

Democratic Politics and Party Competition

Essays in honour of Ian Budge

Edited by

Judith Bara and **Albert Weale**



Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science

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Transferred to digital printing 2010

First published 2006

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2006 Selection and editorial matter, Judith Bara and Albert Weale;
individual chapters, the contributors

Typeset in Baskerville by Wearset Ltd, Boldon, Tyne and Wear

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN10: 0-415-38505-9 (hbk)

ISBN10: 0-415-59947-4 (pbk)

ISBN10: 0-203-96577-9 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-38505-3 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-59947-4 (pbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-96577-1 (ebk)

Democratic Politics and Party Competition

This new book addresses central issues in the comparative study of democracy, principally those issues that can be illuminated through the work of the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP).

Applying the Comparative Manifestos' approach, the contributors to this volume outline the intellectual challenges that it faces and indicate some of the ways that the comparative study of democracy may be carried forward. Addressing a wide range of issues within the broader area of political science, the volume:

- Provides an up-to-date account of the achievements of the CMP.
- Illustrates some of the ways that the comparative study of democracy may be carried forward into the future, focusing on potential extensions of the CMP research programme.
- Presents a wide range of opinions and uses of the CMP's methodology and discusses a number of challenges to this particular approach.

Honouring the lifetime achievement of Professor Ian Budge, who has provided distinguished intellectual leadership for the Comparative Manifestos Project over the last 25 years, this innovative study will appeal to researchers of comparative politics, government and democratic theory.

Judith Bara is a Lecturer in Politics, at Queen Mary, University of London and a Research Fellow in Government at the University of Essex, UK. **Albert Weale** is Professor of Government at the University of Essex, UK. He is also co-editor of the *British Journal of Political Science* and Fellow of the British Academy.

Routledge/ECPR studies in European political science

Edited by Thomas Poguntke

University of Birmingham, UK, on behalf of the European Consortium for Political Research



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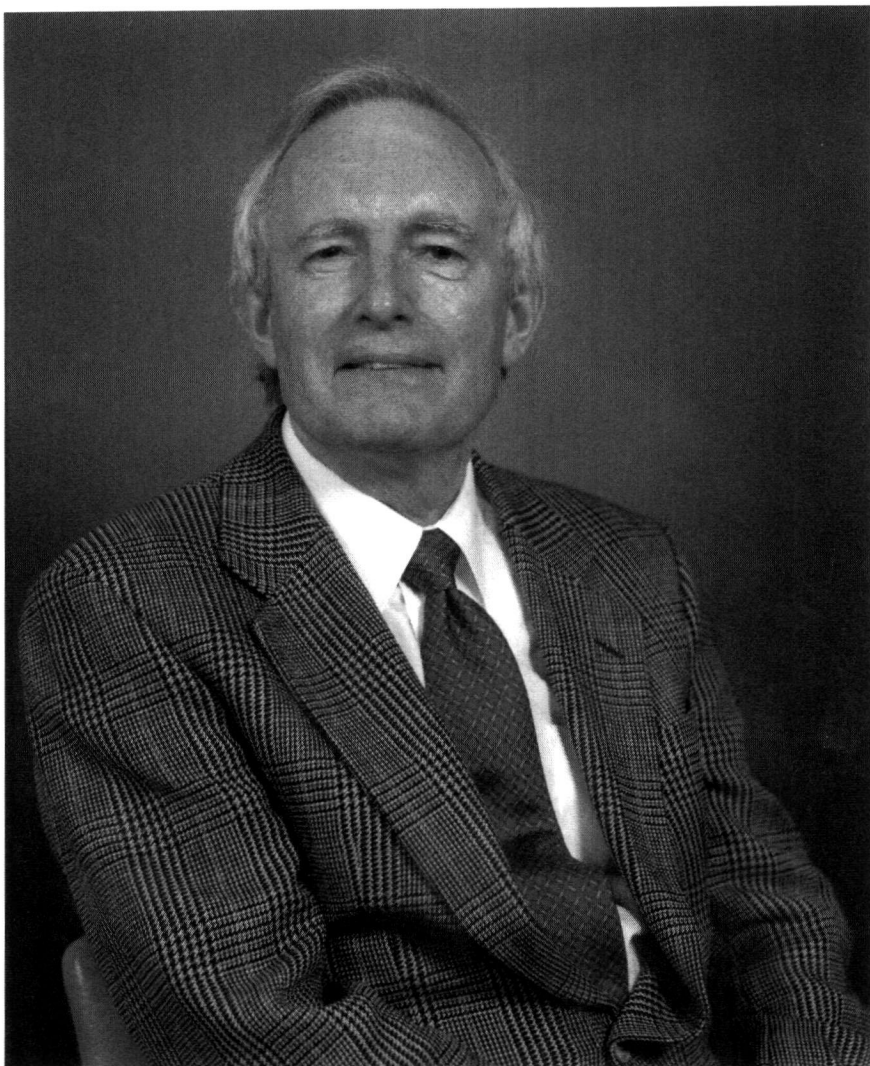
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To Ian Budge

Political scientist, colleague, friend



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Preface

The academic world is a 'small world' as David Lodge entitled one of his sharp and witty novels. It is therefore not exceptionally surprising that a former PhD student of Ian Budge should happen to be the Series Editor of the Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science where this volume in honour of his work is published. Having read Ken Newton's excellent and highly entertaining account of the Budgean *modus operandi* I cannot resist the temptation to add a few details from the perspective of someone who wrote his PhD thesis under Ian's supervision at the EUI.

What comes to mind when thinking back to the Florentine years? Ken mentions the illegible handwriting, and I clearly remember that the first serious challenge on my way to completing a PhD thesis was the task of deciphering Ian's comments on the margins of my outlines and first chapter drafts. Our first meeting, however, made a far more lasting impression on me. Roaming the corridors of the medieval Badia Fiesolana in search for the appropriate supervisor who was to guide one's work over the next three (or so) years, I met Ian Budge and presented some very preliminary ideas about how one might be able to explain the phenomenon of the emerging of Green parties in many Western European countries. He listened patiently and then told me that he was not really convinced by the approach I wanted to follow. 'But if you argue your case well, it will be alright with me', he continued, and I think this simple sentence should be the basic law of PhD supervision. We proceeded on that basis without any problems towards the completion of my thesis and one of the great mysteries of our times is how he could read entire chapter drafts in sometimes little more than half an hour and always spot the weak points that I had tried to carefully hide from his attention.

It is fitting that a volume in honour of Ian Budge's work should be published in the ECPR book series since he has played such an influential role in building up the ECPR. Furthermore, Ian Budge's work has always embodied one of the central missions of the Consortium, that is, the commitment to systematic comparative research. Bringing junior and senior researchers together in Joint Sessions and Research Sessions has

provided the launch pad for many large comparative projects; and the Comparative Manifestos Project, in which Ian Budge has played such a central role, is certainly one of the most important endeavours in empirical political science. It starts from the simple assumption that analysts should, in the first instance, take the programmatic statements of political parties seriously and see whether or not they keep faith to their ideological roots and, eventually, carry out their election promises.

Anyone who wants to answer these questions for more than very few parties over a relatively short period of time needs to convert manifesto prose into quantitative data, and this was the initial mission of the Comparative Manifestos Project. By now, the data set includes more than 50 countries and the data on some parties covers more than five decades – a unique data base for answering the questions sketched out above and many more. What is more, some of the findings from the Manifesto Project can be read as an antidote to political cynicism: parties tend to keep faith to their basic ideological commitments when writing their election manifestos and, within the given political and economic constraints, parties do make a difference to policy outputs.

This volume revisits some of these themes and pushes them further. As the editors point out in their introduction, the contributions centre around three broad themes, including the ‘empirical validity of the generalisations that emerge from Ian Budge’s account of democracy’, related methodological problems, and wider theoretical and methodological implications. It assembles contributions from leading experts in the field, among them many long-standing collaborators of Ian Budge. As such, it is far more than an acknowledgement to his work. It pushes back the boundaries of our understanding of how party competition and democratic government function – and it is precisely this forward-looking nature which makes it such a appropriate tribute to Ian Budge’s achievements.

Thomas Poguntke, Series Editor

Acknowledgements

There are few occasions on which personal moments intersect with the right time to assess professional developments in political science, but this volume records one such occasion. In the last 25 years political scientists have made great strides in understanding the workings and processes of democracy. Ideas of party competition, electoral choice and government formation have been elaborated. Data gathering to test these ideas has been refined and developed. Central to this process has been the work of the Comparative Manifestos Project, possibly the largest network of political scientists in the world. One testament to work of this group is the 2003 Best Data Set Award by the Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association. So, when the occasion came for Ian Budge to retire, it seemed a good idea to mark the occasion in the way that he wanted, namely with a conference devoted to the examination of these professional questions. The present volume is the fruit of those efforts.

The conference itself was held at the University of Essex between 26 and 28 May 2004. It is a mark of the professional and personal respect in which Ian is held that participants were willing to travel from Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland and the United States, as well as the UK, to attend the event, and one participant from Australia routed his journey so as to be there. Altogether there were 19 papers presented. Inevitably, it did not make sense to include all of these in a single volume, and in some cases other commitments pressed upon busy authors. Moreover, some papers had to be extensively rewritten or revised in order to make a coherent volume. The editors and organisers are grateful to all participants in the conference for their contributions, including those (Sarah Birch, Anthony King, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, David McKay and David Sanders) whose papers are not included here. We should also like to thank Ken Newton who undertook the biographical sketch of Ian Budge included in this volume.

The conference itself was proof of the old adage that if you want a job done, find a busy person to do it. In particular, Jackie Pells and Linda Day of the Essex Department of Government, did an excellent job. We are also grateful to the Department of Government and the University of Essex for

financial support for the conference itself and to the University Librarian, Robert Butler, and his colleagues Nigel Cochrane and Sandy Macmillan, for facilitating the exhibition which demonstrated Ian Budge's pioneering contribution to the Essex Summer School as well as to the Comparative Manifestos Project. Many of the participants in the conference have also contributed to the former as both students and faculty. We also owe a huge debt to Julie Snell for managing, with her usual skill, the task of turning disparate typescripts into an intelligible sequence.

It is one thing to have an interesting set of papers, another to have a coherent volume. We are grateful to three anonymous referees on the project whose advice has proved helpful in this task. Thomas Poguntke, in his role as Series Editor of the Routledge ECPR Studies in European Political Science, expedited the project, and Heidi Bagtazo and Harriet Brinton at Routledge have been a model of efficiency. We are grateful to them all.

Above all, however, we should like to express our gratitude to Ian Budge, the inspirer of this project and the dedicatee of this volume. He has been a political scientist who has taught us much. More importantly, he has been a colleague and friend who has generously shared his talents and enthusiasms with many people. We hope he finds evidence of his beneficent effect in these papers.

Judith Bara
Albert Weale

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