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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Maskarinec, P. (2018). Strategic voting in the Hungarian elections of 2014: evidence for Duverger's law under the compensatory mixed electoral system? *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, 18(1), 9-34. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-57900-4>

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# Strategic Voting in the Hungarian Elections of 2014.

## Evidence for Duverger's Law under the Compensatory Mixed Electoral System?

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### Abstract

This article tests Duverger's law through an analysis of the Hungarian parliamentary elections of 2014 which were held under the new compensatory mixed electoral system. The results show that while a strategic voting had a tendency to grow under Hungarian supermixed system in the period 1990–2010, in the elections of 2014 strategic voting was not a universal phenomenon under the plurality rule, as indicated by many violations of Duverger's law in Hungarian single-member districts. Our research confirmed that the effect of electoral institutions (institutional structure) is contingent and at the district level inhibited by country-specific conditions. However, as a new Hungarian compensatory mixed electoral system distributes seats not only by plurality rule in SMDs (nominal tier), but also via proportional representation (list tier), a further research should pay attention to cross-contamination of both tiers of electoral system, as a potential factor which moves Hungarian electoral competition substantially away from Duvergerian predictions.

**Keywords:** Hungary, parliamentary elections, party system, strategic voting, Duverger's law.

On 23 December 2011, Hungary adopted a new compensatory mixed electoral system (or mixed-member proportional, MMP), thus leaving (after almost twenty-two years and six elections, including the “founding” one) its current hybrid and world's “most complicated” electoral system.<sup>1</sup> A Hungarian electoral system was usually classified as “supermixed”, more specifically

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Benoit, “Holding Back the Tiers”, in Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell (eds.), *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, pp. 231-252.

“superposition-correction” system,<sup>2</sup> mixed-member majoritarian system with partial compensation,<sup>3</sup> or mixed-member proportional system,<sup>4</sup> connecting two forms of mixed systems: a “superposition” type and a “corrective” or compensatory type, within three tiers: (1) single-member two-round (dual-ballot) system; (2) proportional system with twenty regional districts; (3) national compensation list.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, an important feature of the Hungarian “supermixed” system was that it favours, in a long-term perspective, larger parties at the expense of smaller parties,<sup>6</sup> thus considerably influencing a shape of the party system. According to Benoit, the reasons for the concentration of the Hungarian party system were institutional, due to linkage between the single-member district (SMD) contest and proportional contest. Similarly, linkage between SMDs and compensatory national list resulted in the fact that a reductive effect of electoral system worked against smaller parties not only in SMDs, but also in a national list, which rewarded especially the largest parties, too.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Nikolenyi stressed the importance of electoral system as an institutional factor, which contributed to a reduction in the number of parties due to necessity of parties’ strategic coordination within various tiers of electoral system.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in contrast to many other Central and Eastern European countries which suffered from marked instability and fluidity of their party politics, the Hungarian party system was relatively stable and closed during the first two post-communist decades, with a failure of most new political parties, although with fluctuating support enjoyed by individual parties, especially in the 1990s.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Louis Massicotte and André Blais, “Mixed Electoral Systems: A Conceptual and Empirical Survey”, *Electoral Studies* 18: 3, 1999, pp. 357.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Soberg Shugart and Martin P. Wattenberg, “Conclusion: Are Mixed-Member Systems the Best of Both Worlds?”, in Matthew Soberg Shugart, Martin P. Wattenberg (eds.), *Mixed-member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, pp. 579-581.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Reynolds, Ben Reilly, and Andrew Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, International IDEA, Stockholm, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Benoit, “Holding Back... cit.”, pp. 235-239.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 244; József Mészáros, Norbert Solymosi, and Ferenc Speiser, “Spatial distribution of political parties in Hungary 1990–2006”, *Political Geography*, 26: 7, 2007, pp. 805.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Benoit, “Holding Back... cit.”, pp. 242-246.

<sup>8</sup> Csaba Nikolenyi, “Strategic Co-ordination in the 2002 Hungarian Election”, *Europe-Asia Studies* 56: 7, 2004, pp. 1056.

<sup>9</sup> Zsolt Enyedi, “The Survival of the Fittest: Party System Concentration in Hungary”, in Susanne Jungerstam-Mulders (ed.), *Post-Communist EU Member States: Parties and Party Systems*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006; József Mészáros, Norbert Solymosi, and Ferenc Speiser, “Spatial distribution... cit.”; Gábor Tóka, “Hungary”, in Sten Berglund, Tomas Hellén, Frank H. Aarebrot (eds.), *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2014, pp. 237; Zsolt Enyedi and Fernando Casal Bértoa, “Patterns of Inter-party Competition (1990–2008)”, in Paul G. Lewis and Radoslaw

Since 1998 (or particularly 2002) thus the political competition in Hungary was dominated by interactions between two large political blocs of roughly an equal size (each of them composed of one large and one small party), with increasingly sharp delineation between them.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, comparing to other Visegrád countries, whose party competition was characterized by the prevalence (to varying degrees) of a socioeconomic dimension (especially in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, to a lesser extent in Poland) - which determined the most relevant lines of political conflict - the Hungarian party system was characterized by the prevalence of a strongly polarizing cultural dimension (or nationalist-cosmopolitan divide). A much less important and less polarizing economically defined left-right dimension cut across this dimension. The party choice between the left (dominated by the social democratic and liberal Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)) and the right (dominated by the national-conservative Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ)), therefore, was based on the fact that while the Hungarian right is morally conservative (clerical), nationalist and anti-communist, for the left the opposite is true, together with its libertarian-cosmopolitan view on society.<sup>11</sup>

However, while the MSZP has enjoyed stable support in some constituencies since 1990, the right-leaning electorate had been characteristic by much more fluidity and volatility until the elections of 2002 when the FIDESZ managed to integrate most voters of the “conservative bloc”, i.e. the former voters of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Independent Smallholders’ Party (FKGP), and the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP).<sup>12</sup> In this context and despite a strengthening bipolarity of party competition between the FIDESZ and the MSZP, Enyedi warned that stability of the Hungarian party system is relative and fragile, as party competition was not based on “socio-structural underpinnings”, or the “organizational isolation of constituencies”.<sup>13</sup>

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Markowski (eds.), *Europeanizing Party Politics? Comparative Perspectives on Central and Eastern Europe*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2011, pp. 147-168.

<sup>10</sup> Zsolt Enyedi, “The Survival... cit.”, pp. 195-199; József Mészáros, Norbert Solymosi, and Ferenc Speiser, “Spatial distribution... cit.”, p. 810.

<sup>11</sup> Zsolt Enyedi, “The Survival... cit.”, pp. 180-182; Gábor Tóka, “Hungary”... cit., p. 320; cf. András Körösnéyi, *Government and Politics in Hungary*, Central European University Press, Budapest, 1999, pp. 59-70; György G. Márkus, “Cleavages and Parties in Hungary after 1999”, in Kay Lawson, Andrea Römmele, and Georgi Karasimenov (eds.), *Cleavages, Parties, and Voters: Studies from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland*, Praeger, London, 1999, pp..

<sup>12</sup> Zsolt Enyedi, “The Survival... cit.”, pp. 195-199; József Mészáros, Norbert Solymosi, and Ferenc Speiser, “Spatial distribution... cit.”, p. 810; Csaba Nikolenyi, “Strategic Co-Ordination... cit.”, pp. 1048-1056.

<sup>13</sup> Zsolt Enyedi, “The Survival... cit.”, pp. 199.

Furthermore, as pointed out by Meyer-Sahling and Jáger, while the party organizations in Hungary are weak, trust in political parties is low and the entrenchment of parties in society is informal at best; on the other hand, the party patronage has become a key feature of the Hungarian party politics and competition, as political parties traditionally have a much closer relationship to the state.<sup>14</sup>

This possible concern materialized in the elections of 2010. The results for the governing MSZP were disastrous, as the party received only 59 out of 386 seats (15.28%) in the Hungarian parliament, comparing to 190 seats (49.22%) in 2006, while the FIDESZ, a major opposition party, won 263 seats (68.13%), in coalition with the small KDNP.<sup>15</sup> One of the election results then was adoption of the new Constitution, lowering the number of MPs from 386 to 199, and adoption of new electoral legislation.

The new Hungarian mixed-member proportional (MMP), or compensatory mixed electoral system distributes the 199 seats by two mechanisms: 106 seats by plurality vote in SMDs (nominal tier), and the remaining 93 seats via proportional representation (list tier) with 5% threshold. An important part of the electoral law is corrective mechanism, as the allocation of seats in the list tier depends on the outcome produced in the nominal tier. Thus, seats under the national list are distributed in proportion to the votes cast for party lists and “unused” and “surplus” votes cast in SMDs. While unused votes are the votes for the candidates who lost in SMDs, surplus votes are the votes cast for the winner from the SMD contest that have not been needed to obtain seats, i.e. the difference in the number of votes between the first- and second-place candidates in SMDs.<sup>16</sup>

However, neither the outcomes of the 2014 elections, held under the new electoral system, brought a renewal of bipolar character of the Hungarian party politics. While the governing FIDESZ received 110 out of 199 seats (55.28%), or 130 seats (65.33%) together with its coalition partner (KDNP), respectively, the MSZP as one of the former two pillars of the Hungarian party system received only 29 seats (14.57%),<sup>17</sup> i.e. only six seats more than the far-right Movement for a Better Hungary (commonly known as Jobbik). The disruption of bipolarization of Hungarian politics was even more pronounced in SMDs, where the FIDESZ-KDNP coalition received 98.30% of the seats in the

<sup>14</sup> Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, Krisztina Jáger, “Party Patronage in Hungary: Capturing the State”, in Petr Kopecký, Peter Mair, and Maria Spirova (eds.), *Party Patronage and Party Government in European Democracies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, pp. 166-185.

<sup>15</sup> Nick Sitter and Agnes Batory, *Europe and the Hungarian parliamentary elections of April 2006*, EPERN Election Briefing No. 28, Sussex European Institute, Brighton, 2006; Agnes Batory, *Europe and the Hungarian parliamentary elections of April 2010*, EPERN Election Briefing No. 51, Sussex European Institute, Brighton, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> PCPRCI, *Halfway into the Hungarian electoral reform: Electoral law already passed, law on procedure still uncertain*, Political Capital Policy Research and Consulting Institute, Budapest, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> In the elections of 2014, the MSZP was part of the Unity coalition, which won 38 seats (19.10%), together.

elections of 2010, or 90.57% of the seats in the elections of 2014, compared to 55.68% of the seats received in SMDs by the MSZP in 2006.

The results of the last two parliamentary elections in Hungary thus suggest a possible long-term transformation of party competition together with the party system type. In connection with the aforesaid, this paper focuses on an analysis of the new electoral system used by Hungary in the elections of 2014 to examine the interactions between electoral system's institutional attributes and the pattern of voter strategic behaviour, following Duverger's assumptions, which William H. Riker called Duverger's law and Duverger's hypothesis.<sup>18</sup> Given that the main objective of our research is an analysis of the strategic voting at the SMDs level, we will work within the framework of the so-called "micro-Duvergerian" agenda (see below), which is based on the assumption of rational actors (and their rational calculations), standing behind the Duverger's psychological effect (see below) at the district level.<sup>19</sup>

Previously, Nikolenyi and Kiss analysed strategic voting in Hungary. Nikolenyi showed that while in the 1990s an electoral competition at the district level was characterized by prevalence of non-Duvergerian equilibrium, the election of 2002 was the first when the transformation of party system resulted in electoral outcomes in compliance with Duverger's expectations.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Kiss, analysing the whole democratic period of Hungarian elections (1990–2010) in SMDs, found "strong indirect evidence of strategic voting over 403 races in six elections" together with the fact that "the strategic motivation of voters of third-place candidates was strongest in 2010 while no evidence was found for strategic voting in 1990".<sup>21</sup> In other words, while in the elections held early after a democratic transition voters of third-place candidates were "motivated by either the prospect of winning their districts, or by giving a signal that their parties have firm support" (i.e. not necessarily "by the prospect of deciding the race between the two leading candidates"), in the following elections, and especially in the elections of 2010, "strategic voting becomes more pronounced as the main fault lines of the political spectrum become more clearly defined".<sup>22</sup> This finding supports the Tavits and Annus' "learning hypothesis"<sup>23</sup> that strategic voting in third-wave democracies tends to increase as voters (but also political elites) become more experienced with the electoral

<sup>18</sup> William H. Riker, "The Two-party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science", *American Political Science Review* 76: 4, 1982, pp. 754.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew Sjøberg Shugart, "Comparative Electoral Systems Research", in Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell (eds.), *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, pp. 30-32; Rein Taagepera, *Predicting Party Sizes: The Logic of Simple Electoral Systems*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, pp. 101-114.

<sup>20</sup> Csaba Nikolenyi, "Strategic Co-Ordination... cit.", pp. 1047.

<sup>21</sup> Áron Kiss, "Identifying strategic voting in two-round elections" *Electoral Studies*, 40, 2015, pp. 134.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Margit Tavits and Taavi Annus, "Learning to make votes count: The role of democratic experience", *Electoral Studies*, 25: 1, 2006, pp. 87.

process, and upholds the argument that the tendencies to classical Duvergerian competition are only effective over a series of elections.

The Hungarian case thus allows us to test the hypotheses related to Duverger's law in the context of a transforming party system. It may also help us verify Clark and Golder's prior finding that Duverger's theory receives much weaker support precisely in the countries that transitioned to democracy after 1989.<sup>24</sup> In this context, Charvát claims that the results of electoral reform in new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe contradict Duverger's expectations, with more fragmented party systems in the countries using SMDs compared to the countries using proportional systems.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, some studies analysing voters' strategic behaviour in post-communist countries (focused on strategic voting in the second-order elections) found significant inconsistencies to Duverger's assumption, whether it was local elections in Romania held under the proportional system,<sup>26</sup> or elections to the upper chambers of parliaments in the Czech Republic using the majority run-off two-round system (TRS) or Poland with the first-past-the-post (FPTP), respectively.<sup>27</sup>

This paper is organized as follows. First, we briefly review the existing formal literature on Duverger's law. In the second part, the data and methods of analysis are introduced. In the third part, the analysis of strategic voting is presented. Finally, the concluding section formulates some implications of the results for further research.

## Theoretical Framework: “Micro-Duvergerian” Agenda And Strategic Voting

The importance of Duverger's seminal work, *Political Parties*,<sup>28</sup> lies in the fact that Duverger was one of the very first authors who highlighted the possibility

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<sup>24</sup> William Roberts Clark and Matt Golder, “Rehabilitating Duverger's Theory: Testing the Mechanical and Strategic Modifying Effects of Electoral Laws” *Comparative Political Studies* 39: 6, 2006, pp. 697-703.

<sup>25</sup> Jakub Charvát, “Úvahy nad otázkou platnosti Duvergerových hypotéz (Considerations on the validity of Duverger's hypotheses)”, *Slovak Journal of Political Science* 9: 2, 2009, pp. 96-106.

<sup>26</sup> Andrada-Maria Albescu, Dana Irina Ioniță, Silviu-Dan Mateescu, “Strategic Voting at the Romanian 2008 Local Elections”, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 3: 1, 2012, pp. 297-311.

<sup>27</sup> Lukáš Hájek, “Strategické hlasování při volbách do Senátu Parlamentu České republiky (Strategic voting in elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic)” *European Electoral Studies* 10: 1, 2015, pp. 3-12; Pavel Maškarinec, “Strategic voting in the 2011 and 2015 Polish Senate elections: Testing Duverger's Law in the second-order elections”, *Slovak Journal of Political Science* 16: 4, 2016, pp. 369-388.

<sup>28</sup> Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties. Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*, Methuen, London, 1954.

to predict relationships between electoral system and political outcomes.<sup>29</sup> This research area was later called “Duvergerian agenda” by Shugart. The same scholar further emphasized its role as forming the core of the field of electoral studies research during the late 1900s.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Benoit, and especially Riker, pointed to the fact that Duverger was not the first author to have discovered that simple plurality electoral systems have tendency to result in the two-party system.<sup>31</sup>

Historically, both the Duverger’s law and the hypothesis have been in the centre of electoral research.<sup>32</sup> However, until the 1990s, most empirical studies focused primarily on the national level (“macro-Duvergerian agenda”), although the district level (“micro-Duvergerian agenda”) is the most appropriate level for testing Duverger’s assumptions.<sup>33</sup> But, especially since the 1990s, a number of studies have attempted to test Duverger’s law at the district level. Considerable attention has been given especially to the effects of electoral rules in SMD contests, as most authors dealing with the size of party systems see district magnitude (the number of seats that a particular district has in the parliament) as a major determinant of the number of political parties in a polity.<sup>34</sup>

Duverger’s assumption that plurality rule can create a two-party competition is based on two underlying effects (“mechanical” and “psychological”) which create incentives for voters and candidates to act strategically.<sup>35</sup> While the mechanical effect concerns how votes are translated into seats, the psychological effect consists of candidates’ and voters’ response to the workings of the mechanical effect.<sup>36</sup>

The Duvergerian logic thus assumes that voters are short-term instrumentally rational, concerned only about affecting the outcome of the

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<sup>29</sup> Rein Taagepera, *Predicting Party Sizes...* cit., pp. 101.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew Søberg Shugart, “Comparative Electoral... cit.”, pp. 28.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth Benoit, “Duverger’s Law and the Study of Electoral Systems”, *French Politics* 4: 1, 2006, pp. 70-71; William H. Riker, “The Two-party System... cit.”, pp. 754-760.

<sup>32</sup> While Duverger’s law predicts that ‘the simple-majority single-ballot system favours the two-party system’, Duverger’s hypothesis claims that ‘both the simple-majority system with second ballot and proportional representation favour multi-partism’ (Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties...* cit., pp. 217, 239).

<sup>33</sup> Matthew Søberg Shugart, “Comparative Electoral... cit.”, pp. 30-32; Rein Taagepera, *Predicting Party Sizes...* cit., pp. 101-114.

<sup>34</sup> Douglas W. Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1971; William H. Riker, “The Two-party System... cit.”; Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Governments in Twenty-one Countries*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1984; Rein Taagepera and Matthew Søberg Shugart, *Seats and Votes: The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1989.

<sup>35</sup> Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties...* cit.

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth Benoit, “Duverger’s Law... cit.”, pp. 74-76.



current election.<sup>37</sup> Strategic voting is then indicated by the presence of voters who desert their preferred (small) parties (candidates), if they have only limited chances to gain a seat (as a reaction of political actors to the expected effects of the operation of electoral rules, i.e. the workings of a mechanical factor), in favour of less preferred parties (candidates) with real chances to succeed. Similarly, parties can act strategically by not nominating candidates (or by joining other parties or coalitions) in the districts where they traditionally have only limited support, with deterring potential for new entrants to join the race. It is then possible to describe Duverger's law as an equilibrium that is reached only over a series of elections.<sup>38</sup> In repeated elections, provided that all voters and parties act perfectly strategically, the equilibrium will emerge when only two candidates receive all the votes and the votes obtained by the third and following candidates approximate zero.

At the empirical level of individual countries, most attention has been paid to the countries violating the assumption that plurality rule would lead to two-party competition even at the national level.<sup>39</sup> Here, Diwakar analyzed Indian parliamentary elections in the period of 1952–2004 and argued that a large number of Indian districts do not conform to the Duvergerian assumption of two-party competition, with no consistent movement towards the Duvergerian equilibrium.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Gaines confirmed in the Canadian case the existence of multipartism even at the district level, with federalism as a key factor complicating the effects of plurality rule,<sup>41</sup> as well as Chytilek, who characterized the Canadian electoral competition as extraordinarily complex, varying and mostly at odds with the Duvergerian logic.<sup>42</sup> Finally, Dunleavy and Diwakar, analyzing SMDs outcomes in three leading plurality rule systems, argued that the USA seems to be a case of “stunted development”, the UK has moved substantially away from Duvergerian predictions, and India shows partial

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<sup>37</sup> Matthew M. Singer, “Was Duverger Correct? SingleMember District Election Outcomes in Fifty-three Countries”, *British Journal of Political Science* 43: 1, 2013, pp. 203.

<sup>38</sup> Brian J. Gaines, “Duverger's Law and the Meaning of Canadian Exceptionalism”, *Comparative Political Studies* 32: 7, 1999, pp. 837; Kenneth Benoit, “Duverger's Law... cit.”, pp. 74-76.

<sup>39</sup> Bernard Grofman, André Blais, and Shaun BOWLER (eds.), *Duverger's Law of Plurality Voting: The Logic of Party Competition in Canada, India, the United Kingdom and the United States*, Springer, New York, 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Rekha Diwakar, “Duverger's Law and the Size of the Indian Party System”, *Party Politics* 13: 5, 2007, pp. 539-557.

<sup>41</sup> Brian J. Gaines, “Duverger's Law... cit.”.

<sup>42</sup> Roman Chytilek, “Between the Macro and Micro Duvergerian Agendas”, in Maxmilián Strmiska, Roman Chytilek, and Nikola Hynek (eds.), *Federalism and Multi-level Polity: The Canadian Case*, Anton Pasienska, Brno, 2007.

Duvergerian conformity, but combined with substantial vertical scattering of non-Duvergerian results.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, some studies, focused on the analysis of strategic voting in other countries, confirmed the assumptions related to the Duverger law. For instance, Reed argued that the 1993 Italian mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) system, based largely on SMD, confirmed the assumptions of Duverger's law, as most of the electoral districts moved closer to bipolar competition.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Reed, analyzing election outcomes in Japanese elections in the period of 1947–1986 (Japan used plurality vote with multi-member districts in this period), confirmed the validity of the law of simple plurality elections (i.e. Duverger's law), although the process of reducing the number of candidates was very long (equilibrium was reached through trial and error processes only) and the “learning process” (rather than rationality) connects structure and behaviour.<sup>45</sup> Finally, Maškarinec found a consistent, but not linear, movement towards the Duvergerian equilibrium in Mongolia (in the period of 1996–2004, when Mongolia used a two-round system, yet a non-majoritarian one, i.e. the one which produced a similar pattern of strategic voting, as an ordinary plurality rule does). On the other hand, the emergence of bipolar party politics in Mongolia was not an immediate process and was reached only over a series of elections (supporting the so-called “learning hypothesis” also). More importantly, after the disruption of bipolar character of Mongolian electoral competition in the elections of 2012 (due to the introduction of MMM system), nor did the introduction of FPTP in 2016 result in electoral outcomes in full compliance with Duverger's law and restoration of bipolar party politics.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, a recent analysis, working with large data sets of elections in SMDs, has confirmed that district magnitude had (at the district level) the effect that Duverger had expected, although the effect of electoral institutions could be contingent and (at the district level) inhibited by country-specific conditions (for instance, social cleavages that generate demand for additional parties).<sup>47</sup> For

<sup>43</sup> Patrick Dunleavy and Rekha Diwakar, “Analysing multiparty competition in plurality rule elections”, *Party Politics*, 19: 6, 2011, pp. 855.

<sup>44</sup> Steven R. Reed, “Duverger's Law is Working in Italy”, *Comparative Political Studies* 34: 3, 2001, pp. 312-326.

<sup>45</sup> Steven R. Reed, “Structure and Behaviour: Extending Duverger's Law to the Japanese Case”, *British Journal of Political Science* 20: 3, 1990, pp. 336.

<sup>46</sup> Pavel Maškarinec, “Testing Duverger's law: strategic voting in Mongolian elections, 1996–2004”, *Post-Soviet Affairs* 33: 2, 2017, pp. 145-158; Pavel Maškarinec, “The 2016 Electoral Reform in Mongolia: From Mixed System and Multiparty Competition to FPTP and One-Party Dominance”, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, online first, doi: 10.1177/0021909617698841.

<sup>47</sup> Matthew M. Singer, Laura B. Stephenson, “The political context and Duverger's theory: Evidence at the district level”, *Electoral Studies* 28: 3, 2009, p. 481.

instance, Singer found that the average outcome under plurality rule is generally, although not perfectly, consistent with two-party competition. The two largest parties (candidates) typically dominate the districts, but third-place parties (candidates) do not entirely disappear, and ethnic divisions shape party fragmentation even under plurality rule.<sup>48</sup> Clark and Golder, who analysed the underlying causal process by which sociological and institutional factors shaped party systems, then concluded that Duverger was right about the determinants of party systems, as plurality rule systems acted as a “brake” on the process by which societal pressures translate into a growth or a decline in the number of political parties.<sup>49</sup> Finally, Raymond, in his analysis of West European elections prior to the adoption of proportional representation, confirmed Clark and Golder’s finding about importance of “social cleavage explanation”.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the occupational diversification, or the emergence of class cleavage, respectively, was positively associated with an increase in mean district-level party system fragmentation, eventually leading (in case of the presence of higher levels of social cleavage diversity) to violation of the two-party assumption associated with the anticipated effect of the Duverger’s law.<sup>51</sup> Thus, although some studies have found rather mixed results, an important fact in this context is that even Duverger did not consider his proposition as valid, but rather as a possible tendency, which may be influenced by other factors.<sup>52</sup>

However, with regard to mixed systems, Rich confirmed Reed’s finding that we can expect that electoral competition under the MMM will closely resemble the Duvergerian logic, as MMM systems tend to concentrate much more on district competition, whereas electoral contest under MMP systems will create a contaminating effect due to its greater emphasis on proportionality.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Feșnic and Armeanu, analyzing a Romanian electoral reform of 2008 (i.e. introduction of the MMP system), found rather mixed results, when the changes in party support were caused by dealignment rather than institutional factors (electoral system).<sup>54</sup> For that reason, Herron and Nishikawa, Ferrara et

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<sup>48</sup> Matthew M. Singer, “Was Duverger Correct... cit.”, p. 201.

<sup>49</sup> William Roberts Clark and Matt Golder, “Rehabilitating Duverger’s Theory... cit.”, p. 706.

<sup>50</sup> Christopher D. Raymond, “In defiance of Duverger: The Class Cleavage and the Emergence of District-level Multiparty Systems in Western Europe”, *Research and Politics* 2: 1, 2015, pp. 2-5.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 2-5.

<sup>52</sup> Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties...* cit., p. 228.

<sup>53</sup> Timothy S. Rich, “Is Duverger’s Law Working in South Korea? An Analysis of District-Level Elections 1988–2012”, *Asian Journal of Political Science* 22: 2, 2014, pp. 164-180.

<sup>54</sup> Florin Feșnic and Oana I. Armeanu, “Strategic Effects of Electoral Rules. Testing the Impact of the 2008 Electoral Reform in Romania”, *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* 14: 2, 2014, pp. 190-199; cf. Cristian Preda, “Partide, voturi și mandate la alegerile din România (1990-2012) (Parties, Votes and Mandates in Romanian Elections [1990-2012])”, *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* 13: 1, 2013, pp. 27-58.

al., or Rich pay attention to a contaminating effect of PR, as the list tier allows representation of smaller parties (apart from the two largest parties in SMDs), and supporters of these smaller parties are thus encouraged to support their third or worse-placed candidates also in SMD contests.<sup>55</sup> Contrarily, Rich, in his analysis covering 90 mixed systems in 23 countries between 1990 and 2012, concluded that the distinction between MMM and MMP systems alone poorly explains the variation in district results and although MMM districts generally have fewer candidates, other factors also have direct influence on district competition (fused ballots, electoral threshold for PR, existence of compulsory voting), potentially distorting the Duvergerian logic and signalling a departure from Duverger's law.<sup>56</sup>

If we move back to theoretical considerations related to "micro-Duvergerian" agenda and strategic voting, Cox tried to formalize the Duverger's law and reformulated Duverger, generalizing the relation between district magnitude ( $M$ ) and the number of "serious" contenders at the level of districts (of various sizes), while the number of "serious" contenders should be no more than  $M + 1$ . Cox called the " $M + 1$ " rule a "direct generalization" of Duverger's law, arguing that the number of viable contenders is equal to two when  $M = 1$ .<sup>57</sup> However, as district magnitude increases, the number of contenders (candidates or lists) cannot be greater than  $M + 1$ . Thus, under the condition of perfect "strategic" co-ordination by both elites (candidates or parties) and voters, the number of parties or candidates (at district level) is two in plurality rule systems.

Nevertheless, the existing two-party competition at the district level does not automatically lead to a two-party competition at the aggregate (national) level. On the contrary, a nationwide two-party competition is possible, as voters may think strategically not just about the district level but also about the national level, for instance with regard to the question of who will form the government.<sup>58</sup> This may, in the next step, lead to other forms of equilibrium if a party with considerable support elsewhere in the country is willing to nominate candidates even in the districts without a real chance to win a seat, in order to strengthen its image before voters as a nationwide party; or there may be more instrumental motivations, such as public subsidies for

<sup>55</sup> Erik S. Herron and Misa Nishikawa, "Contamination effects and the number of parties in mixed superposition electoral systems", *Electoral Studies* 20: 1, 2001, pp. 63-83; Federico Ferrara, Erik S. Herron, and Misa Nishikawa, *Mixed electoral systems: Combination and its consequences*, Palgrave, New York, 2005; Timothy S. Rich, "Is Duverger's Law... cit."

<sup>56</sup> Timothy S. Rich, "Duverger's Law in mixed legislative systems: The impact of national electoral rules on district competition", *European Journal of Political Research* 54: 1, 2015, pp. 182-191.

<sup>57</sup> Gary W. Cox, *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 99.

<sup>58</sup> Brian J. Gaines, "Duverger's Law... cit.", pp. 837-838.

political parties depending on the votes obtained or the number of seats contested. Similarly, if there exist incentives to form multipartism at other levels of government in the country (for instance, proportional representation at sub-national levels), voters may be willing to vote for nationwide parties with limited support at the district level, which they would strategically abandon.<sup>59</sup>

However, the assumption about voter's rationality was questioned by Reed who pointed to the uncertain psychological foundations of the assumption of short-term instrumental rationality, namely that voters will correctly analyse the situation and maximize their self-interest.<sup>60</sup> In this context, the models grounded in Downsian approach,<sup>61</sup> where political competition is based on a single dimension, are quite often in conformity with Duverger's expectations.<sup>62</sup> According to Downs a rational voter decides with regard to "sophisticated" voting,<sup>63</sup> which means that the voter does not vote for his preferred alternative, but for an alternative ensuring the best realizable outcomes, after considering anticipated votes by other voters.<sup>64</sup> In Downsian perspective the process of voting (or candidate selection) takes place as part of the "selection process", rather than an "expression of preference".<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, Reed stressed that voter's rational decisions are limited as party preferences are typically known at a national, rather than district level; learning, rather than rationality, then connects structure and behaviour.<sup>66</sup> This finding is very important, as the effect of strategic voting is expected to work at the district level only.

Cox formulates three conditions for strategic voting to potentially lead to bipartism: 1) short-term instrumentally rational voters; 2) reasonably accurate and publicly available information on candidate standings; 3) myopic ("price-taking") adjustment. Once again, an important aspect here is that without knowing different candidates' preferences, voters are unable to make a plausible judgment as to which one of the top two "losers" in a race (second- or third-place candidates in plurality vote) is the principal challenger, and thus who should obtain their strategic vote.<sup>67</sup> As a result, supporters of the third-place candidate will face little incentive to cast their vote elsewhere, which leads to a non-Duvergerian equilibrium. Furthermore, Grofman, Blais and Bowler emphasized that the logic underlying Duverger's law is in contrast to Grofman's

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<sup>59</sup> Bernard Grofman, André Blais, and Shaun Bowler (eds.), *Duverger's Law... cit.*, pp. 3-4; Matthew M. Singer, "Was Duverger Correct... cit.", pp. 204-205.

<sup>60</sup> Steven R. Reed, "Structure and Behaviour... cit.", pp. 335-336.

<sup>61</sup> Anthony Downs, *An economic theory of democracy*, Harper & Row, New York, 1957.

<sup>62</sup> Bernard Grofman, André Blais, and Shaun Bowler (eds.), *Duverger's Law... cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Anthony Downs, *An economic theory... cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>64</sup> William H. Riker, "The Two-party System... cit.", p. 762.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 764.

<sup>66</sup> Steven R. Reed, "Structure and Behaviour... cit.", p. 336.

<sup>67</sup> Gary W. Cox, *Making Votes Count... cit.*, p. 79.

“embeddedness effects”,<sup>68</sup> i.e. an assumption that electoral rule (institutional structure) is embedded in a wider political system that provides its own set of incentives.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, even Duverger’s original work was based on the assumption that the electoral system is not the only (exclusive) determinant of the number of parties. More importantly, Clark and Golder emphasized that in spite of being referred to as the father of the so-called institutionalist approach, Duverger clearly described the way in which social and institutional variables interact.<sup>70</sup> However, many researchers often ignore his argument that the number of political parties is not determined primarily by electoral systems (institutional structure) but by social-economic factors (social structure). It is for that reason why Duverger describes the effect of electoral systems metaphorically as that of “a brake or an accelerator” which hinders or facilitates a growth in the number of political parties, but considers social-economic factors as the decisive “driving power” of a country’s party system.<sup>71</sup>

Thus, although electoral rules (institutional structure) play an important role for Duverger, it is rather social heterogeneity (social structure) which is the primary driving force behind the multiplication of political parties. Electoral arrangements then only act as a modifier, translating the effect of social forces into the exact number of parties.<sup>72</sup>

## Data And Methods

The basic data for this analysis consist of district-level results of the 2014 elections in Hungary as collected by the National Election Office of Hungary. Because of the above-mentioned problems, we take different approaches to studying the extent of strategic voting at the level of Hungarian SMDs, as well as the psychological mechanism implied by Duverger, within the framework of the “micro-Duvergerian” agenda.

First, we analyse the character of electoral competition (number of political parties) at the micro level. At the basic level of SMDs, we simply

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<sup>68</sup> Bernard Grofman, André Blais, and Shaun Bowler, *Duverger’s Law...* cit., p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> Bernard Grofman, “Preface: Methodological Steps toward the Study of Embedded Institutions”, in Bernard Grofman, Sung-Chull Lee, Edwin Winckler, and Brian Woodall (eds.), *Elections in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan under the Single Non-Transferable Vote. The Comparative Study of an Embedded Institution*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1999, pp. X-XI.

<sup>70</sup> William Roberts Clark and Matt Golder, “Rehabilitating Duverger’s Theory... cit.”, p. 680.

<sup>71</sup> Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties...* cit., p. 235.

<sup>72</sup> William Roberts Clark and Matt Golder, “Rehabilitating Duverger’s Theory... cit.”, p. 704.

calculate the percentage of the vote obtained by the top two (parties) candidates. However, as this may create a misleading picture of the size of the party system, we also use a measure which weighs parties according to their relative sizes. Specifically, we calculate the effective number of electoral parties (*ENEP*) in each district as a measure of strategic voting and the effective number of parliamentary parties (*ENPP*) as a measure of parliamentary fragmentation.<sup>73</sup> According to Duverger's theory, plurality rule should lead to a two-party competition, with effective number of parties of approximately two, while majoritarian rule should produce a larger effective number of parties. However, as the *ENEP* produces various values of fragmentation, Taagepera argues that the countries with the *ENEP* ranging between 1.5 and 2.5 are consistent with Duverger's law.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Chhibber and Kollman use the value of 2.5 as the threshold, with districts where *ENEP* is greater than 2.5 violating Duverger's law.<sup>75</sup>

Second, we use the segmented Nagayama diagrams, which help us understand the nature of competitiveness at the district level.<sup>76</sup> The main advantage of the Nagayama diagrams is that these diagrams can visually (i.e. more intuitively than other methods) display and compare the electoral outcomes for the degree of competition between the most successful parties, and the extent to which smaller parties get a substantial share of votes.<sup>77</sup> In an effort to express in detail the characteristics of electoral competition, Grofman et al. divide the Nagayama diagram into eight segments that reflect the relative strengths of the first-, second- and other-ranking parties. While the percentage of results in segments A, B and C (see Figure 1) can be taken as indicating bipolarized results, the proportion of districts in segments F, G and H indicates multiparty results.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera, "Effective Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe", *Comparative Political Studies* 12: 1, 1979, pp. 3-26.

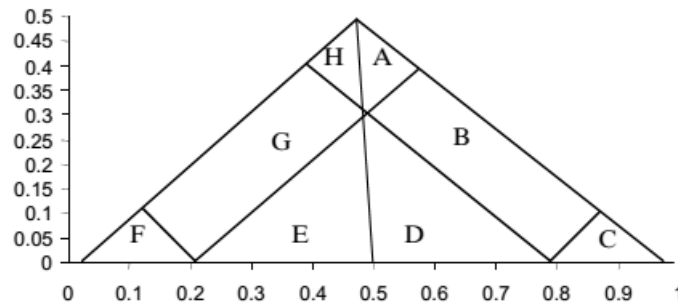
<sup>74</sup> Rein Taagepera, *Predicting Party Sizes...* cit., p. 103.

<sup>75</sup> Pradeep Chhibber and Ken Kollman, *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India, and the United States*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004, p. 48.

<sup>76</sup> The Nagayama diagrams were created using the *ElectMach* software – Roman Chytilek and Lukáš Kutner, *ElectMach* election software, 2005, <http://www.ispo.fss.muni.cz/electmach-1?lang=2> (accessed 8 September 2016).

<sup>77</sup> Steven R. Reed, "Duverger's Law... cit."; Rein Taagepera, "Extension of the Nagayama Triangle for Visualization of Party Strengths", *Party Politics* 10: 3, 2004, pp. 301-306; Bernard Grofman, Alessandro Chiaramonte, Roberto D'alimonte and Scott L. Feld, "Comparing and Contrasting the Uses of Two Graphical Tools for Displaying Patterns of Multiparty Competition: Nagayama Diagrams and Simplex Representation", *Party Politics* 10: 3, 2004, pp. 273-295.

<sup>78</sup> These sub-divisions are delimited by the two sloping triangles and by a vertical line at  $V1 = 0.5$ . At the horizontal axis of the diagram (Figure 1) we see the vote share of the largest party,  $V1$  (from 0 to 100%), and at the vertical axis the vote share of the second largest party,  $V2$  (from 0 to 50%). The triangle is delimited by the horizontal axis and the two lines,  $V1 - V2 = 0.00$  and  $V1 + V2 = 1.00$ . They intersect where  $V2$  equals 50, the logical

Figure 1. Segmented Nagayama diagram<sup>79</sup>

Finally, we use Cox's Second-First Loser ratio, "*SF*-ratio" (the vote share secured by the second loser in relation to the votes secured by the first loser).<sup>80</sup> The *SF*-ratio is useful as one of the possible ways of operationalizing Duverger's theory and because it offers a detailed insight into the electoral behaviour at the lowest level of aggregation, including any instances of strategic voting (or the degree of tactical voting) across SMDs.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, the *SF*-ratio offers the possibility to indicate various degrees of strategic defection from less competitive to more competitive districts across SMDs.<sup>82</sup> An *SF*-ratio near 0 signifies a Duvergerian equilibrium (the first loser is way ahead of the second loser), while the value of 1 shows a non-Duvergerian equilibrium where voters are unable to coordinate their electoral behaviour, leaving the two losers nearly tied. In other words, as it becomes clear who the top challenger in SMD will be, voters become much less likely to continue to support the candidates who are expected to run the third or worse. As a result, the second-ranking candidate will have many more votes than the third-ranking candidate in the district. In contrast, if voters are either unwilling or unable to cast strategic ballots, the *SF*-ratios will tend to be higher.

However, using the *SF*-ratio is not without potential problems. First, looking at *SF*-ratios one is not able to exactly differentiate between different *SF*-ratio distributions, especially the ones that are very similar. Second, *SF*-ratio values can be ambiguous for several reasons; for instance, when both the second and the third losers are considered potentially strong candidates and, therefore,

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maximum for the second largest party under any pattern of competition (cf. Bernard Grofman, Alessandro Chiaramonte, Roberto D'alimonte and Scott L. Feld., "Comparing and Contrasting... cit.", pp. 275-279).

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, p. 276

<sup>80</sup> Gary W. Cox, *Making Votes Count...* cit.

<sup>81</sup> Matthew M. Singer, "Was Duverger Correct... cit.", pp. 209-210.

<sup>82</sup> Robert G. Moser and Ethan Scheiner, "Strategic voting in established and new democracies: Ticket splitting in mixed-member electoral systems", *Electoral Studies* 28: 1, 2009, p. 51.



neither one of them is abandoned by voters, or when both are truly minor candidates and neither of them receives many votes. Third, *SF*-ratios themselves cannot identify who the key actors are. Finally, *SF*-ratio does not consider deviations from a two-party competition in which multiple small parties combine to capture significant portions of the vote.<sup>83</sup> For these reasons, we also used the so-called Third-First Loser ratio, “*TF*-ratio”, introduced by Singer. The *TF*-ratio is defined as the vote share secured by the parties finishing the fourth (in other words, as the third runner-up) or worse as a proportion of the votes secured by the first runner-up. The *TF*-ratio is useful as another indicator of strategic coordination failure by voters and elites because it shows whether the support for the third-place or worse candidates is greater than the margin between the first- and second-place candidates.<sup>84</sup>

### Strategic Voting In Hungarian Elections Of 2014

Table 1 presents the percentage of the vote received by the top two parties in SMDs since 1990. The results confirmed a long-term move to bipolar competition, partly interrupted in the elections of 2010 due to a significant decline in support of the MSZP. While in the elections of 1990 the two strongest parties (the MDF and the SZDSZ) won only 45.66% of the votes, the combined vote share of the top two parties after the elections of 2006 (the FIDESZ-KDNP and the MSZP) reached 82.25% of the votes. However, the outcome of the parliamentary elections of 2010 demonstrated an at least tentative disruption of the bipolarisation of electoral politics in Hungary, as the results for the MSZP were disastrous; the same was true for the following elections of 2014.<sup>85</sup>

The MSZP, who governed Hungary between 2002 and 2010, thus was not able to recover its former electorate, thus contributing to a renewal of bipolar character of the Hungarian party politics. However, as the support for the FIDESZ remained at the very high level in the elections of 2014 (44.11% of the votes in SMDs), support for the two strongest parties (or coalitions, respectively, as both the FIDESZ and the MSZP ran as coalitions) still exceeded 70% of the votes, although with the FIDESZ's dominant (ultradominant)

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<sup>83</sup> Gary W. Cox, “Comment on ‘Japan’s Multimember SNTV System and Strategic Voting: The ‘M + 1’ Rule and Beyond’”, *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 2: 2, 2001, p. 237; Robert G. Moser and Ethan Scheiner, “Strategic voting... cit.”, p. 55; Matthew M. Singer, “Was Duverger Correct... cit.”, p. 210.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> See Agnes Batory, *Europe... cit.*; Gábor Györi, *Hungarian Politics in 2014*, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Policy Solutions, Budapest, 2015, pp. 9-33.

position in SMD contests, where the FIDESZ, together with its coalition partner (KDNP), received almost all (96 out of 106) of the seats.

*Table 1. The vote for candidates in SMDs, 1990 – 2014 (whole country)*

	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014
<b>1st party</b>	23.93	31.27	21.40	39.43	40.26	53.43	44.11
<b>2nd party</b>	21.73	18.62	29.82	40.50	41.99	21.28	26.85
<b>1st and 2nd party</b>	45.66	49.89	51.22	79.93	82.25	74.71	70.96
<b>Others</b>	54.34	50.11	48.78	20.07	17.75	25.29	29.04

Source: National Election Office (<http://valasztas.hu/>); Jakub Šedo, *Volební systémy postkomunistických zemí (Electoral systems of Post-communist countries)*, Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, Brno, 2007.

Note: 1st party: MDF (1990), MSZP (1994), FIDESZ (1998), MSZP (2002), FIDESZ-KDNP (2006, 2010, 2014); 2nd party: SZDSZ (1990, 1994), MSZP (1998), FIDESZ-MDF (2002), MSZP (2006, 2010), MSZP-EGYÜTT-DK-PM-MLP (2014).

Table 2 then presents the percentage of the vote received in the elections of 2014 by the top two candidates. The results demonstrate that a trend to the disruption of the bipolarisation of Hungarian electoral politics is present even if we focus on the electoral support of the two strongest candidates in SMDs, regardless of their party's affiliation. In the elections of 2014, there was no district where the combined vote share of the top two candidates exceeded 90%. Similarly, the top two candidates obtained more than 80% of the vote in four districts only (i.e. 3.77%). In most cases, the support for the top two candidates was between 70–79.99% (77.36%), but at the same time there were almost one fifth of the districts (18.87%) where their gains fell below 70%, although nowhere did it fall below 60%. We can conclude that the outcome of the Hungarian elections of 2014 was in stark contrast to the assumptions related to Duverger's law.

*Table 2. The vote for the top two candidates in SMDs, 2014 (N = 106)*

	Number of districts	Percentage of districts
<b>90.00 – 100.00</b>	0	0.00
<b>80.00 – 89.99</b>	4	3.77
<b>70.00 – 79.99</b>	82	77.36
<b>60.00 – 69.99</b>	20	18.87

Source: National Election Office (<http://valasztas.hu/>), author's own calculations.

However, as the attention to the percentage of the vote obtained by the top two candidates may create a misleading picture of the size of the party system, in the next step we will focus on the measure which weighs parties according to their relative sizes, too. Comparison of the long-term trends in the

number of Hungarian parties competing and elected (Table 3) shows that while there was a clear trend of the shrinking number of competing parties in the SMDs, completely the same statement may not be applied to the effective number of parties elected. Here, the trend to bipolarization was, in some cases, partially disrupted (the elections of 1994 or 1998), and finally totally broken in the elections of 2010 and 2014, when the value of *ENPP* measuring at a constituency level decreased to 1.05, or 1.22 respectively. Thus, Hungarian party system at the level of SMDs clearly shows the reduction to almost real one-party system.

**Table 3. Effective number of parties, 1990 – 2010 (whole country)**

	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010
<i>ENEP</i> <sub>SMD</sub>	7.36	5.99	5.73	3.05	2.89	2.77
<i>ENEP</i> <sub>ALL</sub>	7.05	5.74	5.18	2.94	2.80	2.82
<i>ENPP</i> <sub>SMD</sub>	2.15	1.38	2.70	2.05	2.17	1.05
<i>ENPP</i> <sub>ALL</sub>	3.77	2.90	3.45	2.21	2.40	2.00

Source: Michael Gallagher, Electoral systems web site: Values of indices, [https://www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/Staff/michael\\_gallagher/ElSystems/Docts/ElectionIndices.pdf](https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/michael_gallagher/ElSystems/Docts/ElectionIndices.pdf) (accessed September 8, 2016).

Note: SMD – single member district level, ALL – national level.

However, if we move to the level of district competition (i.e. electoral level), rather than representation, which is the primary level regarding the evaluation of the strategic voting (Table 4), we have to refuse the claim about the long-term concentration of the votes in the two main parties, which was typical of the whole period since the “founding elections” of 1990 until the last elections using supermixed system in 2010. In contrast, while the reductive trend reached its peak after the elections held in 2010, with 2.77 electoral parties in SMDs, the first use of a plurality rule in 2014 resulted in an increase in the value of *ENEP* to 3.22 (at the national level), or to 3.10 (the mean value of SMDs), respectively.

**Table 4. Distribution of effective number of parties in SMDs, 2014 (N = 106)**

<i>ENEP</i> <sub>micro</sub> (min)	<i>ENEP</i> <sub>micro</sub> (max)	<i>ENEP</i> <sub>micro</sub> (mean)	<i>ENEP</i> <sub>macro</sub>	<i>ENPP</i> <sub>coalition</sub>	<i>ENPP</i> <sub>parties</sub>
2.40	3.69	3.10	3.22	1.22	1.48

Source: National Election Office (<http://valasztas.hu/>), author’s own calculations.

Note: *ENEP*<sub>micro</sub> (min) – minimum value of *ENEP* at constituency level, *ENEP*<sub>micro</sub> (max) – maximum value of *ENEP* at constituency level, *ENEP*<sub>micro</sub> (mean) – average value of *ENEP* in the aggregate of constituencies, *ENEP*<sub>macro</sub> – value of *ENEP* at national level, *ENPP*<sub>coalition</sub> – value of *ENPP* at constituency level, insofar as the FIDESZ-KDNP and the Unity coalitions are viewed as single contenders, *ENPP*<sub>parties</sub> – value of *ENPP* at constituency level, insofar as the individual members of the FIDESZ-KDNP and the Unity coalitions are viewed as single contenders.

Figure 2 then outlines the effective number of competing parties in the Hungarian SMDs in the elections of 2014, confirming the finding presented above. A large part of the districts concentrated approximately between the values of 2.9 and 3.2, with a mean value of 3.10 (the values of the *ENEP* ranged from 2.40 to 3.69). More importantly, there were no districts with the *ENEP* smaller than 2.0, only one district (0.94%) with the *ENEP* between 2.01 and 2.50, and all the other districts (99.06%) had the *ENEP* greater than 2.5, thus violating the expectations of Duverger's law.

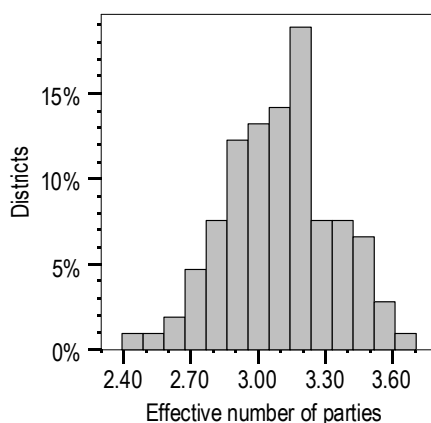


Figure 2. Histogram of effective number of parties in SMDs, 2014 ( $N = 106$ )<sup>86</sup>

The high concentration of SMDs around the level of three effective candidates in the elections of 2014 thus reflected Cox's non-Duvergerian equilibrium and can be interpreted in context of the development of the Hungarian party system after the elections of 2010 which proved that Hungarian politics has overcome its "long term 'entrenched' twofold division".<sup>87</sup> While thus the opposition FIDESZ won a two-thirds majority of seats in the parliament, the MSZP lost its status of a second main pole of the Hungarian party system after a series of corruption scandals and unpopular policy measures, and two new parties – the extreme right-wing Jobbik and the green-liberal Politics Can Be Different (LMP) – reached the 5% threshold, thus obtaining seats in the parliament.

<sup>86</sup> National Election Office (<http://valasztas.hu/>), author's own calculations.

<sup>87</sup> Zoltán Pogátsa, "LMP ("Politics Can Be Different"): Nordic Ecopolitics in Central Europe", in Oľga Gyárfášová and Zora Bútorová (eds.), *Alternative Politics? The Rise of New Political Parties in Central Europe*, Institute for Public Affairs, Bratislava, 2013, p. 190.

Neither an effort of left-wing parties (including the MSZP) which ran as an election alliance in the elections of 2014 resulted in a renewal of bipolar character of the Hungarian party competition. The FIDESZ has maintained its dominant (ultradominant) position, while the left-wing alliance has suffered another loss, with only a slight lead over the Jobbik; the small LMP has retained its parliamentary representation, too.<sup>88</sup> There is one important factor worth mentioning with regard to possible restoration of bipolar character of the Hungarian party competition. As mentioned Győri,<sup>89</sup> the outcomes of the election resulted in establishing Jobbik's prominent presence in the Hungarian political space. While in the elections of 2010 the Jobbik's strongholds were especially in North-Eastern Hungary,<sup>90</sup> four years later the party performed well even in some former MSZP' strongholds (in East Hungary) which are decisive for recovering the left as the second pole of the Hungarian party system and a governing alternative to the FIDESZ. However, the increasing support for the Jobbik was visible even in some districts of traditionally conservative North-Western Hungary, so the difference in party's territorial support has become much narrower, in contrast with the past elections. The capital city of Budapest was one important exception, as the party remains far weaker here than in the rest of the country.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, the data from the polls show that while in the elections of 2010 most of the Jobbik's voters supported the FIDESZ in previous elections (37%), considerable support for radical right was found between the former MSZP voters, too (21%), or between the first-time voters (13%), respectively. Our results thus confirmed Petsinis' claim that the Jobbik took advantage of MSZP's delegitimization. In the vacuum (or the absence) of the party with the status of a second (leftist) main pole of the Hungarian party system, it made a significant inroad into the leftist electorate (extent of this inroad is, however, the subject for future research) with its platform (or concept), the so-called "Eco-social National Economics". The platform strongly criticised global capitalism and included such issues as endorsing state-interventionism, higher taxation of multinational corporations, nationalization

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<sup>88</sup> Századvég Foundation's calculations showed that the influence of introduction of the new electoral system on election outcomes was not too strong, although the FIDESZ-KDNP coalition would be lost its two-thirds majority under the former supermixed system (SZ, *Revitalized political system in Hungary*, Századvég Foundation, Budapest, 2015, [http://szazadveg.hu/ld/v0k5t1m3g9n3x2s4p1w0\\_SzazadvegFoundation\\_HungarianElectio n2014.pdf](http://szazadveg.hu/ld/v0k5t1m3g9n3x2s4p1w0_SzazadvegFoundation_HungarianElectio n2014.pdf) (accessed 8 September 2016).

<sup>89</sup> Gábor Győri, *Hungarian Politics...* cit., pp. 10-11.

<sup>90</sup> András Bíró Nagy and Dániel Róna, "Rational Radicalism: Jobbik's Road to the Hungarian Parliament", in in Olga Gyárfášová and Zora Bútorová (eds.), *Alternative Politics?...cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>91</sup> Gábor Győri, *Hungarian Politics...* cit., pp. 10-11.

of vital sectors of the economy, or the state-ownership of sectors such as health and education.<sup>92</sup>

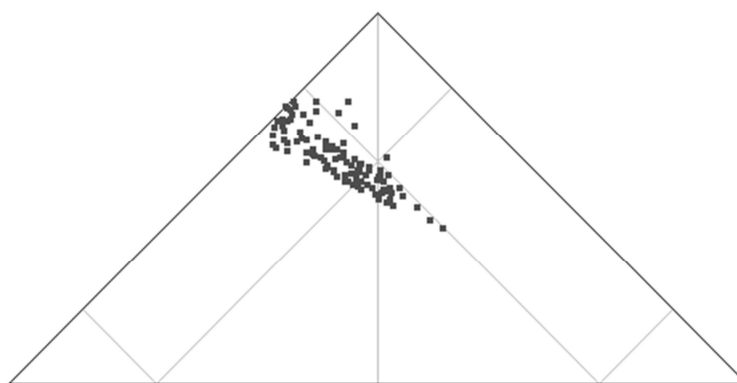


Figure 3. Segmented Nagayama diagram for SMDs, 2014 ( $N = 106$ )<sup>93</sup>

The values of *ENEP* as well as the results from a segmented Nagayama diagram (Figure 3) for the Hungarian SMDs in the elections of 2014 have confirmed that the character of the Hungarian electoral competition was far from the Duvergerian logic. The results show that most of the districts, more than two-thirds, lie in segment G (69.81%), indicating competition between more than two parties (i.e. the competitive multi-party segment of the diagram), although most of the districts in this segment approached segment H, which already defines strong competitive two-party dominance. In contrast, we found only a very limited number of districts in the segments with no substantial third-party strength (A, B, H). None of them was found in the segment which is characteristic by very limited minor party strength and political competition between the top two parties (segment A), with the winner taking 50% or more of the total vote in the district. Similarly, only one district was found in segment B, characterised by a similar type of competition as segment A, with one important exception, namely non-competitiveness. Finally, merely three of the districts (2.83%) showed strong competitive two-party dominance (segment H), yet in contrast to the previous two cases, none of the top two parties was able to gain more than 50% of the vote in these districts.

Thus, with the exception of segment G, the second largest number of districts was found in segments D and E, characterised by neither strong or complete single- or two-party dominance nor political competitiveness. Out of them, 7.55% of the districts were in segment E where the largest contender

<sup>92</sup> Vassilis Petsinis, "The 'New' Far Right in Hungary: A Political Psychologist's Perspective", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23: 2, 2015, p. 281.

<sup>93</sup> National Election Office (<http://valasztas.hu/>), author's own calculations.

obtained less than 50% of the vote, or 18.87% of the districts in segment D where the largest contender obtained more than 50% of the vote, respectively.

To summarize the above-mentioned findings according to the three categories proposed by Grofman et al. (Table 5), the results show that only 0.94% of the districts did not have any substantial third-party strength, representing two-party competition (segments A, B, C). Furthermore, if we complement the first category with segment H, which also represents (competitive) dominance of the top two parties, the proportion of the districts with limited minor party strength increases to a very limited extent to only 3.57%. In contrast, more than fifth of the districts (26.42%) witnessed neither strong or complete single- or two-party dominance nor political competitiveness (segments D and E), and finally most of the districts (69.81%) witnessed multi-party competition.

*Table 5. Distribution of SMDs by Nagayama segments, 2014 (N = 106)*

Segments	Number of districts	Percentage of districts
A	0	0.00
B	1	0.94
C	0	0.00
D	20	18.87
E	8	7.55
F	0	0.00
G	74	69.81
H	3	2.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<i>Categories of districts</i>		
<b>Categories with no substantial third-party strength (A + B + C)</b>	1	0.94
<b>Competitive districts (F + G + H)</b>	77	72.64
<b>Neither strong or complete single- or two-party dominance nor political competitiveness (D + E)</b>	28	26.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: National Election Office (<http://valasztas.hu/>), author's own calculations.

Therefore, it is apparent that the character of electoral competition in Hungary is less than uniform, as the election outcomes in SMDs were characterized by a prevalent mix of competitive multi-party configurations, although the prevailing competitive character of elections remained contaminated by neither strong or complete single- or two-party dominance nor political competitiveness configurations in almost a fifth of the districts.

Overall, the analysis using the Nagayama diagram shows that disruption of the bipolarisation of electoral politics in Hungary, compared with the elections of 2006 or 2002, may be a longer lasting phenomenon, as the societal pressures are translated into a growth in the number of relevant political parties, which neither a plurality rule will be able to interrupt, at least in the near future. In this context, Nagy and Róna argue that the Jobbik's success and future prospects may be long-term, as the party has a charismatic leader and it was able to build a solid organizational base and obtain subcultural embeddedness (especially among the youth) with a possible increasing party identification just among the youngest generations.<sup>94</sup>

As with the previous indicators, even the values of *SF*-ratios and *TF*-ratios confirmed an at least tentative disruption of the bipolarisation of electoral politics in Hungary. As a result, only two districts (1.89%) showed competition indicating a Duvergerian equilibrium (*SF*-ratio), while in nearly half (48) of the SMDs (45.28%) the *SF*-ratio values were above the upper limit. Similarly, the election results indicated voters' limited willingness and limited ability to vote strategically by abandoning hopeless candidates in favour of those with a chance to succeed. Thus, we have found higher levels of strategic failure, with many voters casting their ballot for candidates that came out the third, fourth or below; only in a quarter (27) of the districts (25.47%), the values of the *TF*-ratio fell within the limit.

The above mentioned findings are well illustrated when looking at a histogram of *SF*-ratios and *TF*-ratios (Figure 4) in Hungarian SMDs after the elections of 2014. Especially a very large number of the districts with the high *SF*-ratio values, crossing the upper limit and mostly concentrated around the level of 0.85 indicates Duvergerian non-equilibrium, i.e. many votes going to the candidates ranking the third in relation to second-place candidates. Similarly, the resulting *TF*-ratio patterns were not in full conformity with a Duvergerian logic, although the proportion of districts with competition indicating a non-Duvergerian equilibrium, as well as *TF*-ratio values, was considerably lower than in case of *SF*-ratio, with most districts concentrated around the level of 0.25–0.35, nearing the level, which indicates Duvergerian equilibrium.

Overall, we have concluded that strategic voting is possible (i.e. that political elites and voters react strategically to the incentives of electoral law), yet this occurs only when certain crucial conditions are met. However, such conditions have not been met in contemporary Hungary. Even our analysis of strategic, or tactical, voting confirmed the findings that the effect of electoral institutions could be contingent and (at the district level) inhibited by country-specific conditions. In Hungarian case, we can mention the current form of the party competition, which serves as the factor that limited voters' rationality,

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<sup>94</sup> András Bíró Nagy and Dániel Róna, "Rational Radicalism... cit.", pp. 179-180.



created problems with strategic decisions and ultimately made it very difficult for voters to abandon hopeless candidates; specifically, the Jobbik's definitive rooting as one of the three main poles of the party system.

This is possible to demonstrate by district-level outcomes. The Jobbik was not only able to increase its support in the former MSZP strongholds, and to a lesser extent also in the FIDESZ strongholds (as mentioned above), but more importantly, the Jobbik's candidates finished second ahead of the FIDESZ, or the left-wing alliance candidates in 41 districts (38.7%), compared to 55 districts (51.89%) where the leftist candidates finished in second place; in the remaining 10 districts (9.43%) the FIDESZ's candidates finished second behind the winning leftist candidates. Furthermore, while the *ENPP* (measuring at constituency level) reached the value of 1.22 in 2014, thus indicating the reduction to almost real one-party system at this level (in the sum of all SMDs), the opposite is true for the values of *ENEP* which increases to 3.10 (the mean value of all SMDs), clearly indicating disruption of bipolarization of the Hungarian political competition. The very similar findings were also confirmed by the Nagayma diagram which graphed the character of party competition. Even here, we have confirmed that most of the districts (more than two-thirds) witnessed multi-party competition, supplemented with more than a fifth of the districts with neither strong or complete single- or two-party dominance nor political competitiveness, and only in less than 1% of the SMDs we found two-party competition with no substantial third-party strength. Similarly, the values of *SF*-ratio indicated voters' limited willingness to vote strategically by abandoning hopeless candidates in favour of those with a chance to succeed.

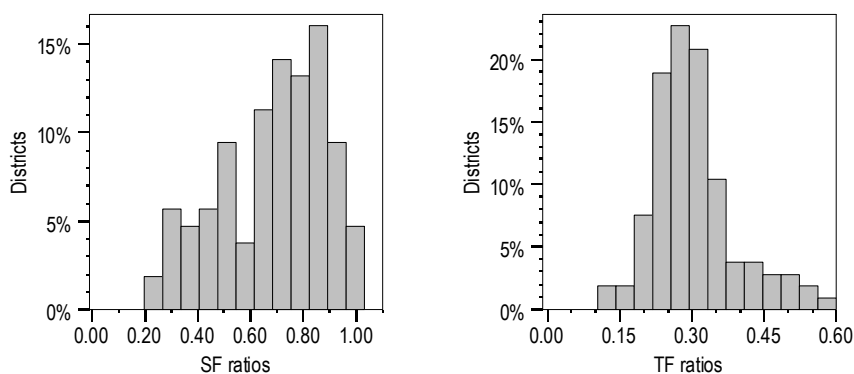


Figure 4. Histograms of *SF*-ratios and *TF*-ratios in SMDs, 2014 ( $N = 106$ )<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup> National Election Office (<http://valasztas.hu/>), author's own calculations.

### *Summary and conclusions*

The article has aimed to analyse strategic voting in the context of the adoption of the new Hungarian electoral law (mixed-member proportional, or compensatory mixed electoral system), which was first used in the elections of 2014, and its influence on the character of Hungarian party competition. We have used some alternative methods to study the assumptions related to Duverger's law, and have come to several conclusions. First, while the previous analysis showed that the strategic voting had a tendency to grow under Hungarian supermixed system in the period of 1990–2010,<sup>96</sup> our analysis has shown that strategic voting is not a universal phenomenon in the elections of 2014 under the plurality rule, as indicated by many violations of Duverger's law in Hungarian SMDs.

In our opinion, the main reasons behind the problems with tactical voting are rooted in transformation of the Hungarian party system after the elections of 2006. In these elections, the FIDESZ gained dominant (ultradominant) position, and weakness of the MSZP resulted in the rise of the Jobbik which became one of three main poles of the party system, with support only slightly ahead of the MSZP. Thus, while the FIDESZ clearly dominates almost all the districts, at the same time, it is not clear who the top challenger in particular SMD will be, and voters continue to support candidates of both the MSZP as well as the Jobbik. As a result, the differences between the second-ranking candidate and the third-ranking candidate are very small, voters are unable to coordinate themselves, and the values of *SF*-ratio will tend to be higher, showing a non-Duvergerian equilibrium.

More importantly, a deep ideological (de facto unbridgeable) distance between the MSZP and the Jobbik, or their voters, respectively, further hampers the possibility that voters of these parties would desert their preferred (possibly third-ranking) party (candidate), if they have only limited chances to gain a seat, to support a candidate from another camp who is expected to finish second. In contrast, the histogram of the *TF*-ratios shows that although the resulting *TF*-ratio patterns were not in full conformity with a Duvergerian logic, most districts concentrated around the level, indicating the proximity to Duvergerian equilibrium. Thus, voters followed the logic of strategic voting and the third-ranking candidates obtained many more votes than the fourth-ranking (or worse) candidates in the district.

In this sense, our findings make it clear that plurality rule significantly reduces fragmentation of the party system (which is inhibited by the electoral system's mechanical effects), even if the election results are not always in full compliance with Duverger's law, as some indicators of strategic behaviour at the SMD level show that various SMDs can move far away from the

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<sup>96</sup> Csaba Nikolenyi, "Strategic Co-Ordination... cit."; Áron Kiss, "Identifying strategic voting... cit."

Duvergerian equilibrium. We have thus confirmed the original way of how Duverger conceived of his law, i.e. that electoral system (as an institution) plays an important role, but only in modifying the effect of social forces on the creation of political parties. The plurality rule (as an institutional structure) in SMDs thus acted as a “brake” on the process by which societal pressures translate into an excessive growth in the number of political parties, but on the other hand, it could not entirely suppress the underlying processes by which sociological factors shaped Hungarian party systems after the elections of 2010.

Future research then should provide a more comprehensive answer on whether (or to what extent) the Hungarian electoral reform from December 2011 has changed the strategic behaviour of Hungarian voters, as some authors claim that the expectations of Duverger’s law, as an equilibrium where only two candidates receive all the votes and the votes obtained by the third and following candidates approximate zero, are reached only over a series of elections.<sup>97</sup>

However, the relatively stable and firmly rooting support of the FIDESZ, the MSZP and the Jobbik in certain social segments of the Hungarian society, together with the fact that a new Hungarian compensatory mixed electoral system distributes seats not only by plurality rule in SMDs (nominal tier), but also via proportional representation (list tier),<sup>98</sup> can result in the fact that it will be very difficult (particularly in the near future) to achieve a political situation (corresponding to the expectations of Duverger’s law) when voters will be able to vote strategically, abandon the weaker candidate, thus pressuring toward a two-party competition over a series of elections. Further research thus should pay attention to cross-contamination of both tiers of Hungarian electoral system, as the list tier allows representation of smaller parties (apart from the two largest parties in SMDs) and supporters of these smaller parties thus are encouraged to support their third or worse-placed candidates also in SMD contests, together with possible influence of unfreezing social cleavages and the potential impact of the economic crisis on the transformation of the Hungarian party system.

Particularly an analysis of ticket splitting, i.e. possibility that voters can cast two votes, each with different logic and impact on representation of political parties, can provide an interesting opportunity to study underlying effects of the new Hungarian electoral system, which may inhibit incentives for voters and candidates to act strategically. In this context, survey data will help to reveal more complex patterns in analysing strategic voting and ticket splitting under mixed-member proportional system and cross-contamination resulted from a vote linkage mechanism, which connects both tiers of electoral system.

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<sup>97</sup> Brian J. Gaines, “Duverger’s Law... cit.”.

<sup>98</sup> The existence of the list tier can foster the willingness of small and medium-sized parties to nominate candidates even in the districts without a real chance to win a seat, in order to strengthen in front of the voters its image as a nationwide party.