

Electoral Systems: A Global Perspective

Third edition

**Elisabeth Carter,
David M. Farrell,
Gemma Loomes**

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
LONDON • NEW YORK • OXFORD • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

BLOOMSBURY, BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC and the Diana logo
are trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain 2001

Second edition published 2011

This edition published 2024

Copyright © Elisabeth Carter, David M. Farrell, Gemma Loomes, 2024

Elisabeth Carter, David M. Farrell and Gemma Loomes have asserted their right under the
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Authors of this work.

For legal purposes the Acknowledgements on p. xii constitute an extension
of this copyright page.

Cover design by Jess Stevens

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or
by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information
storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc does not have any control over, or responsibility for, any third-party
websites referred to or in this book. All internet addresses given in this book were correct at the time
of going to press. The author and publisher regret any inconvenience caused if addresses have
changed or sites have ceased to exist, but can accept no responsibility for any such changes.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Carter, Elisabeth L., author. | Farrell, David M., 1960-
author. | Loomes, Gemma, 1982- author.

Title: Electoral systems : a global perspective / Elisabeth Carter, David M. Farrell,
Gemma Loomes.

Description: Third edition. | London ; New York : Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. |
Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "Electoral Systems
examines the six principal types of system currently in use in more than fifty of
the world's democracies. The book considers the operations and effects of these
systems and adopts a common format throughout. Making use of an array of
visual material, including authentic ballot papers, tables and figures, this revised
edition assesses: a spread of case studies in and beyond Europe; forms and
consequences of electoral reform; 'electoral integrity' and gerrymandering; and
expanded coverage of 'contamination' problems with mixed-member systems.

This in-depth study remains the go-to book for students and researchers seeking
to understand electoral systems around the world"-- Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2024014190 (print) | LCCN 2024014191 (ebook) |
ISBN 9781350348974 (hardback) | ISBN 9781350348967 (paperback) |
ISBN 9781350348998 (epub) | ISBN 9781350348950 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Elections. | Representative government and representation.

Classification: LCC JF1001 .F35 2024 (print) | LCC JF1001 (ebook) |
DDC 324--dc23/eng/20240715

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024014190>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024014191>

ISBN: HB: 978-1-3503-4897-4

PB: 978-1-3503-4896-7

ePDF: 978-1-3503-4895-0

eBook: 978-1-3503-4899-8

Typeset by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India
Printed and bound in Great Britain

To find out more about our authors and books visit www.bloomsbury.com and
sign up for our newsletters.

Contents

	List of Illustrations	viii
	Preface and Acknowledgements	xii
1	The study of electoral systems	1
	1.1 Why study electoral systems?	1
	1.2 Classifying electoral systems	4
	1.3 Plan of the book	8
2	The single-member plurality system and its cousins	11
	2.1 Why choose SMP?	12
	2.2 The single-member plurality system in practice in the UK	14
	2.3 Assessing SMP in the UK	20
	2.4 SMP on a grand scale: The case of India	26
	2.5 The cousins of SMP	33
	2.6 Conclusion	36
3	Majority electoral systems: Two-round systems and the alternative vote	37
	3.1 Two-round systems	38
	3.2 The alternative vote system	46
	3.3 Assessing majority electoral systems	53
	3.4 Conclusion	62
4	The list system of proportional representation	65
	4.1 The introduction of list PR	66
	4.2 Electoral formulas	69
	4.3 District magnitude, multi-tier districting and legal thresholds	74

4.4	Ballot structure	80
4.5	Conclusion	91
5	Mixed-member electoral systems	93
5.1	MMP in practice: The case of Germany	95
5.2	MMM in practice: The case of Japan	111
5.3	Mixed-member electoral systems in comparative perspective	120
5.4	Conclusion	126
6	The single transferable vote system of proportional representation	129
6.1	STV in Ireland	131
6.2	How STV works	134
6.3	Variations in STV design	143
6.4	The consequences of STV for the political system	148
6.5	Conclusion	155
7	The systemic consequences of electoral systems	157
7.1	The proportionality of different electoral systems	157
7.2	Electoral systems and party systems	163
7.3	Electoral systems and government stability	167
7.4	Electoral systems and the political system	174
7.5	Conclusion	182
8	The strategic consequences of electoral systems	185
8.1	The decision to enter the race	185
8.2	Which (types of) candidates to field	194
8.3	Electoral systems and election campaigns	197
8.4	Electoral systems and elected politicians	206
8.5	The strategic consequences of electoral systems for voters	210
8.6	Conclusion	220
9	Electoral system design and reform	223
9.1	Electoral system design	224

9.2	Electoral reform	227
9.3	The mixed-member moment in New Zealand, Italy and Japan	232
9.4	Explaining electoral system design and reform	236
9.5	Does electoral reform work?	240
9.6	Built-in distortions to electoral systems	243
9.7	Conclusion	248
10	Do electoral systems matter?	249
10.1	So, do they matter?	249
10.2	Why do electoral systems not matter more?	254
10.3	Conclusion: Why electoral systems still matter, nevertheless	257
	Notes	261
	Appendix	269
	Bibliography	280
	Glossary	317
	Index	320