



Citizens' Assembly

Annotated Bibliography of Advanced Readings

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Anderson, Christopher and Christine Guillroy. 1997. "Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems." *The American Political Science Review*, 91(1): 66-81.

Summary: This article examines whether or not the electoral system affects people's satisfaction with democracy. The study demonstrates that people who live in countries that use more consensual systems tend to be more satisfied than are those who live in countries that use more majoritarian systems. (16 pages).

Blais, André and Louis Massicotte. 2002. 'Electoral Systems' in *Comparing Democracies 2: New challenges in the study of elections and voting* edited by Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi and Pippa Norris. London: Sage. pp 40-69

Summary: This is a concise but sophisticated introduction to the politics of electoral systems. It documents the diversity of systems presently in use and the impact of electoral systems on political life. The authors also consider the normative question of which system is best and they identify major tradeoffs involved in choosing an electoral system. This chapter is highly recommended. (29 pages).

Blais, André. 1991. "The Debate over Electoral Systems." *International Political Science Review*. 12(3): 239-260.

Summary: This article reviews the debate over the essential dimensions of electoral systems. In so doing Blais looks at each system from the perspective of its proponents and summarizes their positions. The paper also reviews empirical arguments made in defence on one system or another and identifies values that are often invoked in that debate. (21 pages).

Gallagher, Michael. 1991. "Proportionality, Disproportionality and Electoral Systems." *Electoral Studies*. 10 (1): 33-51.

Summary: This article provides an overview of the different ways of distributing seats under PR systems and the values underpinning them. Discusses different ways that one can measure/understand disproportionality. (19 pages).

Katz, Richard. 1997. *Democracy and Elections*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Summary: Katz addresses the relationship between four values of democratic theory—popular sovereignty, liberalism, personal development, and community—and the electoral institutions used to implement them. Part II addresses the consequences of electoral institutions with the objective of finding the institutions most appropriate to each model of democracy. (344 pages).

Lijpart, Arend. 1994. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945-1990*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Summary: This book is a comprehensive study of 70 electoral systems in 27 countries. The analysis demonstrates the effect various features of electoral systems have on the proportionality of the outcome, the degree of multi-partisanship, and the creation of majority parties. Research indicates that electoral systems are not as diverse or as complex as is usually assumed. (209 pages).

Norris, Pippa. 1997. "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems." *International Political Science Review* 18 (3): 297-312.

Summary: Norris outlines the different types of electoral systems, considers the normative criteria underpinning the debate about reform and evaluates relevant criteria for choosing an electoral system. In so doing the article compares legislative elections in 53 countries at various stages of economic and political development. (16 pages).

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

Latner, Michael and Anthony McGann. 2005. "Geographical Representation Under Proportional Representation: The Cases of Israel and the Netherlands." *Electoral Studies* 24: 709-734.

Summary: This article looks at two PR systems where one would not expect to find geographic representation with the goal of determining whether or not PR systems allow for that type of representation. The research finds that PR does allow for very distinct patterns of representation, with both metropolitan and peripheral regions experiencing over-representation. (26 pages).

Rule, Wilma and Joseph Zimmerman. *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities*. Westport Conn: Greenwood Press.

Summary: This is a comparative study of electoral procedures, trends and key issues with a particular focus on the women's and minority representation around the world. The authors offer explanations as to why these groups are under-represented. They also point to ways in which women and minorities can enhance their positions politically. (259 pages).

VOTER TURNOUT

Blais, André and Agnieszka Dobrzynska. 1998. "Turnout in Electoral Democracies." *European Journal of Political Research*. 33: 239-261.

Summary: Blais and Dobrzynska explore factors that influence voter turnout through an examination of 324 elections in 91 countries over a twenty year period. Results indicate that economic development, population size, compulsory voting, the electoral system, the competitiveness of the election, and the number of parties can have an impact on turnout. (23 pages).

Blais, André and Louis Massicotte and Agnieszka Dobrzynska. 2003. "Why is Turnout Higher in Some Countries than in Others?" *Elections Canada*. ([available online](#))

Summary: This article explores why voter turnout is higher in some countries and lower in others. Results indicate that compulsory voting, the presence of a proportional or mixed system and the ability to vote by mail, by proxy or in advance help to increase voter turnout. (28 pages).

Jackman, Robert. 1987. "Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Countries." *American Political Science Review*. 81 (2): 405-424.

Summary: Jackman explores the determinants of voter turnout in a comparative analysis of various electoral systems. The research finds that institutional factors such as competitive districts, a single legislature and a proportional system create incentives that encourage people to vote. (20 pages).

Norris, Pippa. 2002. *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Summary: Norris looks at electoral turnout, party membership and civic activism in countries around the world. Her research indicates that rates of traditional political participation (e.g. voting) are not declining as much or as rapidly as is commonly assumed. She also finds that many citizens are participating in new forms of civic engagement. (290 pages).

CASE STUDIES

Banaducci, Susan, Todd Banaducci and Jeffrey Karp. 1999. "Proportional Representation and Attitudes about Politics: results from New Zealand." *Electoral Studies* 18: 533-555.

Summary: Examines the impact of the switch from FPTP to MMP in New Zealand to see how the move to a more proportional system impacted upon people's attitudes about politics. The research finds that the shift to a more proportional system encouraged greater positive feelings about the political system than had existed previously. (23 pages).

Boston, Johnathan and Stephen Church and Tim Bale. 2003. "Impact of Proportional Representation on Government Effectiveness: The Case of New Zealand." *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. 62 (4): 7-22.

Summary: Examines how the introduction of a degree of proportionality to the electoral system in New Zealand (MMP) has impacted government effectiveness. The research finds that while governments have become less durable and the policy process more complex, governments are no less effective than they were under the old FPTP system. (16 pages).

Jansen, Harold. 2004. "The Political Consequences of the Alternative Vote: Lessons from Western Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. 37 (3): 647-669.

Summary: Considers Western Canada's past experiences with AV. The research indicates that AV did little to address the issues of increased proportionality or voter turnout. At the same time it finds that AV did lead to increased numbers of parties and ballots rejected. (23 pages).

Norris, Pippa. 2001. "The Twilight of Westminster? Electoral Reform and its Consequences." *Parliamentary Affairs*. 53 (4): 877-900.

Summary: Through the use of a 19 country comparative study this article discusses the two main claims put forward by proponents of the Single Member Plurality system: it promotes strong voter-member linkages and generates greater satisfaction with the political system. Results indicate that voter-member linkages are stronger in single member districts than in pure multi-member districts but that combined districts, such as those found in MMP, can preserve these links. As for the issue of greater satisfaction, there is some evidence to support this claim but the results are too preliminary to allow for any concrete conclusions.

Vowles, Jack. 2000. "Introducing Proportional Representation: The New Zealand Experience." *Parliamentary Affairs*. 53 (4): 680-696.

Summary: Provides a history of why New Zealand changed its electoral system and describes the features of the new system. Discusses the results of the first two elections held under the new system and draws conclusions about the reforms' impact. (17 pages).