contents

New Introduction: Seats, Votes and the Spatial Organisation of Elections Revisited by *Ron Johnston* ix

Preface xli

1 Translating votes into seats

1.1 Seats and votes 1
1.1.1 Electoral reform 2
1.2 The spatial organisation of plurality elections 4
1.2.1 The distribution of party voters 5
1.2.2 Drawing constituency boundaries 8
1.2.3 The interaction of voters and boundaries 11

2 A modelling framework for the seats-votes relationship

2.1 The frequency-distribution approach 13
2.1.1 The constituency proportion distribution 14
2.1.2 Basic types of seats-votes relationships 17
2.2 The normal distribution and the cube law 20
2.2.1 Normal predictions of seat proportions 22
2.2.2 The cube law as a normal model 26

3 Explaining the cube law

3.1 The binomial method 32
3.1.1 Variants on the binomial distribution 33
3.1.2 The distribution of constituency proportions and spatial clustering 35
3.2 The Markov method 39
3.2.1 A model of individual voters 40
3.2.2 A model of clusters of voters 42
3.3 An empirical investigation of the Markov explanation 47
3.3.1 The sample survey 48
3.3.2 The political mosaic of Newcastle upon Tyne 49
3.4 The normal distribution as an electoral norm 52

4 Malapportionment, nonuniform swing, and nonnormality

4.1 Malapportionment 55
4.1.1 The effective party vote proportion 56
4.2 Nonuniform swings 59
4.2.1 Variations in patterns of swing 59
4.2.2 Simple random or linear swing-votes relationships 61
4.2.3 Other swing-votes relationships 64
4.3 Nonnormality in constituency proportion distributions 65
4.3.1 Nonnormality 1: skewness 68
4.3.2 Nonnormality 2: kurtosis and bimodality 71
4.3.3 Empirical studies of constituency proportion distributions 73
4.4 The components of electoral bias 86

5 Three-party elections

5.1 The three-party seats-votes relationship and the election triangle 93
5.1.1 Election triangles 94
5.2 The case of nationally uniform third-party vote 96
5.2.1 Equal attraction rates 97
5.2.2 Unequal attraction rates 99
5.3 Nonuniform levels of third-party support 102
5.3.1 Independent variable support for the third party 102
5.3.2 Third-party support related to major-party strength 106
5.3.3 Regional variation in third-party support 107
5.4 Empirical applications 109
5.4.1 Three-party elections in Britain 109
5.4.2 A permanent minority: Social Credit in New Zealand 116
5.5 Conclusion: three-party elections, the Achilles heel of the plurality system 119

6 Decisionmaking in electoral districting

6.1 Types of districting agencies 122
6.1.1 Partisan decisionmaking 122
6.1.2 Nonpartisan decisionmaking 125
6.1.3 Bipartisan districting 127
6.1.4 Beyond the USA 131
6.1.5 The question of South African elections 133
6.2 A statistical framework 140
6.2.1 Constituencies as combinatorial structures 140
6.2.2 Algorithms for finding feasible solutions 143
6.3 The two-constituency case 146
6.3.1 Alternative solutions 146
6.3.2 Constituencies for Sunderland 149
6.3.3 Districting decisions of alternative agencies 151
6.3.4 A formal derivation of majority-party bias 152
6.4 Extensions to more than two constituencies 154
6.4.1 Variance and party fortunes 155
6.4.2 Constituencies for Newcastle upon Tyne 156
6.4.3 Congressional districts for Iowa 158
6.5 Is there a satisfactory districting procedure? 160

7 Beyond pluralities

7.1 Systems of voting 162
7.2 Majority systems of voting 165
7.2.1 The alternative vote in Australia 165
7.2.2 The double ballot in France 169
7.2.3 A majority-vote system for Britain 172

7.3 The single-transferable-vote system 176
7.3.1 STV in Ireland 176
7.3.2 STV for British elections 179
7.4 A mixture of pluralities and PR 188
7.4.1 The 'mixed system' in the Federal Republic of Germany 190
7.4.2 Additional members for the British parliament 192
7.5 Conclusions: electoral engineering 195

8 Concluding comments and summary 200

Appendix 1

Alternative approaches to explaining the cube law 205
March's behavioural rationalisation 205
Taagepera's communication theory 208
A game-theoretic approach 211

Appendix 2

Functional relationships between seats and votes in multiparty elections 213
Qualter's multiparty equation 213
A general seats-votes equation 215
Casstevens and Morris's decomposed system 218
Spafford's regression approach 219

Appendix 3

Derivation of the seats-votes relationship: uniform support and even attraction 222

Appendix 4

Derivation of the seats-votes relationship: uneven attraction from major parties 223

Appendix 5

Construction of figure 5.10 225

Appendix 6

Derivation of equations for linear relations between third-party support and the strength of other parties 226

Appendix 7

Alternative explanations of bimodal CPDs 228

References 231

Index 237