Elections in Africa
Dieter Nohlen, Bernard Thibaut, and Michael Krennerich (eds)

Elections in Africa is the first volume of a series of election data handbooks published by OUP; it covers all the 53 states in Africa. Elections have always been an integral part of post-independence African politics and have assumed the utmost importance in the course of recent democratization processes. However, comparative research on political development in Africa lacks reliable electoral data. Elections in Africa fills this gap. Following the overall structure of the series, an initial comparative introduction on elections and electoral systems is followed by chapters on each state of the region. These contributions examine the evolution of institutional and electoral arrangements from independence to the present (1999), and provide systematic surveys of the up-to-date electoral provisions and their historical development. Exhaustive statistics on national elections (presidential, parliamentary, and constitutional assembly), referendums and coups d’état are included within each chapter; these cover electoral bodies and voting, electoral participation of parties and alliances, vote distribution, parliamentary composition, and power holders. The data are presented in the same systematic manner for all countries in order to provide electoral statistics in line with internationally established standards of documentation, so that the data can be easily compared. The book, therefore, provides a definitive and comprehensive set of data on elections in order to facilitate comparative research. Together with the other books of this series, Elections in Africa is a highly reliable resource for historical and cross-national comparisons of elections and electoral systems worldwide.

Storable Votes
Alessandra Casella
Storable Votes are a simple voting scheme that allows the minority to win occasionally, while treating every voter equally. Because the minority wins when it cares strongly about a decision while the majority does not, minority victories occur with little cost, in fact typically with gains, for the community as a whole. The idea is simple: Consider a group of voters faced with a series of proposals, each of which can either pass or fail. Decisions are taken according to the majority of votes cast, but each voter is endowed with a budget of votes to distribute freely over the multiple decisions. Because voters cast more votes on decisions that matter to them more, they reveal the intensity of their preferences and increase their probability of winning exactly when it matters to them most. Thus Storable Votes elicit and reward voters’ intensity of preferences without the need for any external knowledge of voters’ preferences. By treating everyone equally and ruling out interpersonal vote trades, they are in line with common ethical priors and are robust to criticisms, both normative and positive, that affect vote markets. The book complements the theoretical discussion with several experiments, showing that the idea is supported by the data: experimental outcomes match the predictions of the theory. Because the intuition behind Storable Votes is so simple—“vote more when you care more”—the results are robust across different scenarios, even when subtle strategic effects are not identified by the subjects, suggesting real potential for practical applications.

Introduction
Robert R. Bianchi

in Guests of God: Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World

The hajj has always had far-reaching political ramifications, but today, after a half century of sponsorship and regulation by governments around the world, it is more politicized than ever. In most countries, hajj administration is tainted with favoritism and corruption. All the major pilgrimage programs are explicitly tailored to benefit voting blocks and businesses at home while cultivating prestige and influence abroad. Frequently, pilgrim management is so politicized it subverts the central values of the hajj. Instead of promoting unity and equality, it divides Muslims along every conceivable line—ethnicity, language, class, party, region, sect, gender, and age.
Electoral Performance and Prospects
Paul Whiteley, Patrick Seyd, and Antony Billinghurst

in Third Force Politics: Liberal Democrats at the Grassroots

Published in print: 2006 Published Online: September 2006
Item type: chapter

This chapter begins by looking at long-term support in elections and in the polls for the Liberal Democrats, to see how it has evolved over the last half-century or so. This provides a context within which to judge the party’s future electoral prospects. The analysis of trends in Liberal Democrat voting intentions over a thirty-year period shows that the competitive situation between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats is significantly greater than the competitive situation between Labour and the Liberal Democrats. It also shows that the party has to wait for its main rivals to make political mistakes and lose support before it can profit by winning over voters. This is described as the political equivalent of ‘waiting for Godot’, meaning that the Liberal Democrats are not the masters of their own electoral fate.

Australia: The Alternative Vote in a Compliant Political Culture
David M. Farrell and Ian McAllister

in The Politics of Electoral Systems

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: February 2006
Item type: chapter

The history of Australian electoral systems shows a high degree of democratic experimentation. Australia employs the alternative vote to elect its lower house of parliament, and the single transferable vote to elect the upper house. In addition, the adoption of compulsory voting has consequences for the operation of those electoral systems. Political culture reflects a high degree of delegation by voters to political parties, and electoral reform is not high on the political agenda.

Mandates Without Obvious Majorities?
Michael D. McDonald and Ian Budge

in Elections, Parties, Democracy: Conferring the Median Mandate

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: February 2006
DOI: 10.1093/0199286728.003.0006
The government mandate in its full form fails descriptively because few spontaneous majorities form in support of one party, and there is no guarantee that the plurality party is not actually opposed by most electors. A minimal version might still apply however in terms of retrospective voting — a majority might still vote against a government. This idea has been particularly prominent in the economic voting literature. This chapter examines the evidence for ‘economic’ voting. It confirms previous comparative research by showing there is only limited evidence of consistent effects from growth, unemployment and inflation on voting. This is explained in terms of electoral reactions to any set of economic conditions never being undifferentiated or unproblematic. As there is always some rational argument for voting against incumbents some electors will always do so, accounting for a general fall of incumbent votes towards their long term norm. Median voter positions are not predictable from the state of the economy, but they do match government positions over the long term and indeed provide the equilibrium towards which government policy tends.

Social Structure and Party Choice 1
Maria Oskarson

This chapter explores the explanatory power of the social cleavage model presented by Lipset and Rokkan in the 1960s. According to most of the dominant literature, the explanatory power of this model has declined over time. This trend is confirmed in this chapter. However, the findings in this chapter also show that social cleavage voting must be seen as the result of an interaction between groups in society on the one hand, and the political parties on the other. Changes in party appeal or party strategies are important factors to consider to understand the evolution of social cleavage voting.
This chapter demonstrates that the European voter is also an economic voter in the sense that negative evaluations of the economy hurt the electoral fortunes of incumbent parties. For those who expected that economic voting would be on the rise, the empirical results are disappointing. Systematic trends towards an increase in economic voting were not observed. Political events and institutional factors account for some of the variations in economic voting. For instance, the weak and irregular effects in Norway can be explained by the dominance of minority governments, a weak opposition, and the EU issue which dominated over economic concerns and probably reduced Labour’s ability to benefit from the first stage of the economic recovery in the 1993 election. Similarly, under a different institutional context, the British Conservative party in 1997 had less success than Labour four years later in taking advantage of an improving economy. These examples may suggest that institutions as well as embedded effects of political events influence the impact of economic evaluations on the vote.

Social Choice Theory
Patrick R. Laughlin

This chapter discusses social choice theory, an axiomatic and deductive approach to societal problem solving by existing or possible voting procedures. Social choice theory in economics and political science considers how the members of a society such as voters or policy makers may make societal decisions such as selection among competing candidates to office or policies by existing or possible voting systems. Thus, social combination models and social choice theory address the same basic issue: the aggregation of group member preferences to a collective group response. As a historical example, the representatives from the American colonies who met at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 faced a multitude of judgmental issues on the composition, powers,
and procedures of their government. Over four months, they achieved consensus on the U.S. Constitution. Once this consensus on judgmental issues was achieved, the U.S. Constitution became a conceptual system and guide for group problem solving for subsequent generations of Americans.

Conclusion
James A. Gardner

in What are Campaigns For?: The Role of Persuasion in Electoral Law and Politics
Published in print: 2009 Published Online: September 2009
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195392616.003.0007
Item type: chapter

Reform efforts aimed solely at elevating the democratic quality of campaigns are unlikely by themselves to have much success. At the same time, there is ample justification for attempting to gain greater control over the campaign environment for a different reason: to improve the accuracy with which elections record public opinion. In addition, the book's argument suggests that we might be well advised to shift priorities by worrying somewhat less than we do about problems of public opinion formation that appear during campaigns, and worrying somewhat more than we do about the problems and dynamics of public opinion formation in civil society.

Putting Voters in their Place
Ron Johnston and Charles Pattie

Published in print: 2006 Published Online: October 2011
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199268047.001.0001
Item type: book

Why do people living in different areas vote in different ways? Why does this change over time? How do people talk about politics with friends and neighbours, and with what effect? Does the geography of well-being influence the geography of party support? Do parties try to talk to all voters at election time, or are they interested only in the views of a small number of voters living in a small number of seats? Is electoral participation in decline, and how does the geography of the vote affect this? How can a party win a majority of seats in Parliament without a majority of votes in the country? This book explores these questions by placing the analysis of electoral behaviour into its geographical context. Using information from the latest elections, including the 2005 General
Election, the book shows how both voters and parties are affected by, and seek to influence, both national and local forces. Trends are set in the context of the latest research and scholarship on electoral behaviour. The book also reports on new research findings.

A New Engagement?
Cliff Zukin, Scott Keeter, Molly Andolina, Krista Jenkins, and Michael X. Delli Carpini

Published in print: 2006 Published Online: October 2011
Item type: book

In searching for answers as to why young people differ vastly from their parents and grandparents when it comes to turning out the vote, this book challenges the conventional wisdom that today's youth is plagued by a severe case of political apathy. In order to understand the current nature of citizen engagement, it is critical to separate political from civic engagement. Using the results from an original set of surveys and primary research, the book concludes that while older citizens participate by voting, young people engage by volunteering and being active in their communities.

Re-running Elections Under Alternative Electoral Systems
Andrew Reynolds

in Electoral Systems and Democratization in Southern Africa

Published in print: 1999 Published Online: November 2003
Item type: chapter

Together with Chs 5 and 6, Ch. 7 forms the historical, empirical, and quantitative heart of the book, providing the foundational evidence against which earlier postulated theories are gauged (Ch 1 and 2), and upon which subsequent comparisons, recommendations, and conclusions are based. Chapter 7 deals with the methodology used for an election re-running exercise under alternative electoral systems, presents the results obtained for each of the five country case studies presented in the book, and discusses the practical implications of each set of re-running observations, as well as the positive and negative consequences for stability and representative government; further details of the methods used for crafting districts for re-runs are given in an appendix at the end of the book. The chapter first discusses the importance of re-running evidence, and second, outlines the range of alternative
electoral systems used for the re-runnings, justifying their inclusion in the exercise, and addressing the underlying assumptions and methodological objections. Third, results are given of plurality single-member districts (SMD) elections re-run in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe under the alternative vote in single-member districts (AV-SMD), the alternative vote in multi-member districts (AV-MMD), list proportional representation (PR) in regionally defined multi-member districts, and list PR in one national multi-member district. Finally, the results are given of re-running the list PR elections held in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia under plurality SMD, AV-SMD, AV-MMD, and the list PR method not utilized in the actual elections.

The Political Consequences of Germany's Mixed-Member System: Personalization at the Grass Roots?

Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Bernhard Wessels

in Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?

Addresses the question of the relevance the German mixed-member electoral system has for the party system and for candidate vote, and argues that the mixed-member electoral system does indeed live up to its German moniker of ‘personalized proportional representation’, in that it provides at once individualized representation of geographic constituencies and proportionality. The analysis proceeds in four steps and discusses the impact of the electoral system on the interparty and intraparty dimensions. The first two sections deal with the impact of the electoral system (a) on the party system, and (b) on voting behavior, with special attention to ticket-splitting. The third and fourth sections deal with (a) candidate selection and opportunity structures as shaped by the electoral system and the parties, and (b) the likelihood of a district performance-based personal vote for members of parliament. Concludes with a confrontation of the normative expectations of the founding fathers and empirical reality and speculates about the future of the German party system.
The United Kingdom Comes of Age: The British Electoral Reform “Revolution” Of the 1990S

David M. Farrell

in Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: November 2003
Item type: chapter

In the field of electoral systems, Britain has long held out as a bastion of stability, as the country seen as least likely to undergo fundamental electoral reform, but this picture was rudely shattered in the late spring of 1997, with the election of a new Labour government. The central argument of this chapter is that the current debate over British electoral reform should be viewed as part of a wider process of the coming of age of British politics. A review of the historical debate reveals a series of failed initiatives to reform the electoral system, suggesting that the matter has never been entirely put to rest, and that there has always been the prospect of its re-emergence. The current episode, dating from the election of the new government in 1997, provides reason to expect that electoral reform may really happen this time, and indeed already has happened in a number of British electoral arenas (European Parliament; London mayor; Northern Ireland, Scottish, Welsh and London Assemblies). The chapter is arranged as follows: the first section summarizes the historical record from 1860 to 1970, and provides evidence of a political elite willing at least to countenance the idea of experimenting with change, even if not yet prepared to embrace it; the second section explores possible explanations for why the issue re-emerged in the 1990s and describes the reforms implemented in that period (up to 2000); this is followed by an outline of the deliberations and proposals of the Independent Commission on the Voting System for the British House of Commons (the Jenkins Commission), which was established by the new Labour prime minister, Tony Blair, in December 1997, whose report was published in October 1998 and suggested ‘alternative vote plus (AV+)’ as the new electoral system; the concluding section discusses the current prospects for electoral reform in the UK.

Race-Conscious Districting in the USA

Anne Phillips

in The Politics of Presence

Published in print: 1998 Published Online: November 2003
Civil rights litigation in the USA successfully interpreted the 1965 Voting Rights Act as implying the right of minority voters to elect the candidates of their choice. This gave the impetus to ‘race-conscious districting’, which created voting districts in which minority citizens (primarily Black and Latino) formed a voting majority. This chapter explores the success of this in raising the proportion of black representatives but also the problems this mechanism has generated. It uses this case study to argue the importance of combining a politics of ideas with a politics of presence.

Are Politicians Vote-Maximizers?
Leif Lewin

in Self-Interest and Public Interest in Western Politics
Published in print: 1991 Published Online: November 2003
Item type: chapter

According to the assumption of the public-choice theory, politicians are guided by their self-interest and vote maximization. By analysing studies based on theories of the political business cycle, Leif Lewin provides evidence of predominance of public interest over self-interest in politics. The author then proceeds to analyse the electoral strategies of European socialists supporting this argument. The facts presented clearly indicate that the image of the politicians as primarily vote-maximizers has little empirical support.

The Politics of Electoral Systems
Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell (eds)

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: February 2006
Item type: book

Electoral systems are the central political institution in representative democracies. They convert votes into seats and structure the choices facing voters. They also affect the behaviour of political parties, individual MPs, and candidates. This book looks at three kinds of issues. First, it focuses on the ‘political science of electoral systems’, that is, it joins the canon of works that have attempted to explore various relationships between electoral systems on the one hand and ‘outputs’ such as government formation, the behaviour of political actors, the
representativeness of parliaments, and the quality of governance. Second, while quite a lot is known about generic families of electoral systems, such as ‘plurality rule’ or ‘proportional representation’, much less is known about variation within these broad types and how exactly a given electoral system ‘really works’ in a particular country. Thus, the book includes detailed studies of the operation of electoral systems in 22 countries. Third, it studies the ‘politics of electoral systems’. It treats each country’s electoral system as, potentially at least, constituting a political issue in its own right. It establishes the reasons behind the initial adoption of an electoral system and discusses who supports the current electoral system and who opposes it, who benefits from it and who loses out, reviewing the current debate in each country on the question of electoral reform. This highlights issues relevant to normative debates about which electoral systems ‘work well’ and which do not, which ones operate uncontentiously, and which ones are a focus of division in the countries employing them. It reviews these questions by in-depth studies of 22 countries – chosen to represent a range of different electoral systems and located in all continents of the world – along with a number of chapters supplying comparative analysis.

The Number and Balance of Parties

Rein Taagepera

in Predicting Party Sizes: The Logic of Simple Electoral Systems

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Item type: chapter

When some parties have many seats and some have few, we need a meaningful ‘effective’ number of parties so as to compare the effects of electoral systems on party systems. The standard way to express the effective number of parties is to convert to fractional seat shares, square them, add, and take the inverse. The same can be done with fractional vote shares. This method is not ideal, but all others are worse. Effective number of parties can be complemented by a measure of balance in party sizes.
Excessive deviation from proportional representation may hurt the democratic legitimacy of the regime. The simplest way to measure the deviation from PR is to add all the differences between seat and vote shares of each party, then divide by two. Proportionality profiles are a way to show which parties are advantaged and which are disadvantaged. Volatility of votes from one election to the next can be measured the same way as the deviation from PR.