



## **Beyond Electoralism? Electoral Fraud in third wave regimes**

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### **Abstract**

As the “third wave” of democratization spread across the globe after 1974, more and more citizens got a chance –often for the first time in their lives- to cast their vote in multi-party elections. Since then, the number of countries holding regular elections for executive and legislative offices has sharply increased: over 85% of the world’s states now select their national leaders through elections. Unfortunately, the variety of elections has multiplied concomitantly, ranging from “free and fair” elections with genuine contestation between parties or candidates to “façade” elections that are marred by manipulation and fraud. In light of these empirical developments, research on the quality of elections is increasingly relevant. Not only as a way to clarify the fuzzy boundaries between regime types, particularly electoral autocracy and electoral democracy. But also, and more importantly, to understand the causes of variation in election quality as well as its consequences for the functioning of government and broader democratization processes in these policies. This thesis studies the quality of elections in 97 countries in Southern Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, the Former Soviet Union, Sub-Saharan Africa, South America and Central America from 1974 until 2009. Chapter 1 reviews the literature on democratization and elections and specifies the research questions addressed. Subsequently, chapter 2 proposes a definition of the quality of elections that is grounded both in academic work as well as international legal conventions on human and political rights, and introduces the data collected to ‘measure’ election quality. The resulting database on electoral fraud in third wave regimes contains election quality scores for over 880 elections. Chapter 3 and 4 study variation in election quality across polities, attempting to explain why some new democracies manage to “get their elections right” while others do not. Chapter 5 and 6 ask the “so what” question by investigating the consequences of variation in election quality: do elections of higher quality generate more accountable and responsive governments? Finally, chapter 7 connects the findings in the earlier chapters by inquiring to what degree and how election quality affects broader democratization processes and concludes with suggestions for policy-making and further research.



**Jury:**

Petr Kopecky (University of Leiden), Staffan Lindberg (University of Florida/ University of Gothenburg), Carolien van Ham (candidate), Mark Franklin (EUI), Philippe Schmitter (EUI).

**Bio:**

Carolien van ham is a post-doc researcher at the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of Twente, the Netherlands, working on a Netherlands Royal Academy of Sciences research project about the (presumed) legitimacy crisis of representative democracy in advanced industrial democracies. She did her PhD in Political Science at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, Italy, and during that period also spent a semester at the Harvard Kennedy School as a visiting research fellow. Her PhD research is in the field of comparative democratization and investigates the causes and consequences of electoral fraud in 97 third wave regimes between 1974 and 2009.

She holds a Master in Political Science from the University of Leiden (cum laude) and a Master of Migration and Ethnic Minorities from the University of Utrecht (cum laude), and received PhD scholarships from NUFFIC and UACES. Before coming to EUI, she worked as a management consultant for national and local governments in the Netherlands, as a researcher for the Dutch Parliamentary Commission on Integration Policy (Commissie Blok), and as a researcher at the Instituto de Estudios sobre Migraciones (IEM) in Madrid, Spain.