

“African politics is often reduced to primordial ethnic affiliations tempered by electoral patronage. This book effectively challenges this conventional wisdom by adopting and refining an approach to political affiliations first developed to understand European and US politics as involving socioeconomic cleavages (including ethnic ones) refracted through regional and local lenses. Africa turns out to be less distinctive after all.”

John Agnew, co-author of *Mapping Populism:
Taking Politics to the People*

“Catherine Boone convincingly shows that spatial inequalities structure political competition in Africa, much as they do in other parts of the world. This is a must-read for all scholars of comparative politics.”

Melissa Rogers, Claremont Graduate University

“This kind of focus on the territoriality of political and economic administration is rare in political science but Boone shows just how powerful it can be. If you buy the argument – and I do – this understanding either displaces or profoundly changes how we think about ethnicity and its supposedly defining political and economic role on the continent.”

Antoinette Handley, University of Toronto

“This is a big book that promises to have a major impact. The book seems well positioned to shake up – disrupt, in tech speak – the political science literature on Africa. Among other remarkable strengths, the book offers exciting new data on regional voting patterns; broad and deep coverage of colonial period and the inequalities it created; and a convincing critique of micro, clientelist, ethnic approaches.”

Ben Schneider, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Inequality and Political Cleavage in Africa

This pathbreaking work integrates African countries into broader comparative theories of how spatial inequality shapes political competition over the construction of markets, states, and nations. Existing literature on African countries has found economic cleavages, institutions, and policy choices to be of low salience in national politics. This book inverts these arguments. Boone trains our analytic focus on the spatial inequalities and territorial institutions that structure national politics in Africa, showing that regional cleavages find expression in both electoral competition and policy struggles over redistribution, sectoral investment, market integration, and state design. Leveraging comparative politics theory, Boone argues that African countries' regional and core-periphery tensions are similar to those that have shaped national economic integration in other parts of the world. Bringing together electoral and economic geography, the book offers a new and powerful map of political competition on the African continent.

Catherine Boone is Professor of Comparative Politics at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her works include *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics* (2014), *Political Topographies of the African State* (2003), and *Merchant Capital and the Roots of State Power in Senegal* (1993).

Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics

General Editor

Kathleen Thelen, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

Associate Editors

Lisa Blaydes, *Stanford University*
Catherine Boone, *London School of Economics*
Thad Dunning, *University of California, Berkeley*
Anna Grzymala-Busse, *Stanford University*
Torben Iversen, *Harvard University*
Stathis Kalyvas, *University of Oxford*
Melanie Manion, *Duke University*
Perna Singh, *Brown University*
Dan Slater, *University of Michigan*
Susan Stokes, *Yale University*
Tariq Thachil, *University of Pennsylvania*
Erik Wibbels, *University of Pennsylvania*

Series Founder

Peter Lange, *Duke University*

Editor Emeritus

Margaret Levi, *Stanford University*

Other Books in the Series

Christopher Adolph, *Bankers, Bureaucrats, and Central Bank Politics: The Myth of Neutrality*
Michael Albertus, *Autocracy and Redistribution: The Politics of Land Reform*
Michael Albertus, *Property without Rights: Origins and Consequences of the Property Rights Gap*
Santiago Anria, *When Movements Become Parties: The Bolivian MAS in Comparative Perspective*
Ben W. Ansell, *From the Ballot to the Blackboard: The Redistributive Political Economy of Education*
Ben W. Ansell and Johannes Lindvall, *Inward Conquest: The Political Origins of Modern Public Services*
Ben W. Ansell and David J. Samuels, *Inequality and Democratization: An Elite-Competition Approach*
Ana Arjona, *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*
Leonardo R. Arriola, *Multi-Ethnic Coalitions in Africa: Business Financing of Opposition Election Campaigns*

Continued after the index

Inequality and Political Cleavage in Africa

Regionalism by Design

CATHERINE BOONE

London School of Economics and Political Science

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-44163-6 — Inequality and Political Cleavage in Africa
Catherine Boone
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009441636

DOI: 10.1017/9781009441667

© Catherine Boone 2024

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place
without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2024

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

*A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from
the Library of Congress*

ISBN 978-1-009-44163-6 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-009-44161-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
remain, accurate or appropriate.

Why countries have the political cleavages they do and why those cleavages change [or not] are among the enduring mysteries of comparative politics.

Ronald Rogowski 1987: 1121

One of the biggest things that this country has to live with, if it does not address it at this point in time, is the gross inequality between regions, zones and parts of this country. That is a matter that has to be addressed at this particular time. We should not leave that problem to future generations.

Abdul Bahari Ali Jillo, MP for Isiolo South
Kenya Hansard, June 20, 2020, p. 1455

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	xiii
<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	xv
1 Economic Inequalities and Territorial Oppositions in African Politics	I
2 Region and Regionalism in African Politics	25
3 Endowment, Institutions, and Spatial Inequality: Regions by Design	48
4 Regional Blocs and Bloc Voting in National Elections <i>with Catherine Boone and Juliette Crespin-Boucaud, PhD</i>	90
5 Regional Hierarchies and Winning Coalitions	149
6 Territorial Oppositions in African Politics	168
7 Regionalism and the National Agenda	195
8 Conclusion: Inequality and Political Cleavage in African Politics	223
<i>Appendices</i>	243
<i>References</i>	281
<i>Index</i>	321

Figures

1.1	Interpersonal and spatial inequality in African countries, 2012 (with comparison to some other high inequality countries)	<i>page 5</i>
1.2	Territorially divided states: Theoretical expectations and African exemplars	9
1.3	Regional cleavages and national politics: Causes and effects	20
2.1	Spatial inequality in African countries compared to other countries, by world region	33
3.1	Uneven development and territorial institutions bring spatial inequalities to the fore in politics	52
3.2	Tiered institutional structure and regional economic differentiation in an African colony	65
3.3	Persistence of Native Authority (NA) borders in 2012 Admin2 units: Ghana and Nigeria	73
4.1	Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia: Persistent electoral blocs	101
4.2	Côte d’Ivoire, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe: Persistent electoral blocs and oppositional zones	102
4.3	Nigeria: Persistent electoral blocs	103
4.4	Tanzania, Cameroon, and Mali: Persistent electoral blocs and oppositional zones	105
4.5	(a–c) Bloc advantage and disadvantage (composite 1990s through 2010s)	114
4.6	(a–b) Colonial producer regions and electoral bloc overlay (panels a and b)	125
4.7	Ethnic profile of the electoral blocs (2010s)	134
5.1	Bloc political dominance: Bloc types I–IV	153
6.1	Kenya electoral blocs, disparities in regional GDP proxy and education	171
		xi

xii	<i>List of Figures</i>
6.2	Zambia electoral blocs, disparities in regional GDP proxy and education 177
6.3	Malawi electoral blocs, disparities in regional GDP proxy and education 182
6.4	Uganda electoral blocs, disparities in regional GDP proxy and education 187
7.1	Regional preferences over state design 218
A.1	Interpersonal and spatial inequality in African countries using population-weighted CoV 243
A.2	Spatial inequality in African countries (unweighted by population) 244
E.1	Overlap of electoral blocs and colonial-era producer zones: Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi 274
E.2	Overlap of electoral blocs and colonial-era producer zones: Mali, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania 275
E.3	Overlap of electoral blocs and colonial-era producer zones: Zambia and Zimbabwe 276

Tables

3.1	Constituencies (2000) nested within Admin2 units (2000)	<i>page 75</i>
4.1	Advantage of electoral blocs (including oppositional zones) over non-blocs in the same country	111
4.2	Colonial-era producer regions: Percentage of colonial producer region in a persistent electoral bloc or oppositional zone today, and continuing sectoral specializations	118
4.3	Producer profile of electoral blocs in 2010	122
4.4	Electoral bloc overlap with colonial-era Admin1s	130
4.5	Ethnic profile of units comprising the persistent electoral blocs (2010s)	135
5.1	National winning coalitions: Winner bloc plus non-blocs	159
A.1	Spatial inequality averages by world region, 2010	245
B.1	Overview of twelve countries	247
B.2	Electoral data and bloc boundaries overview	249
B.3	Demographic and health surveys	252
C.1	“Colonial Admin1” corresponding units	260
C.2	Global Moran’s I (vote shares)	262
C.3	Area of all blocs, combined, as percentage of national area (sq. km)	264
C.4	Bloc population density in 1990, 2000, and 2015, compared to national averages (w/o capital city)	264
C.5	Summary of electoral bloc characteristics, with stability of regional inequalities over time and consistency across indicators	267
D.1	Producer profiles of the non-bloc regions: Export and traded food crops	271
F.1	Bloc political dominance	277
F.2	Gap magnitude: Relative luminosity gap between the bloc ranked first and the bloc ranked second in 1992, 2000, and 2013	278
		xiii

Preface and Acknowledgments

This book argues that *regionalism* – defined as political competition along the lines of subnational regions defined roughly at the provincial level – animates national politics in African countries. This happens just as it does in territorially-divided countries in other parts of the world, and for largely the same reasons. Economic inequality among regions gives rise to rival preferences over redistribution, growth strategies, market integration, and state design. These fuel regional cleavages, producing political dynamics that go far in defining development trajectories of national systems as a whole. Challenges of national integration and social cleavage that have often been attributed to ethnic politics, or to politicians’ opportunistic manipulation of ethnicity are, in this account, traceable to spatial inequalities and the territorial institutions that bring these to the fore.

It emerges from a research project I led at the London School of Economics, “Spatial Inequalities in African Political Economy” (2019–2022) (ESRC ES/R005753/1), which drew together the contributions of many persons. Professor Michael Wahman (Political Science, Michigan State University), a co-principal investigator (PI), contributed to the conceptualization, identification, and write-up of the original regional voting blocs analysis, which was published in *Political Geography* (Boone, Wahman, Kyburz, & Linke 2022). That coauthored paper is a precursor to the work on these countries that appears in Chapters 4 and 6. Stephan Kyburz (Ph.D., Economics, University of Bern) did the first version of the electoral bloc analysis in 2020, with essential contributions from co-PI Andrew Linke (Geography, University of Utah), who led us in our first efforts to use spatial analysis to make sense of the African electoral data. At the LSE, co-PI Leigh Gardner contributed to the historical boundary analysis (Chapter 3), along with her coauthor Jutta Bolt (University of Groningen) and LSE Ph.D. student in Economic History, Jennifer Kohler. Field work included research on land politics in Tanzania in 2011 and 2012,

on the land sector in Côte d'Ivoire from 2015 to 2020, in Kenya from 2017 to 2022 on devolution and the land settlement schemes. The Kenya settlement scheme mapping project was made possible by a collaboration with Dr. Fibian Lukalo at the National Land Commission of Kenya and Professor Sandra Joireman, University of Richmond.

Juliette Crespin-Boucaud (Ph.D., Paris School of Economics) was a doctoral researcher on the Spatial Inequalities project in 2021 and 2022. Juliette played a key role in the conceptualization, analysis, and interpretation of the spatial inequality measures that feature here, and is coauthor of Chapter 4. Rebecca Simson (Ph.D., Economic History, LSE) collaborated on an early working paper on spatial inequality in African countries (Boone & Simson 2019). Johan Iddawela (Ph.D., Geography, LSE) did the first version of the boundary analysis in 2019. Cristin Fergus (Ph.D., International Development, LSE) prepared electoral data and file structures in 2018 and organized and prepared the final versions of many of the tables and figures. Linchuan Xu (Economics, LSE) made the final version of the maps in QGIS. Yuezhou Yang (Ph.D., International Development, LSE) collected data on Tanzania and produced the overview of country indicators that appears in Appendix Table B.1. Michaela Collord (Ph.D., Oxford, Politics, now at the University of Nottingham) worked as a postdoc on the Tanzania and Uganda cases for this project in 2020 and 2021. The assistance of LSE undergraduate and M.Sc. students Eva Richter, Jonathan Karl, and Victor Selanius was invaluable. My coauthors in Boone, Bado, Dion, and Zigbo (2021) and Boone, Lukalo, and Joireman (2021) contributed to the analyses of land politics that feature in Chapter 7.

Dann Naseemullah, Alexandra Hartman, William Hurst, Omar McDoom, and Elliott Green offered welcome feedback at a book workshop hosted at the LSE in February 2022. LSE undergraduates in GV334, "Comparative Politics of Inequality," have read several sections of this work. David Soskice, Clark Gibson, Shaheen Mozaffar, Melissa Rogers, Sebastian Elischer, Joan Ricart-Huguet, Camilo Acero-Vargas, Jorich Loubser, Nic Cheeseman, Michaela Collord, Franz Borge Weitze, Faustin Maganga, Alexander Trubowitz, Peter Trubowitz, and four anonymous reviewers also provided feedback on earlier versions of all or parts of this work. I also incurred many debts in giving talks on this project in the political science departments of Yale, University of Michigan, University of California at Berkeley, University of California, San Diego, University of Gothenburg, University of Geneva, Oxford, LSE, and the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals; at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, the African Studies Centre at Leiden University, and the British Institute in Eastern Africa in Nairobi; as well as at annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, the African Studies Association, and the Society for the Advancement of Socioeconomics. Pablo Beramendi offered valuable feedback as the manuscript was going to press. At CUP, Rachel Blaifeder has been the ideal editor.

My greatest thanks go to Peter Trubowitz, who always believed that this work would come together as a book, and to my sons, Joshua and Alexander.