**Lessons Learned from the 2018 Presidential Election in Madagascar:**

**Breaking the Cycle of Political Morass**

Madagascar has a history of cyclical social movements driving political change. This can largely be attributed to a narrow political space replete with predatory actors married to private sector interests and civil society leaders who are captured by rents. Entering into the November 2018 elections the electorate was at an impasse. The only three viable presidential candidates were discredited giving rise to popular perceptions of disenfranchisement and a divided international community. Unpacking the complex social features that continuously undergird cyclical instability is necessarily an interdisciplinary pursuit, blending anthropology, sociology, and economic theoretical foundations to lay bare an analytical task political science itself has been unable to accomplish. Consistent with the methodological hybridity and interdisciplinarity in the conference call, this study uses qualitative interviews and participant observation, elite interviews, and survey data collected by the author in the capital in July 2018 and May 2019 to analyze drivers of political malcontent. In so doing it helps us understand the presidential victory of onetime illegitimate leader Andry Rajoelina, becomes predictive of electoral outcomes, helps us to understand Madagascar’s political morass, and unpacks some of the possible tools that could be employed to break what has become an ever more precarious and rapid cycle of violence, mismanagement, and disarray.