

does democracy need elections?

A Make Votes Count + X-Change @ ERS essay competition

Context

The meaning and definition of modern representative democracies has been the selection of government through elections. But as turnout continues to drop and participation in 'issue politics' is increasing, more and more people are turning away from formal, electoral politics. And whilst there are renewed efforts to get people registered and voting, many engagement initiatives are focusing on non-electoral means of involvement and participation.

Are we moving into a post-electoral politics? Can we have a democracy without elections? Should we, or how can we, restore the primacy of elections in democratic participation?

You can choose to answer the essay in any way you would like. We're not looking for a balanced and academic article – more of an opinion piece that you might find in the Comments section of a newspaper.

The Competition

The winner will be awarded £250, and have their essay published in the forthcoming Young Fabian pamphlet released later this year.

The first runner up will be awarded £100

Runner-up prizes will be awarded to short-listed competitors.

The essays will be judged by a panel of three judges;

- Lord Tyler, a member of the House of Lords
- Bano Murtuja, a member of the Power Commission,
- A journalist (yet to be announced)



The small print

All essays become the property of MVC/X-Change with the right to publish in part or whole.

The decision of the judging panel is final and is not subject to appeal.

Quotes and references must be clearly marked throughout the essay and properly cited.

Each participant can only submit one essay.

Requirements

You must be between 19 and 26 years of age (inclusive) on 31st May 2006.

Your submission should be between 1000 and 1500 words.

All entries should e-mailed to x-change@reform.demon.co.uk

All essays must contain a cover note with the author's name, date of birth, contact e-mail, contact telephone number, and their college or university (where applicable).

Deadlines

Entries must be received by **12noon on Wednesday 31st June.**

The winner will be announced by the end of June.