

Essay for the Katheryne B. Willock Library Research Award

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Project Overview

My project contributes to a nascent field of electoral integrity, focusing on whether and when experience with and perceptions of electoral unfairness motivate citizens to protest. I analyze New Russia Barometer surveys, conducted shortly after the Russian parliamentary election in 2011, to explain the divide in attitudes to the protests it triggered. Few studies explored the consequences of perceptions of election unfairness, and little is known about how they contribute to protest. This presents a dual challenge: making the best use of nascent, but rapidly growing literature; and finding established research in other fields that can inform my theory.

Working with Recent Publications

I found the library resources invaluable in dealing with the first challenge. For example, the interlibrary loan service helped me obtain an important article pre-published on a scholarly journal website this summer, but unavailable elsewhere. Impressively, the acquisitions department responded immediately with an approval of purchase for a desperately needed e-book, Andreas Schedler's *Politics of Uncertainty*, which has come out in September (Schedler 2013). After setting up the notification in my library account, I got the message about the e-book availability within a few weeks! The selection of other recent books on electoral integrity is unparalleled both in print and e-book format. I am very grateful to librarians who assisted me in acquiring access to the most recent publications.

The Research Process

Working with established literature was a different kind of challenge. I had to navigate publications in less familiar fields to find relevant theories. My process owes much to a book on dissertation writing by Single (2009), obtained in the library, and the course by Dr. Hayton (2013). First, I found a broad overview of less familiar subjects. Then, I expanded my search to more specific studies. For example, psychological theories of procedural justice inform us how people react to unfairness in the context of dealing with judges and the police (Tyler and Lind 2001). I found the Law Library book collection to be an excellent starting point to explore this literature. Using this knowledge, I expanded my search with JSTOR database. One advantage of JSTOR is that it shows a list of sources used in a journal article, as well as more recent articles that cite it. This information allowed me to collect and sort studies that are representative of the past and recent developments in the field. I used EBSCOhost, E-Journals, and Google Scholar to supplement JSTOR information.

Citations and Organization

The library service for graduate students provides a helpful overview of citation software. I used Zotero to organize my literature, notes, and visuals. Librarians gave me useful advice on citing Russian language sources. In addition, I gained access to the recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style Online through the library. There are still more resources that will be useful, such as the Current Digest of the Russian Press that I have recently discovered. I truly appreciate the contribution of the library staff and resources to my project.

Works Cited

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- Schedler, Andreas. 2013. *The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Single, Peg Boyle. 2009. *Demystifying Dissertation Writing: a Streamlined Process from Choice of Topic to Final Text*. 1st ed. Sterling, Va: Stylus.
- Tyler, Tom R., and E. Allan Lind. 2001. "Procedural Justice." In *Handbook of Justice Research in Law*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.