Codebook - Namibian Elections

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Overview

This dataset contains Namibian election results since independence, at the most granular level available to date. At present, it contains only national assembly (and constituent assembly) results, with presidential and local authority elections to follow in due course.

Sources

Where possible I have used numbers directly from the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN). Often these are spreadsheets, which the commission used to have on their website (around 2015). That the data come straight from this official body does not always guarantee that the results are accurate (see Issues and Discrepancies below), but they represent the best data available at this point.

election	level	data source
1989	voting district	Tötemeyer, Wehmhörner, and Weiland (1996) (scan, OCR)
1994	region	ECN spreadsheet (.xls)
1999	constituency	ECN spreadsheet (.xls)
2004	constituency	ECN annual report (scan), OCR)
2009	constituency	ECN spreadsheet (.xls)
2014	constituency	ECN spreadsheet (.pdf, OCR)
2019	constituency	ECN election report (.pdf, OCR)

Files

`na_1989-2019.rds`: national assembly results from 1989 until 2019.

Issues and Discrepancies

Election results from the electoral commission are the best source of ground truth, and so there is seldom anything to check them against. However, in some years (1999, 2009-2019 so far) I have found party-level totals published in the government gazette. As Table 2 shows, these totals can differ — though even in the worst case, 1999, the difference makes up less than 0.2% of any party's total. The reasons for these differences are not always clear, though sometimes are likely due to errors when manually transcribing results.

Table 2: ECN spreadsheets versus official gazetted results.

year	comparison source	official - calculated	notes
1989		NA	
1994		NA	
1999	gov gazette 2261	321	Likely foreign votes
2004		NA	other errors in ECN spreadsheet; see below for details.
2009	gov gazette 4397	0	
2014	gov gazette 5641	2	Likely typo
2019	gov gazette 7126	-20	Likely typo

1999

It is likely that the missing votes would be found in Namibian missions abroad. The ECN did not report results for abroad in the National Assembly election. In the presidential election 1999, the ECN reports a total of 323 votes — a number very similar to the 321 votes missing from the National Assembly election results.

2004

The total votes for parties reported do not match the totals we get from adding up across all constituencies. Most parties have higher totals in the reported overall results than in the calculation; a lot of this might be due to the fact that the constituency-level results did not report on votes in foreign missions.

In several constituencies, the number of "total votes cast" seems to be incorrect. In other words, when votes for all parties were added up with the number of rejected votes, the total did not match the number in the ECN records. This occurred with 15 constituencies, with differences ranging from 1 vote to over 500 (see table below).

region	constituency	calculated vote total	provided vote total	difference
Khomas	samora machel	15915	16455	540
Ohangwena	epembe	5481	5663	182
Ohangwena	ohangwena	8244	8571	327
Ohangwena	ondobe	8730	9119	389
Ohangwena	omulonga	9913	9950	37
Omaheke	gobabis	7946	7943	3
Omaheke	epukiro	2825	2824	1
Omusati	oshikuku	4873	4878	5
Omusati	ruacana	4486	4986	500
Oshana	okaku	7212	7216	4
Oshana	ondangwa	12838	12848	10
Oshana	oshakati east	13825	13798	27
Oshikoto	guinas	4595	4631	36
Otjozondjupa	omatako	4870	4800	70
Otjozondjupa	otavi	6524	6433	91

In some cases, (e.g. Ondangwa), this error seems to have come from ECN officials making typos when inputting totals. I decided to treat the vote tallies as authoritative, and calculated total valid votes as the total of all votes cast for parties. This was then added with rejected votes for a new 'total votes' number.

2014

The total vote count for the Congress of Democrats (CoD) is greater by two in the official results than the number we get from adding up all their votes. This error is in the constituency-level results presented by the ECN (which provide an overall party total), and thus likely the source of the error in the gazette as well.

2019

The All People's Party (APP)'s votes come to 14,664 when added up, but the Electoral Commission reported 14,644. This is likely a typo on behalf of the Electoral Commission.

Variables

year

Year of the election.

month

Month in which the election was held.

region

The name of the region in which the constituency resides. Note: in 1989, election results were reported in electoral districts. These do not map onto the modern administrative divisions. region is `NA` in that year.

region_id

A number assigned by ranking the regions alphabetically in each election. Note: this means that region numbers may change from one election to another (as they do for example with the split of Kavango into Kavango East and Kavango West, and the renaming of Caprivi into Zambezi).

constituency

The name of the constituency. For the 1989 election, this is the district name. For the 1994 election, where only regional data is available, this is the same as the region name.

constituency_id

A number assigned by ranking the constituencies alphabetically for each election. Note: this means that constituency numbers may change from one election to another.

party_abb

Abbreviation of the party name

party_name

English party name

party_id

A party's id as determined by the PartyFacts dataset (Döring and Regel 2019). If a party does not exist in the PartyFacts database, it is assigned a number here with the prefix `00_`. There are some open questions here, including whether the MAG should be explicitly coded as a successor to ACN, and whether NDP and NNDP are the same party and should be coded as such.

party_abb	party_id	party_name
acn	00_6	National Christian Action (Asie Christelik Nasionaal)
app	5642	All People's Party
cda	00_4	Christian Democratic Action for Social Justice
cdv	00_14	Christian Democratic Voice
cod	2358	Congress of Democrats
cp	00_7	Workers Revolutionary Party / Communist Party
dcn	00_10	Democratic Coalition of Namibia
dpn	00_12	Democratic Party of Namibia
dta	2356	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance / Popular Democratic Movement
fcn	00_5	Federal Convention of Namibia
lpm	00_16	Landless People's Movement
mag	00_9	Monitor Action Group
ndmc	00_11	Namibia Democratic Movement for Change
ndp	00_1	National Democratic Party of Namibia
neff	00_15	Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters
nndp	00_22	Namibia National Democratic Party
nnf	00_2	Namibia National Front
npf	00_8	National Patriotic Front of Namibia
nudo	2357	National Unity Democratic Organisation
pdm	2356	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance / Popular Democratic Movement
rdp	4895	Rally for Democracy and Progress
rp	5641	Republican Party
swanu	8524	South West Africa National Union
swapo	2331	Suidwes-Afrikaanse Volks Organisasie
swapo-d	00_3	Swapo-Democrats
udf	2355	United Democratic Front
upm	00_13	United People's Movement
wrp	00_7	Workers Revolutionary Party / Communist Party

votes

votes received by this party in this constituency.

registered_voters

voters registered to vote in this constituency, if available

votes_cast

Number of votes cast in the constituency. When available, as provided by data. Otherwise, calculated as the total of all parties.

valid_votes

Number of valid cast in the constituency. When available, as provided by data. Otherwise, calculated as the total of all parties.

rejected_votes

Number of rejected votes in the constituency. After the introduction of Electronic Voting Machines, there were no more spoiled ballots and this data was no longer provided. From 2014 on, this variable is always `NA`.

seats

Seats won by the party at the national level. Only elected seats; appointments by the President are not counted.

seat_share

Proportion of (elected) seats.

References

Döring, Holger, and Sven Regel. 2019. "Party Facts: A Database of Political Parties Worldwide." *Party Politics* 25 (2): 97–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068818820671.

Tötemeyer, Gerhard K H, Arnold Wehmhörner, and Heribert Weiland, eds. 1996. *Elections in Namibia*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan Publishers.