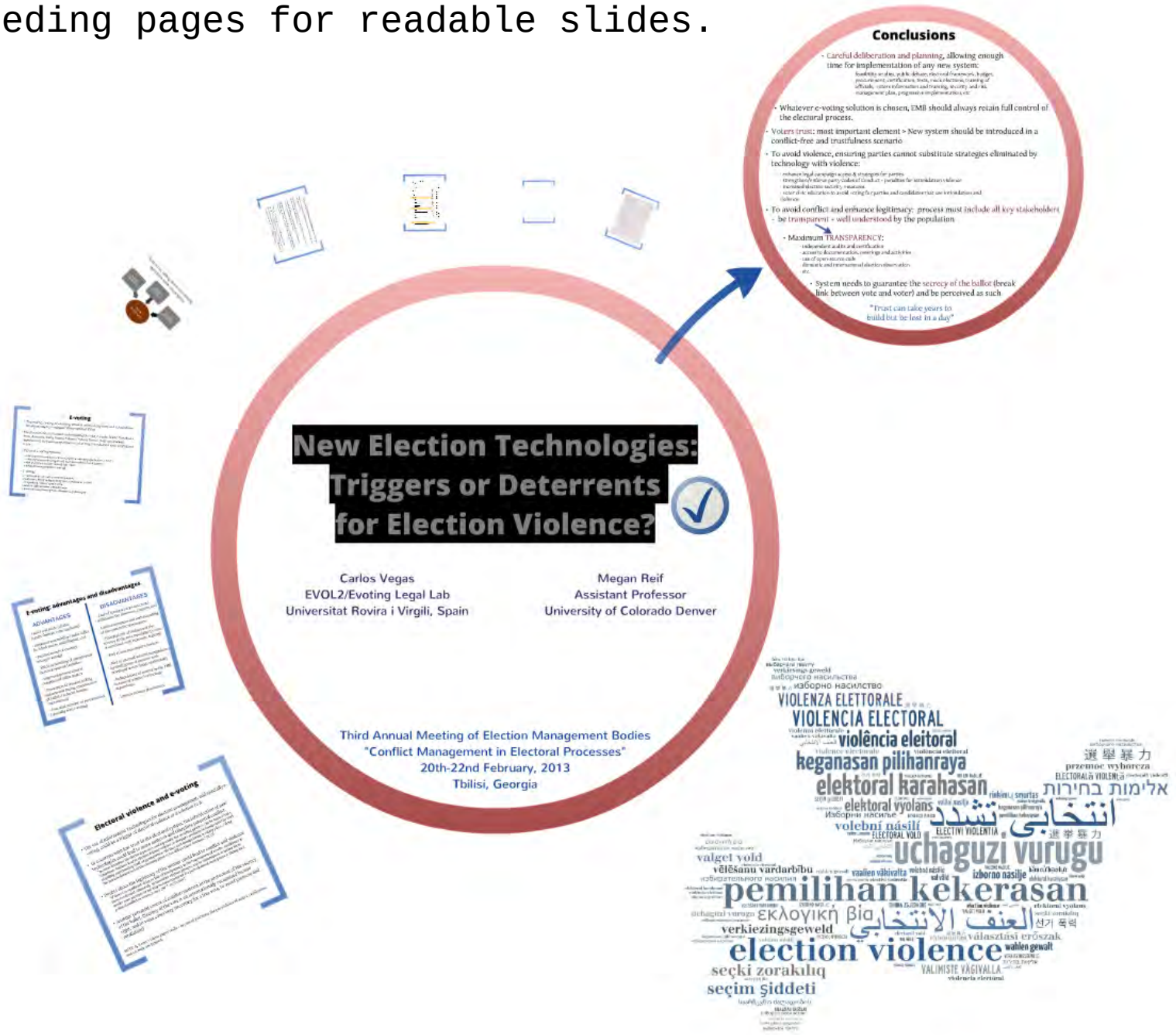
Overview Slide of Prezi Presentation
See proceeding pages for readable slides.



New Election Technologies: Triggers or Deterrents for Election Violence?

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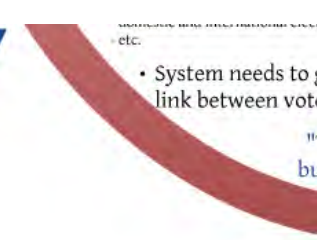
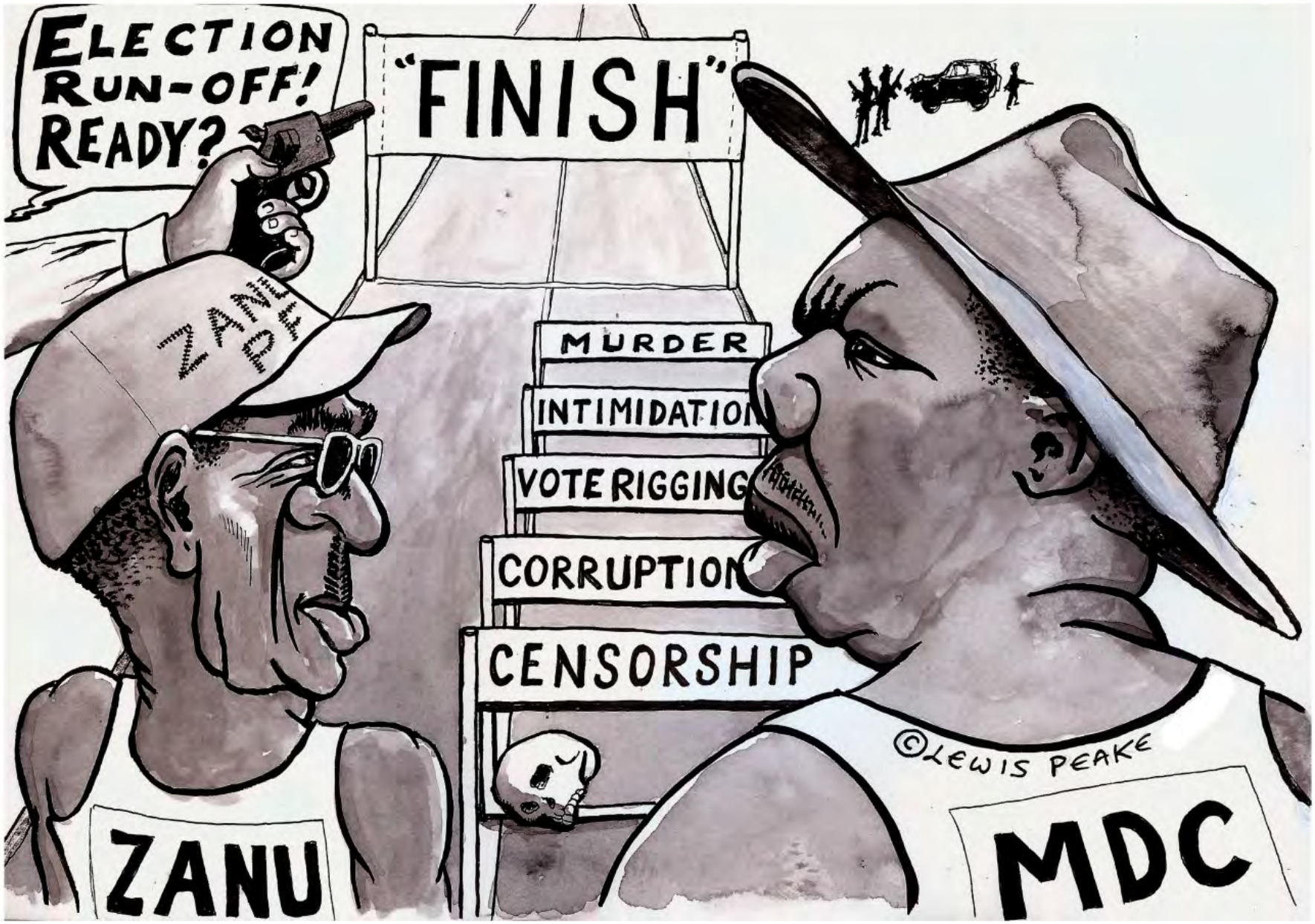
Third Annual Meeting of Election Management Bodies
"Conflict Management in Electoral Processes"
20th-22nd February, 2013
Tbilisi, Georgia




ELECTION RUN-OFF! READY?
"FINISH"
MURDER
INTIMIDATION
VOTE RIGGING
CORRUPTION
CENSORSHIP
ZANU
MDC
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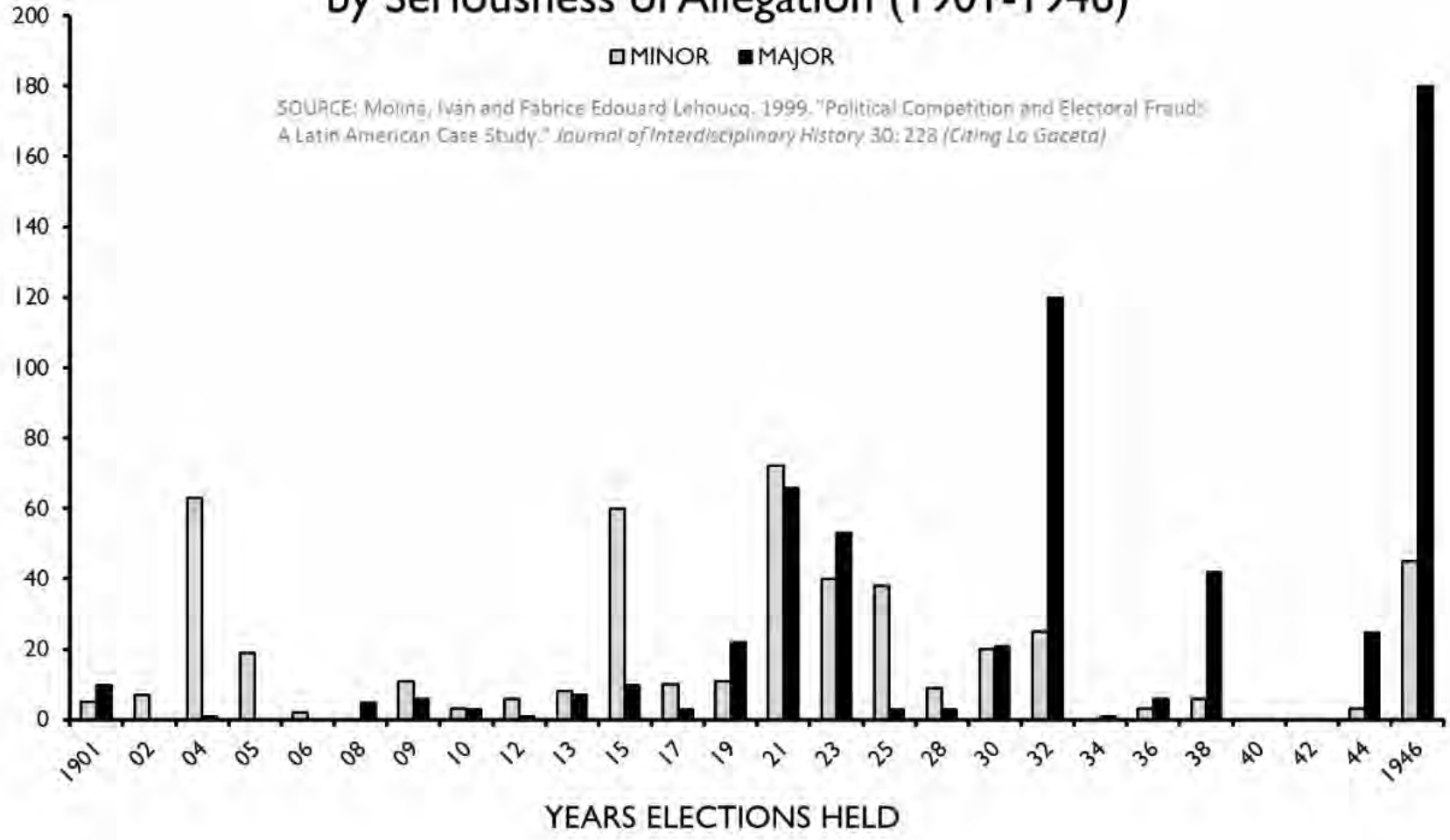
Complaints of Election Misconduct in Costa Rica by Seriousness of Allegation (1901-1946)



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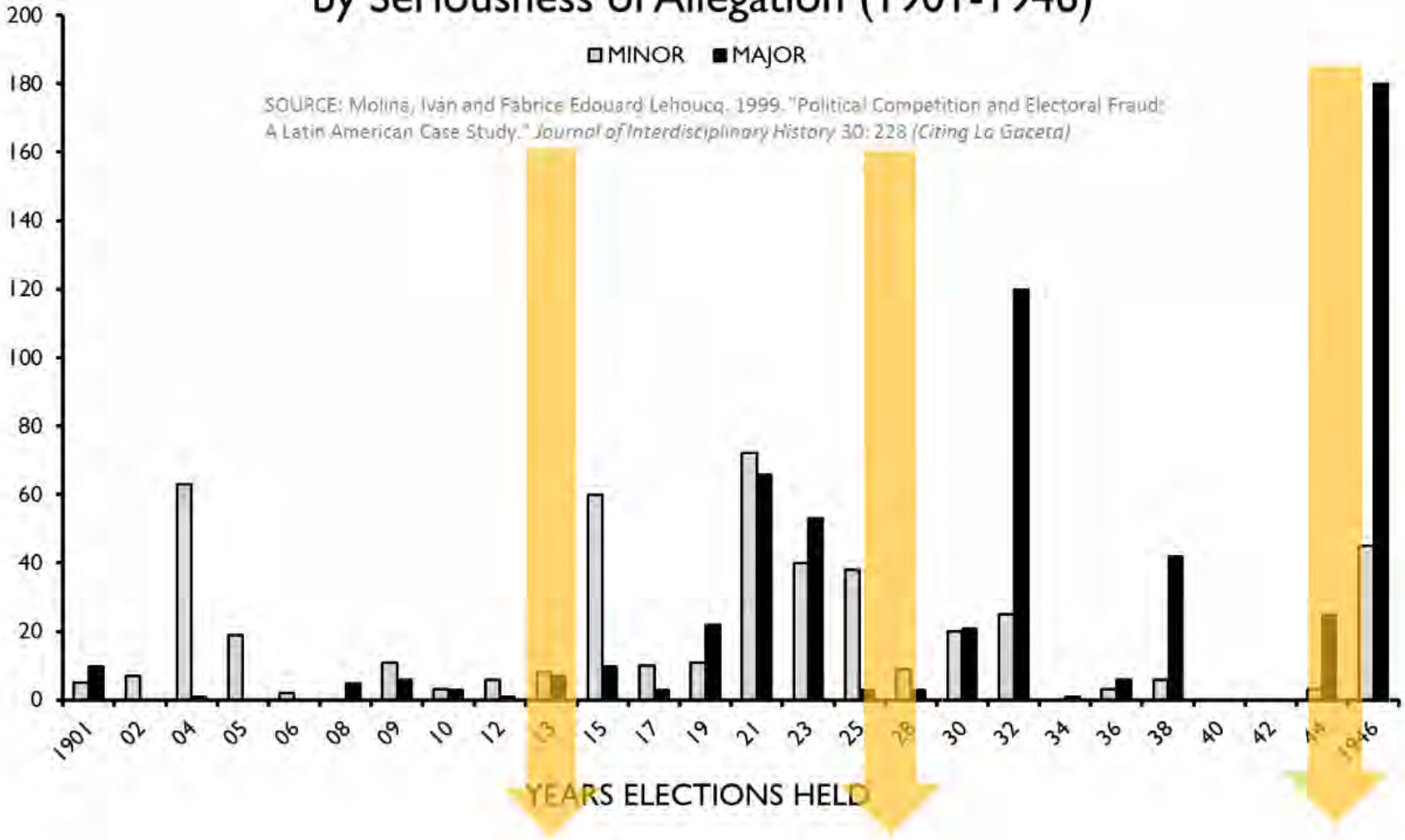
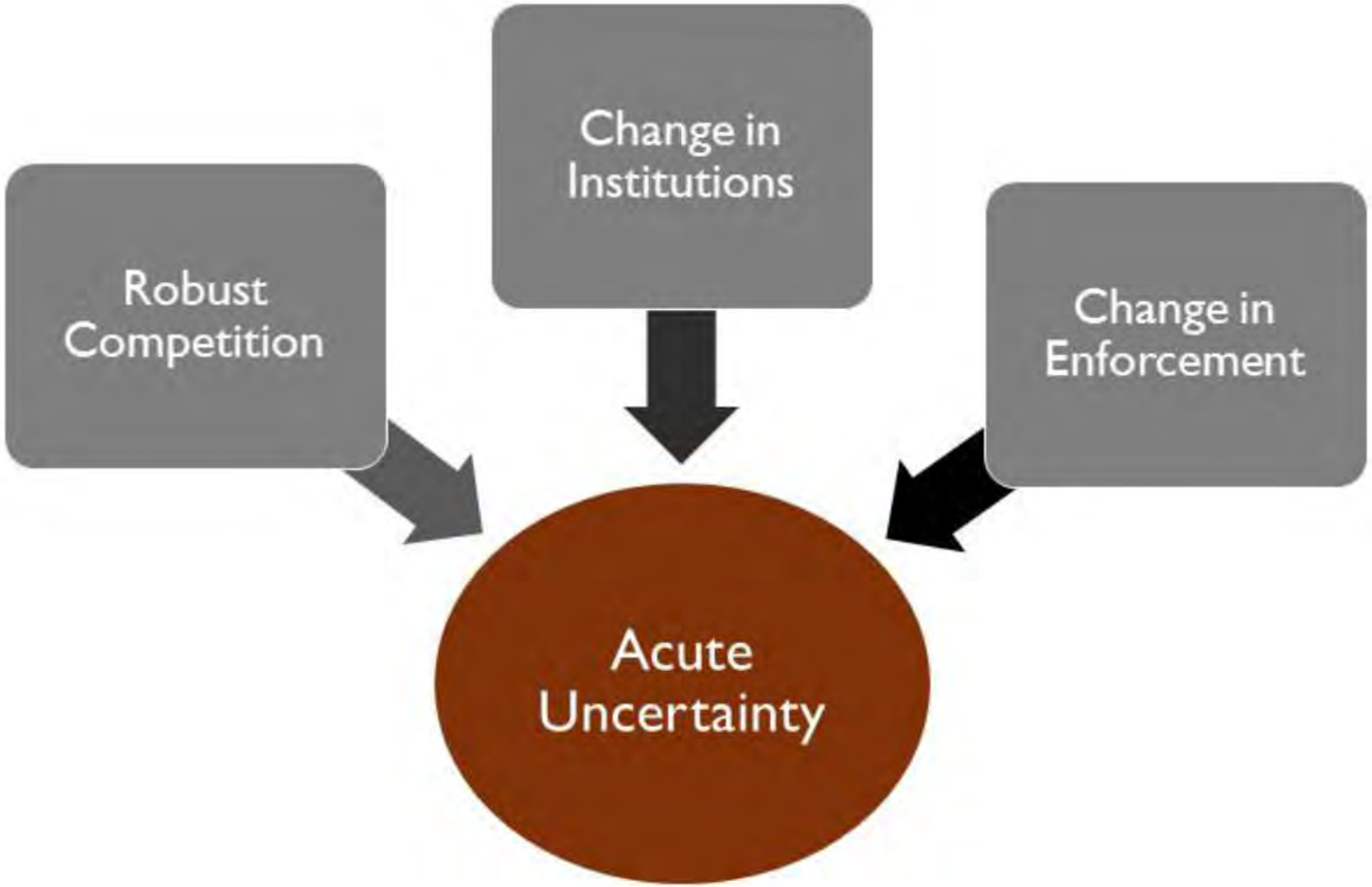


Technology, Reforms, and Substitution Effects

- Boss Tweed's Tammany Hall Political Machine faced challenges and turned to violence
- Secret Ballot in 1890s USA and Germany led to election violence as it became more difficult to buy votes
- Transparent ballot boxes in Pakistan and other elections create incentives for candidates to change tactics
- Biometrics and other improvements in registration methods make cheating more difficult, increasing competitiveness and short-term risks of violence

> "The April elections were heralded as among the fairest in Nigeria's history, but they also were among the bloodiest," said Corinne Dufka, senior West Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch (2011).

Actors risk adding violence to biasing repertoire under uncertainty



E-voting

- "Recording, casting or counting votes in political elections and referendums involving new technologies" (International IDEA)

- Used in more than 20 countries (including the USA, Canada, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Australia, India, Russia, Estonia Finland, France, Belgium, Norway, Switzerland, etc) and many others are planning introduction and carrying out trials.

- Types of e-voting systems

  > DRE (Direct Recording Electronics): with or without paper trails (VVPAT)
  > OMR (Optical Mark Recognition): machine-readable ballot papers
  > EBP (Electronic Ballot Printers): DRE+OMR
  > Internet voting systems (i-voting)

- E-voting:

  > Controlled vs. uncontrolled environments
  > With our without independent physical evidence (VVPAT)
  > Proprietary code vs. open source
  > With or without voter authentication
  > Internationally developed vs. domestically developed

E-voting: advantages and disadvantages

ADVANTAGES

- Faster and more reliable results (human error excluded)

- Increased accessibility (audio ballot for blind voters, multilingual, etc)

- Facilitates out-of-country voting (i-voting)

- Efficient handling of complicated electoral systems formulae

- Improved presentation of complicated ballot papers

- Prevention of fraud in polling stations and during transmission of ballots (reduced human intervention)

- Potential increase of participation (specially with i-voting)

DISADVANTAGES

- Lack of transparency (can create difficulties for observers, citizens, etc)

-Limited openness and understanding of the system for non-experts.

- Potential risk of violation of the secrecy of the vote (specially if e-vote is combined with biometric registry)

- Risk of external attacks: hackers

- Risk of internal attacks: manipulation by small group of insiders with privileged access (large-scale fraud)

- Reduced level of control by the EMB because of vendor/technology dependence

- Limited recount possibilities

Electoral violence and e-voting

- The use of Information Technologies for election management, and specially e-voting, could be a trigger of electoral violence or a solution to it.

- In countries with low trust in the electoral system, the introduction of new technologies could lead to more mistrust and therefore potential conflict.

  "In some countries the electoral process, and especially the counting process, can be tense events. Sometimes tensions lead to election related violence as attempts are made to manipulate the work of polling and counting staff, or perception is rife that such manipulation is taking place. Taking the human element out of the counting process can diffuse these tensions." (IFES)

- Doubts about the legitimacy of the winner could lead to conflict and violence.

  "If there is a significant delay or lack of transparency in the transmission of results, confidence in these results and, ultimately, in the entire election process, can be undermined. Whether those results were accurate or not may become irrelevant if a post-electoral atmosphere is sliding into political conflict or worse. Kenya 2007". (EC/UNDP)

- Another potential source of conflict: mistrust in the protection of the secrecy of the ballot. (Secrecy of the vote is an internationally recognized human right, and in some cases very necessary for a free vote, to avoid pressure and retaliation)

NOTE: Systems with no paper trails > in case of problems the possibilities of audits, verification and recount are limited.

Conclusions

- Careful deliberation and planning, allowing enough time for implementation of any new system:
  feasibility studies, public debate, electoral framework, budget, procurement, certification, tests, mock elections, training of officials, voters information and training, security and risk management plan, progressive implementation, etc
- Whatever e-voting solution is chosen, EMB should always retain full control of the electoral process.
- Voters trust: most important element > New system should be introduced in a conflict-free and trustfulness scenario
- To avoid violence, ensuring parties cannot substitute strategies eliminated by technology with violence:
  - enhance legal campaign access & strategies for parties
  - strengthen/enforce party Codes of Conduct + penalties for intimidation violence
  - increased election security measures
  - voter civic education to avoid voting for parties and candidates that use intimidation and violence
- To avoid conflict and enhance legitimacy: process must include all key stakeholders + be transparent + well understood by the population
  - Maximum TRANSPARENCY:
    - independent audits and certification
    - access to documentation, meetings and activities
    - use of open-source code
    - domestic and international election observation
    - etc.
  - System needs to guarantee the secrecy of the ballot (break link between vote and voter) and be perceived as such

"Trust can take years to build but be lost in a day"