

# Zachary Elkins

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Born: February 13, 1970—Bogotá, Colombia  
Nationality: United States of America

## Areas of specialization

Comparative Politics • Research Methods • Constitutional Design • Democracy • National Identity

## Teaching Appointments

2010-present *Associate Professor*, University of Texas at Austin  
2008-2010 *Assistant Professor*, University of Texas at Austin  
2003-2008 *Assistant Professor*, University of Illinois

## Education

1992 B.A. in Philosophy, Yale University  
1996 M.A. in Government, University of Texas at Austin  
2003 Ph.D in Political Science, University of California, Berkeley. Committee: David Collier (Chair), Beth Simmons, Henry Brady, Ruth Berins Collier, Trond Petersen.

## Publications

### BOOKS

2009 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. *The Endurance of National Constitutions* New York: Cambridge University Press. (Preview [Chapter One](#)).

in progress Elkins, Zachary. *Designed by Diffusion: Constitutional Reform in Developing Democracies*.

### JOURNAL ARTICLES

2016 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "On the influence of Magna Carta and other cultural relics." *International Review of Law and Economics* 47: 3-9.

2014 Zachary Elkins, Tom Ginsburg, James Melton, Robert Shaffer, Juan F. Sequeda, and Daniel P. Miranker. "Constitute: The world's constitutions to read, search, and compare." *Journal of Web Semantics* 27-28: 10-18.

2014 Elkins, Zachary. "Measuring Partial Membership in Categories: Alternative Tools." *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 12(1).

2013 Cheibub, Jose Antonio, Zachary Elkins, and Tom Ginsburg. "Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism." *British Journal of Political Science* 44(3): 515-544.

- 2013 Elkins, Zachary. "The Weight of History and the Rebuilding of Brazilian Democracy." *Lua Nova: Revista de Cultura e Política* 88: 257-303.
- 2013 Elkins, Zachary. "Comparability and the Analysis of National Constitutions." *APSA-CP Newsletter* 23(1).
- 2013 Elkins, Zachary. "When Constitutions Shape National Identity." *LASA Forum*.
- 2013 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and Beth Simmons. 2013. "Getting to Rights: Treaty Ratification, Constitutional Convergence, and Human Rights Practice." *Harvard International Law Journal*.
- 2012 Elkins, Zachary, James Melton, Tom Ginsburg, and Kalev Leetaru. 2012. "On the Interpretability of Law: Lessons from the Decoding of National Constitutions." *British Journal of Political Science* 43(2): 399-423.
- 2012 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "Comments on Law and Versteeg's 'The Declining Influence of the U.S. Constitution.'" *NYU Law Review*.
- 2011 Cheibub, Jose, Zachary Elkins, and Tom Ginsburg. "Latin American Presidentialism in Comparative and Historical Perspective." *University of Texas Law Review* 89(7).
- 2010 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "On the Evasion of Executive Term Limits." *William and Mary Law Review* 52.
- 2010 Elkins, Zachary. "Diffusion and the Constitutionalization of Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 43: 1-31.
- 2010 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "Lessons from the Decoding and Coding of National Constitutions." *APSA-CD Newsletter* 9(1).
- 2009 Ginsburg, Tom, Zachary Elkins, and Justin Blount. "Does the Process of Constitution-making Matter?" *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 5: 201-223.
- 2009 Ginsburg, Tom and Zachary Elkins. 2009. "Ancillary Powers of Constitutional Courts." *University of Texas Law Review* 87: 1430-61.
- 2009 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and Justin Blount. "The Citizen as Founder: Public Participation in Constitutional Approval." *Temple Law Review* 81(2): 361-382 [Published in Spanish in expanded form as, "Ciudadano Como Fundador: la Participacion Publica en el diseno constitucional," in *Revista Latinoamericana de Politica Comparada* 1: 119-153]
- 2008 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "Military Occupations and their Constitutional Residue." *APSA-CP Newsletter* 19(2): 7-10.
- 2008 Ginsburg, Tom, Svitlana Chernykh, and Zachary Elkins. "Commitment and Diffusion: How and Why National Constitutions Incorporate International Law." *Illinois Law Review* 101: 201-237.
- 2008 Zachary Elkins, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "Baghdad, Tokyo, Kabul...Constitution Making in Occupied States." *William and Mary Law Review* 49(4): 1139-1178.
- 2007 Elkins, Zachary and John Sides. "Can Institutions Build Unity in Multiethnic States." *American Political Science Review* 101: 693-708. [Runner-up for the award of best article of 2007 awarded by the Comparative Democratization Section of APSA in 2008.]
- 2006 Elkins, Zachary, Beth Simmons, and Andrew Guzman. "Competing for Capital: The Diffusion of Bilateral Investment Treaties, 1959-2000." *International Organization* 60(4): 811-846. [Reprinted in: (1) Frank Dobbin, Beth Simmons, and Geoff Garrett (eds.) *International Diffusion of Political and Economic Liberalization* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 220-260; (2) Michael Waibel (ed.) *The Backlash against Investment Arbitration*, pp. 369-407; and (3) *Illinois Law Review* 2008: 265-304, with data and analysis updated to 2006 along with an expanded discussion.]
- 2005 Elkins, Zachary and Beth Simmons. "On Waves, Clusters, and Diffusion: A Conceptual Framework," with Beth Simmons. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 598: 33-51.
- 2004 Simmons, Beth and Zachary Elkins. "The Globalization of Liberalization: Policy Diffusion in the International Political Economy." *American Political Science Review* 98: 171-190.
- 2003 de Figueiredo, Rui and Zachary Elkins. "Are Patriots Bigots? An Inquiry into the Vices of In-group Pride" *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 171-188.

- 2000 Elkins, Zachary. "Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations." *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 293-300.
- 2000 Elkins, Zachary. "Quem Votaria? Conhecendo as Consequências do Voto Obrigatório no Brasil" *Opinão Pública* 6 (1): 111-137. [English title: "Who Would Vote? Understanding the Consequences of Mandatory Voting in Brazil"]

#### CHAPTERS IN EDITED VOLUMES

- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary and Tom Ginsburg. "Constitutions and fiscal balance requirements in comparative and historical perspective." in Mark Rosen, Georg Vanberg, Tom Ginsburg, and Pedro Magalhães (eds.). *Liberal Democratic Constitutions During Severe Financial Crises*.
- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary. "How do we recognize a crisis of democracy?" in Mark Graber, Sandy Levinson, and Mark Tushnet (eds.) *Constitutional Democracy in Crisis?*.
- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary. "The Revolution will be Constitutionalized: Critical Junctures as Reflected in Higher Law." in Diana Kapiszewski, Steven Levitsky, and Deborah Yashar (eds.) *Reshaping the Political Arena*.
- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary. "Constitutional Transition." in Roger Congleton, Bernie Grofman, and Stefan Voigt (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Public Choice*.
- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary. "Term Limits and Constitutional Fragility." in Daniel Brinks, Steven Levitsky, and M. Victoria Murillo (eds.) *Weak Institutions in Latin America*.
- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary and Tom Ginsburg. "Survey of Presidential Term Limits." in Alexander Baturo and Robert Elgie (eds.) *The Politics of Presidential Term Limits*. Oxford University Press.
- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary. "Formal Methods of Concept Formation." in Diana Kapiszewski and Matthew Ingram (eds.) *Data and Methods in the Comparative Study of Legal Institutions*.
- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary and Alex Hudson. "When Do Constitutional Referenda Fail?" in Richard Albert and Richard Stacey (eds.) *The Limits and Legitimacy of Referendums*.
- forthcoming Elkins, Zachary and Alex Hudson. "Constitutional Referenda and Democracy" in David Landau and Hanna Lerner (eds.) *Handbook on Comparative Constitutional Law*.
- 2017 Elkins, Zachary. "Constitutional Revolution in the Andes?" in Rosalind Dixon and Tom Ginsburg (eds.) *Comparative Constitutional Law in Latin America*. Elgar.
- 2017 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights as Constitutional Model" in Keri E. Iyall Smith, Louis Edgar Esparza, Judith R. Blau (eds.) *Human Rights Of, By, and For the People: How to Critique and Change the US Constitution*.
- 2016 Elkins, Zachary. "The Logic and Design of a low-commitment Constitution (or, how to stop worrying about the right to secede)." in Sanford Levinson (ed.) *Nullification and Secession in Contemporary Constitutional Thought*.
- 2016 Elkins, Zachary. "Comparative Approaches to Constitutional Gun Rights." In Glenn Howard Utter (ed) *Guns and Contemporary Society: The Past, Present, and Future of Firearms and Firearm Policy*.
- 2016 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "Time and Constitutional Efficacy." in Tom Ginsburg and Aziz Huq (eds.) *Assessing Constitutional Performance*. pp. 233-268.
- 2014 Chernykh, Svitlana, Zachary Elkins, James Melton, Tom Ginsburg. "Constitutions and the Management of Elections." In Norris, P and Frank, RW and Martinez I Coma, F, (eds.) *Advancing Electoral Integrity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2014 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "The Content of Authoritarian Constitutions." In Tom Ginsburg and Alberto Simpser (eds) *Constitutions in Authoritarian Regimes*. Cambridge University Press.
- 2012 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton, "An epidemiological analysis of constitutional mortality," in Keith Whittington (ed.) *Law and politics : critical concepts in political science. V. 4, Comparative and international issues*. Princeton.

2012

- Cheibub, Jose, Zachary Elkins, and Tom Ginsburg. "Still the Land of Presidentialism? Executives and the Latin American Constitution," in Detlef Nolte and Almut Schilling (eds.). *New Constitutionalism in Latin America: Promises and Practices*. London: Ashgate.
- 2012 Blount, Justin, Zachary Elkins, and Tom Ginsburg. "Does the Process of Constitution-Making Matter?" In Tom Ginsburg (ed.), *Comparative Constitutional Design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2011 Elkins, Zachary, James Melton, and Tom Ginsburg. "Do Executive Term Limits Cause Constitutional Crises." In Tom Ginsburg (ed.), *Comparative Constitutional Design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2009 Cheibub, Jose Antonio and Zachary Elkins. "A Hibridização De Formas Constitucionais: A Constituição Brasileira De 1988 Em Uma Perspectiva Histórica." In *O Legislativo Brasileiro em Perspectiva Comparada*. Lucio Rennó and Magna Inácio, eds. Editora Editora UFMG. Pp. 55-77.
- 2009 Elkins, Zachary. "Constitutional Networks." In Miles Kahler (ed.), *Networked Politics: Agency, Power, and Governance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pp. 43-63.
- 2008 Elkins, Zachary. "Is Democracy Contagious?" In Peter Nardulli (ed.) *International Perspectives on Contemporary Democracy*. University of Illinois Press. Pp. 42-62
- 2003 Elkins, Zachary and Beth Simmons. "Globalization and Policy Diffusion: Explaining Three Decades of Liberalization." In Miles Kahler and David A. Lake (eds.) *Globalizing Authority: Economic Integration and the Changing Structure of Governance*. Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press. Pp. 275-304.

#### BOOK REVIEWS

- 2012 Elkins, Zachary. Review of Tulia G. Falletti's *Decentralization and Subnational Politics in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) in *Perspectives on Politics*.
- 2005 Elkins, Zachary. Review of Marcus Kurtz's *Free Market Democracy and the Chilean and Mexican Countryside* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) in *Comparative Political Studies* 38: 330-332.

#### SELECTED OTHER WRITING

- 2013 Elkins, Zachary. "Rewrite the Second Amendment." *New York Times*, April 5, 2013. p. A23
- 2013 Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. "Guns Truly are American Exceptionalism." *Bloomberg View*, March 7, 2013
- 2010 Elkins, Zachary. "Constitutional Engineering." In Leonardo Morlino (ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of Political Science*. Sage.
- 1998 Stiles, Jon, Jonathan Cohen, Zachary Elkins, and Frederick Gey. *Latino Demographic Data Book*. Berkeley, CA: California Policy Studies. 176pp.
- 1997 Cavalcanti, Maria, Zachary Elkins, Katherine Mock, and O'Neal Spicer. "Problems of Service Delivery in Brazilian Public Security Policy," In *Policymaking in a Redemocratized Brazil*, Volume 2: Public Policy and Social Exclusion. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. Pp. 47-69.
- 1994 Elkins, Zachary and Adelaide Farrah. "Racing Toward a New Disabilities Strategy in the Americas." *Americas* 46 (4).

#### SELECTED ONLINE AND MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS

- 2014-present *Rights Interactive: The Bill of Rights in Comparative Perspective*. Interactive infographics and visualizations installed in the gallery of the National Constitutions Center and online.
- 2013-present *Constitute: The World's Constitutions to Read, Search, and Compare*. Online at [constituteproject.org](http://constituteproject.org).
- 2013-present *The Constitution Imagery Project*. High-resolution images of Constitutional artifacts and photos. Online at [imagine-constitutions.culturalspot.org](http://imagine-constitutions.culturalspot.org)

- 2013-present *Constituting Brazil*. A film about the making of the Brazilian Constitution. [status: editing in progress]
- 2006-2013 *constitutionmaking.org*. Resources for constitutional drafters, including analytical reports, an edited set of constitutions, and an online forum (blog) [Since merged with *constituteproject.org*]
- 2005-present *The Comparative Constitutions Project*. Data, reports, and infographics. Online at [comparativeconstitutionsproject.org](http://comparativeconstitutionsproject.org).

## Honors

- 2015 *Best Comparative Policy Paper of 2014*, awarded by the APSA Public Policy Section. [awarded for “Micro-level Foundations of Diffusion Theory: Experimental Evidence”]
- 2014 *Tribeca Disruptive Innovation Award*. [awarded for *Constitute*]
- 2014 *Nominet Trust List: 100 Most Inspiring Examples of Social Innovation*. [awarded for *Constitute*]
- 2013 *Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Prize* for Best Dataset awarded by the Comparative Politics Section of the APSA. [awarded for the *Comparative Constitutions Project*]
- 2012 *Innovating Justice Award*, awarded by the *Hague Institute for the Internationalization of Law* [awarded for *constitutionmaking.org* (now *constituteproject.org*)]
- 2009 *Best book of 2009*, awarded by the Comparative Democratization Section of APSA. [awarded for *Endurance of National Constitutions*]
- 2007 *Best article of 2007* (runner-up), awarded by the Comparative Democratization Section of APSA. [awarded for “Can Institutions Build Unity in Multiethnic States?”]
- 2005-06 *Graduate Mentor of the Year*, Department of Political Science, University of Illinois [Selected by the Political Science Graduate Student Association]
- 2002-07 *List of Excellent Instructors as Rated by their Students*, University of Illinois [awarded if “course quality” and “Instructor Effectiveness” are both in the top 30 percent of University instructors]
- 2006 *Jon Tolman prize for best paper*, Brazilian Studies Association Conference (BRASA). [awarded for “Sources of Constitutional Reform in Brazil: The Role of Foreign Models”]

## Grants

### AS FACULTY

- 2013-present Fellow of H. Malcolm Macdonald Chair in Constitutional and Comparative Law, University of Texas at Austin
- 2012-13 IC2 Innovation Grant (\$25,000)
- 2013-14 Google Ideas (multiple)
- 2008-09 National Science Foundation Grant – renewal of SES 0648288 (\$95,000)
- 2007-08 US Institute of Peace (\$26,000)
- 2007-08 National Science Foundation Grant – SES 0648288 (\$197,000)
- 2005-06 Fellow, Center for the Study of Democratic Governance, University of Illinois
- 2003,2004 University of Illinois Research Board Grants

### AS STUDENT

- 2001 University of California, Berkeley Dissertation Writing Fellowship
- 2000 Boren Dissertation Fellowship
- 1999 Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) Dissertation Fellowship
- 1998 Tinker Summer Grant for Research in Brazil
- 1997 Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Summer Fellowship
- 1996 Ford Foundation Summer Grant for Research in Brazil
- 1995 University of Texas Summer Grant for Research in Cuba

1991 Yale University Mellon Summer Grant for Research in Guatemala  
1991-92 Aurelian Honor Society, Yale University

## Teaching

### UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

*Comparative Constitutional Design.*  
*The Politics of Development.*  
*Comparative Political Behavior.*  
*The Art and Science of Contracting.*

### GRADUATE COURSES

*Conceptualization and Measurement.*  
*Comparative Constitutional Design.*  
*Comparative Political Behavior.*  
*Democracy and Democratization.*  
*Law and Democracy.*  
*Writing and Publishing in Political Science.*

### PHD STUDENTS SUPERVISED OR SUPERVISING

[based on limited records – apologies for omissions!]

(1) James Melton; (2) Hector Ibarra-Rueda; (3) Daniel Nogueira-Budny; (4) Stephanie Holmsten; (5) Allison White; (6) Gabriel Cardona-Fox (LBJ); (7) Rachel Sternfeld; (8) Ilana Lifshitz; (9) Abby Blass; (10) Huseyin Alptekin; (11) Gustavo Rivera; (12) Anna Fruhstorfer (Humboldt University, Berlin); (13) Regina Goodnow; (14) Steven Brooke; (15) Riitta-Ilona Koivumaeki; (16) Justin Blount (Illinois); (17) Joe Amick; (18) Robert Shaffer; (19) Alex Hudson; (20) Giorleny Altamirano; (21) Byung-Jae Lee; (22) Ryan Lloyd; (23) Luis Camacho; (24) Mathew Rhodes-Purdy; (25) Jonathan Kinkel; (26) Ashley Moran;

## Project Administration

2005-present Co-director (with Tom Ginsburg and James Melton), *Comparative Constitutions Project*  
2012-present Director, *Constitute*  
2010-present Co-editor (with Ran Hirschl and Tom Ginsburg). Book series on Comparative Constitutional Law and Policy, Cambridge University Press  
2008-present Co-director (with Dan Brinks). Working Group on Law and Democracy, University of Texas

## Selected Previous Experience

2001 Visiting Scholar, Universidade de Brasilia, Brasilia, Brazil  
1996 Visiting Scholar, Instituto Universitario de Pesquisa de Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ), Brazil  
1994 Analyst, The Organization of American States, Washington, DC  
1992-94 Manager, The Princeton Review, Barcelona, Spain  
Summer 1990 Intern, US Agency for International Development, Guatemala City, Guatemala

## Professional Service and Affiliations

### UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

2008-2014	Graduate Admissions
2010-11; 2012-13;	Executive Committee
2014-15; 2015-16;	Centennial Speakers Committee
2010 2017-18	IR search committee
2010-12	Charlie Wilson Chair Search Committee
2011-12; 2012-13	Faculty Council
2012-13	Faculty Council committee on International Programs and Study Abroad (Chair)
2012-present	Institute of Latin American Studies committee on student aid
2012-present	Advisory Board Member, Human Dimensions of Organizations
2008-present	Affiliate, <i>Rapoport Center on Human Rights</i> , <i>Institute of Latin American Studies</i> , and <i>School of Law</i>

### DISCIPLINE-WIDE SERVICE

2015-present	Chair, Committee on Concepts and Methods (IPSA)
2014	Chair, Best Dataset Award Committee
2012-2015	Advisory Board, Committee on Concepts and Methods (IPSA)
2013	Chair, Best Paper Award Committee, APSA Comparative Democratization Section
2012-present	Advisory Board, Electoral Integrity Project
2010	MPSA Section Head

### UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS (2002-2008)

2006-07	Graduate Admissions
2004-05; 2007-8	Executive Advisory Board
2002-08	Formal Theory and Empirical Methodology
2002-07	Comparative Politics
2002-03	Teaching and Student Awards
2002-03	Undergraduate Programs
2003; 2004; 2005	Comparative Politics Search Committees
2004-5; 2006-7	Executive Board, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies
2006-8	Executive Board, Brazilian Studies Center
2003-2008	Regular instructor for a modular course in Latin American Studies
2005-2008	International Political Economy Research Group
2004-08	Center for the Study of Democratic Governance

### REVIEWER

*inter alia*, American Journal of Political Science; American Political Science Review; Journal of Politics; Political Psychology; International Organization; Journal of Peace Research; World Politics; Journal of Theoretical Politics; World Development; Political Behavior; Law and Society; Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Studies; Political Analysis; NSF

## Foreign Languages and Experience

### LANGUAGES

Serviceable command of Spanish and Portuguese (extensive coursework and residency); rudimentary knowledge of French (two years of college coursework); sub-conscious knowledge of Latin (five years of high-school coursework)

### EXPERIENCE

Born in Bogotá, Colombia. Field work or residency in Brazil, Guatemala, Spain, Cuba, Colombia, and Belize.

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