Markovian Elections

John Duggan and Jean-Guillaume Forand

Abstract

We establish existence and continuity properties in a model of dynamic elections with a discrete state space and general policies and preferences. We assume state-by-state commitment: the incumbent politician is committed to her current policy for as long the current state remains in place. The modeling approach is illustrated in several examples, including a model of ideological politics with two demographic states, a model of public investment with two economic states, and a model of changing politician valence that captures either experience or corruption.