

Seats and Votes: Consequences of the Hungarian Election Law

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Legislation on the stakes in electoral competition

The constitutions of the eastern European communist countries followed the example of the 1936 Soviet constitution, and gave - only on paper, of course - a virtually unlimited power to the national legislature. The political changes of 1989-90 created a new institutional framework, with a more balanced division of powers. In the case of Hungary, it remained nevertheless doubtless, that the Parliament and the Prime Minister, who became truly accountable to the legislature, are the supreme powers in the country.

The current Hungarian Election Law and the constitutional amendments referred above were passed in October 1989 by the Parliament elected in June 1985, on the last non-competitive election. However, all these bills, proposed in the Parliament by the socialist Németh-government, were prepared on the three-lateral National Roundtable talks which took place between 13 June and 18 September 1989 with the participation of the ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Opposition Roundtable¹ and the so-called Third Side².

The agreement reached on the talks stipulated that the Presidential Council³ was to be dissolved and the head of the state would be a president to be elected by the national assembly⁴ and given rather limited executive power. The legislature was to remain unicameral⁵ and the tenure of future parliaments was reduced to four years, with a strictly regulated possibility of early dissolution. The new institutional framework rather closely, sometimes even explicitly followed the example of the short-lived postwar parliamentary democracy. The most important deviation from the 1945-48 framework was the establishment of the Constitutional Court. Its members were to be elected by the Parliament. On the first occasion it was decided that each major party had the right to nominate one judge, with the rest to be selected solely on the base of non-partisan criteria. The final shape of the new institutional structure was also strongly affected by the May 1990 constitutional amendments, the July 1990 Act on Local Self-Governments, and the election of an opposition backbencher for President in May 1990 (on these post-election developments see the chapter by Tamás Kolosi in this volume).

The regulation of franchise

Some elements of the election laws of the communist period were retained without any controversy. They certainly included secret and equal ballot, but also the timing of elections and by-elections for Sundays (from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.), the eligibility requirements (Hungarian citizenship and an age of 18 years or more⁶), automatic registration of electors, and defining

voting as non-compulsory. The provisions for absentee voting also remained unchanged, neither postal voting, nor voting at the Hungarian embassies became allowed.

The electoral register, which was based on the permanently updated population register, was to be compiled by the local electoral committees with the assistance of the local councils. In the event that somebody wanted to vote in a different electoral district than the one where they were registered, they had to obtain a certificate from the local authority of their permanent residence proving that their name was temporarily deleted from the local electoral register in order to be able to vote elsewhere, and give this certificate to the election committee in the polling station where they wanted to vote. The same procedure was applied in all those hospitals and asylums where ballot boxes were provided on request. In the military garrisons an unusually large portion of the rank and file was let to go home for that weekend. For those who stayed to maintain a limited service a ballot box was provided in the garrison and they could cast a vote without the above formalities. Note, however, that people voting outside the borders of their home constituency were entitled to vote only for party lists, but not for individual candidates (on the distinction between these two votes see below).

The local authorities were obliged to notify the electors about the fact of their registration and the location of their polling station two months in advance. People who did not receive such notice were urged through government sponsored media broadcasts and advertisements to contact the local electoral committee to have their names entered into the electoral register. Since in principle every Hungarian citizen has an identity card that contains all the information needed to determine the home constituency and eligibility of the person, the correction of the electoral register was normally a smoothly going and not very time-consuming business⁷.

Creating a fabulously incomprehensible electoral system

The serious controversies emerged only when the electoral system came to the agenda. In the last decades of communist rule, the electoral system was essentially identical to the two ballot system of the French Fifth Republic (the guarantees against the emergence of genuine competition were in the provisions about the nomination process; for further details see Furtak, 1990). Many parliamentarians of the late Kádár-period did real constituency service, and in 1989 it was apparently widely believed among politicians that because of the appreciation of this practice the general public would not support the wholesale abandonment of single-member districts. The members of the 1985-90 Parliament claimed legitimacy on the ground of their alleged personal vote and many of them were very uneasy about the prospect

of any move towards proportional representation. Though it seemed very unlikely that the Parliament would openly express its resentment by rejecting a major bill proposed by the socialist government, and most participants on the roundtable talks did not share the above mentioned feelings, they were nevertheless keen not to ignore these sentiments completely. But it was also taken for granted from the beginning that because of the presumably great fragmentation of popular vote, the British-type first-pass-the-post system had to be avoided. These factors thus favoured the survival of the old electoral arrangement, which, however, was - for understandable reasons - seen as discredited, and on the whole rejected by each member of the Opposition Roundtable.

The basic problem faced by the participants on the talks was that the party-system of the country was unsettled and electoral reactions largely incalculable. Nevertheless, with the possible exception of the rather undecided Democratic Forum, each party advocated a solution which - according to the prevailing elite perception of its implications - would have maximized the party's own share of mandates. Indeed, these July-August 1989 expectations were mostly disconfirmed by the election results; in particular, the reformcommunists and the Free Democrats, the two groupings whose electoral fortune changed dramatically in the following months, were really badly penalized for their preference for the dominance of single-member districts. The historical parties may also have identified their good luck too hastily with the 1945-47 electoral system. But the positions taken by the parties during the talks were nevertheless consistent with what was believed to be their self-interest⁸, given their presumably limited understanding of electoral mechanics and the then available information about the electoral strength and particular weaknesses of each.

The party elites thought that single member districts would allow the personal characteristics of candidates to have an extremely great impact on election results, and that personal votes would almost certainly benefit partly the Free Democrats⁹, and partly the ruling HSWP, which - though discredited as a party - had far the strongest national organisation and many, at least locally well-known and supposedly respected candidates. On the other extreme, the Young Democrats were expecting to do particularly badly in single-member districts partly because of the weakness of their local organizations and partly because of the age of their prospective candidates.

The HSWP and the AFD argued on the roundtable talks that the new Parliament would have a greater legitimacy if the electors were called to make their choice mostly between individual

candidates and less so between the hardly known parties. The "historical parties" - obviously lacking really strong candidates but their names having been well-known and supposedly attractive to the electorate - insisted that a ballot choice between clear-cut political alternatives was more desirable. Thus, they (the Independent Small Holders Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic People's Party) called for a return to the arrangements of the postwar democracy. At that time a proportional representation system was applied with 18 regional constituencies. The Young Democrats largely agreed with them, but they would have preferred to treat the country as a single multimember constituency.

The compromise about the introduction of a mixed electoral system was relatively easily reached. Thus, each elector was given two votes: one for an individual candidate contesting a single-member seat, and another to be cast for a party-list in a regional multimember district. Then a long lasting debate followed about the ratio of seats to be distributed by the two different systems. Finally the fifty-fifty solution, proposed by the Hungarian Democratic Forum, was adopted. (However, the incumbent Parliament expressed its dissatisfaction with the bill by changing the ratio of single-member and regional seats to 176:152, i.e. 152 mandates became available in the twenty multimember districts, and 176 single-member seats were created.) On the insistence of the historical parties the units of regional administration became the multimember constituencies, that is, the idea of just one nationwide multimember constituency was abandoned. These twenty constituencies became the metropolitan area of Budapest (concentrating almost a fifth of the country's population, with 1493380 registered electors on the day of election) and the 19 counties, which had between 176379 to 707030 electors individually. The distribution of seats between the counties was roughly proportional to population size (see table 1). The regional party lists were closed lists: the electors were not allowed to express their personal preferences between the candidates on these lists. In practice, the first names on these lists were usually determined by the national party leadership, and the rest in consultation between the national and local party leaders.

Table 1 about here

In the single-member constituencies a two-ballot system was agreed upon. If less than 50 percent of the electors cast a valid vote in the first round, then the ballot was declared invalid and a second one was called. In these cases all the candidates were allowed to enter the runoff. Otherwise the candidate obtaining an absolute majority of first ballot votes was declared elected: if there was no such candidate (but the turnout requirement was fulfilled), then only

the candidates obtaining more than 15 percent of the votes, but at least the three strongest candidates proceeded to the second round. If less than 25 percent of the electors cast a valid vote in the runoff, the seat was to be left unfilled and a by-election called. Otherwise the candidate winning the largest number of votes was declared elected.

The only controversy regarding the rules of the game in the single-members concerned the number of candidates proceeding to the second round. The opposition would have preferred to let only the two forerunners to stand for the runoff. The eventually adopted provision (see above) was originally proposed by the reformcommunists. At the time of the roundtable talks it was still believed that the HSWP candidates would finish on the first or second place in most single-member constituencies, and therefore it seemed essential for the reformcommunists to avoid facing a candidate supported by an *ad hoc* anticommunist coalition in the runoff. However, candidates were allowed to withdraw from candidacy voluntarily between the two rounds, so the opposition parties had the possibility to form occasional coalitions¹⁰.

Had the negotiation about the electoral formula stopped here, the Hungarian electoral system would have become almost identical to the mixed systems currently in effect in Bulgaria and Lithuania. But the parties present at the Hungarian roundtable talks agreed that the electoral system was to guarantee as high a degree of proportionality between votes and seats as possible, taken the above characteristics of the electoral system as given. Therefore they accepted the idea of providing some compensations for votes not winning seats otherwise. In addition to list votes not gaining seats on the county level, the votes cast in the first valid ballot for the finally defeated candidates in the single-member districts were to become the remainder votes of the respective parties, provided that they were otherwise eligible for compensatory mandates (see below). 58 compensatory seats were created: this figure itself makes it clear that the compensation was meant to be partial, and not to counterbalance completely the bias in favour of one or more great parties introduced by the single-member districts.

A few more features of these compensatory mandates should be noted. First, they were to be distributed among the national lists of those parties which obtained at least 4 percent of the votes cast in the multimember constituencies. Secondly, there was a very high probability that much more remainder votes were to be generated in the single-members than in the multimember constituencies¹¹. Therefore, the compensatory mandates created a strong incentive for contesting as many single-members as possible, even if there was not the slightest

chance of winning them. In fact, the nomination procedure (see below) was already such that it actually forced the parties to contest even those single-member seats where they definitely expected defeat. This may also have been necessary to assure a full mobilization of their local organizations during the campaign. Thirdly, though the compensatory mandates made the already complex system one of the world's most complicated electoral formula, they did not make the job of the voters any more difficult. However, as we will see below, they made the relation between seats and votes less easily comprehensible¹².

Allocation of mandates between list and remainder votes

The further details of proportional representation were apparently left to the experts of the government and were hardly debated by the opposition. For the allocation of seats in the multimember constituencies the Hagenbach-Bischoff quota (number of valid votes divided by the number of seats plus one; essentially the same as the Droop quota), and a curious version of the largest remainder method was used. The unique element was that the minimum number of remainder votes required to win a seat in the regional constituencies was set rather high: to two thirds of the quota itself. In the 1990 election, not less than 32 mandates remained unallocated on the county level because of this provision. These mandates were added to the compensatory mandates distributed between candidates on the national lists.

Table 2 about here

To see how this system works, consider the example shown in table 2. In the example we have a four-member constituency with altogether 100.000 valid votes cast for the nine party lists. The quota is 100.000 votes divided by five (4 seats + 1), i.e. 20.000 votes. Party A obtained 34.000 votes and Party B 22.000, thus they have one full quota each and 14.000 and 2.000 remainder votes respectively. No other party has a full quota, therefore we have to look at the remainder votes to see whether there are some parties whose remainder votes exceed two-thirds of the quota, i.e. 13.333,33. Party A indeed has 14.000 remainder votes, so it is granted one more seat. Note that the 6.000 votes which is the difference between a full quota and the 14.000 remainder votes of Party A, will be subtracted from the national total of Party A's remainder votes before the allocation of the compensatory mandates on the national level. In this example no other party qualifies to obtain any more seats in this regional constituency, and therefore one of the four seats remains unallocated. This seat will be added to the compensatory mandates to be distributed on the national level. It can be easily proven that 1. the smaller the constituencies, the more likely that this two-thirds rule will deny mandates from

the smaller parties; 2. deviations from this general tendency are likely if the regional distribution of party support is very uneven; and 3. the larger the constituency, the more unpredictable and less systematic the effect of this rule.

Whereas the rationale behind the adoption of the two-thirds rule is unclear¹³, the justification of a rather high effective threshold on the county level is straightforward. As it was noted above, a much larger number of remainder votes were to be generated in the single-member than in the regional constituencies. If virtually all the seats available on the county level had actually been allocated there, the minimum number of votes needed to win a seat would have been enormously higher on the national than on the county level. It is unknown to us whether the designers of the election law had definite expectations about which parties were to be favoured by the compensatory mandates. In the Summer 1989 by-elections, Democratic Forum candidates, supported by several smaller opposition parties, always won (usually in the runoff) against various independents and the HSWP-candidates, with the latter normally finishing on the second place. It seems likely that the HSWP-strategists expected their party to do better in a general election, provided that the opposition forces were fragmented. But it is nevertheless plausible that the compensatory mandates, and any increase in their total number, were meant to benefit the HSWP above all. In the actual election, however, the Free Democrats collected a much larger number of remainder votes in the single-members than any others, and therefore they gained the most by the existence of the compensatory mandates.

For the allocation of compensatory mandates between the remainder votes the d'Hondt highest average system was adopted. Note that this method tends to favour the party with the largest number of votes in a more pronounced way than most of the alternatives which could have been applied (see Gallagher, 1992). Under the mixed electoral system of Hungary, this party was to be one which obtained a large number of votes but relatively few mandates in the single-member districts. Note that - as it was mentioned above - the increases in the number of compensatory mandates (i.e. due to some seats remaining unallocated in the regional constituencies) are likely to occur on the expense of the smaller parties which just passed the four percent threshold nationally.

Filtering out the small parties: the four percent threshold and the nomination procedure

There was a consensus in the roundtable talks that only those parties that would obtain at least 3 percent of all valid votes cast for party lists in the country as a whole would remain in competition for the 152 seats available in the twenty multimember constituencies and for the

additional 58 compensatory seats. It was also agreed that the regulation of the nomination process had to discriminate the very small parties, but no deposits could be required. Thus, collecting a certain number of signatories from the electors in the given constituency in the month before the last one of the campaign became the condition for nominating a candidate in a single-member district¹⁴. There was, however, a long-lasting controversy about the precise threshold figures: the HSWP wanted somewhat higher, while the opposition a bit lower ones (1000 signatories and a 5 percent threshold for the list votes versus 500 signatories and a 3 percent threshold). In both cases, the arithmetic mean of the two proposals became eventually accepted as a compromise.

Additional filters were introduced by the regulation of party lists. Only those parties became entitled to set up a regional list in a county, which nominated candidates in at least one fourth of the single-member constituencies in the respective county¹⁵. Each party which had at least seven regional lists became entitled to set up a national list too¹⁶. In the 1990 elections 12 parties had national lists, and seven other parties, which had only 1-3 regional lists, were automatically denied the chance to gain seats by their remainder votes. Taken that the four percent threshold would presumably have eliminated these regionally based parties anyway, the only practical consequence of the above rule was related to the regulation of government sponsored election broadcasts¹⁷.

The decision about the percentage threshold was known to be a potentially crucial one. Once again, it was mostly against the initial expectations that in fact it was not so much the small anticommunist parties and certainly not the liberals, but the traditional Left, to whom the reformcommunists' insistence on a higher than 3 percent threshold cost dearly. The splinter party of the orthodox communists, the social democrats, and the Agrarian Alliance all finished between 3 and 4 percent of the list votes nationally. The four percent threshold thus weakened the "Left" numerically, but probably also strengthened it inasmuch as it left the Socialists as its practically single representative on the post-election political landscape.

The persistence of the controversy about the required number of signatories seemed to be odd to some observers, but in fact, it was not without stakes. In Baranya, the only county for which we have these data, approximately 120 men and women attempted to become a candidate in the seven single-member constituencies, and almost a half of them was unable to collect the required number of signatories (Pálné Kovács, 1990). In the country as a whole, there were 65 political parties duly registered by 31 January 1990, and thirty-nine claimed

election broadcast time in the radio and the television before the nomination period (Kiss-Stefány-Tari, 1990). Still, only 28 could nominate at least one candidate for the election.

The total number of candidates in the 176 single-member constituencies was 1623. Even in Budapest, where the average number of candidates per constituency was significantly lower than in any county, there were 237 candidates in the 32 electoral districts. The parties were allowed to nominate "joint candidates" too. On the ballot paper, these candidates were indicated as the nominees of two or three parties together. In such cases, the nominating parties normally agreed in advance about which parliamentary caucus the candidate would join, and in case of defeat his or her votes were equally distributed among the remainder votes of all supporting parties which passed the four percent threshold. On table 3 the joint candidates of the AFD-AYD-CDPP and the AFD-AYD local coalitions are handled separately. Other joint candidates are counted as the candidates of that sponsoring party which they were expected to join in the Parliament. Note that at the time of the elections, many candidates were either not card-carrying members of the party which nominated them, or contested the elections as independents, though enjoying the full support of one or more parties from the beginning to the end. In the present report the ballot papers are taken as the authoritative source of information about the party affiliation of the candidates.

Table 3 about here

The two rightmost columns in table 3 show the number of seats contested, and the number of candidates nominated by various parties. The two figures are not always identical (e.g. 203 independent candidates contested just 121 seats). It is apparent that there were only three parties which contested practically every single-member seat. Out of the three constituencies which the Socialists seemingly left uncontested, one was that of Prime Minister Németh, who, though ranking extremely high on the national list of the HSP and also leading one of its regional list, decided to run as an independent candidate. In another case, the HSP supported a candidate who was nominated by the local socialist youth organizations. Considering also various joint candidates, there were just two seats uncontested by the Democratic Forum and the Free Democrats. In the Békés 5 constituency, they both supported a local notable running as independent, whereas in Somogy 1 they both supported the independent General Béla Király, commander of the National Guard during the 1956 uprising, repeatedly sentenced to death by communist authorities in 1952 and 1958.

Other parties produced highly visible indications of weakness in party organization. Even the Small Holders were left without any candidate in 19 districts (14 of them were in Budapest, where the party had particularly serious difficulties with its relatively one-sided agrarian profile). This party also showed evidence of another organizational problem: due to disagreements either between various local factions, or between the national and local leadership, there were six districts where there were two official ISHP-candidates in each. Other parties displayed even more serious weaknesses through their relatively poor performance in the nomination stage. Among the more significant parties, the Christian Democrats almost completely failed to nominate candidates in five counties (three of them were located in Protestant East-Hungary), and the Young Democrats only narrowly managed to secure the minimal number of individual candidates required to set up a regional list in each multimember constituency. On the whole it looks that the designers of the election law managed to find such provisions regarding nomination which were not too difficult for the strongest parties, but could still provide some guarantees against both a high fragmentation of the vote and any surprisingly good showing of virtually non-existing parties.

The results in the single-member constituencies

Only five candidates secured an absolute majority in the first round (two independents, including Prime Minister Németh, two HDF-members, and one quasi-independent running in HDF-colours, but leaving the parliamentary caucus just a few weeks after the election). The other 171 constituencies seemed to suggest an HDF-AFD race for the runoffs, with a considerable advantage for the first: Democratic Forum candidates had a plurality of the votes in 76, Free Democrats in 63, Small Holders in 11, AFD-AYD and AFD-AYD-CDPP candidates in 4, Christian Democrats in 4, Socialists in 3, Young Democrats in 2 and others in 8 constituencies. In five north-eastern constituencies, the turnout requirement was not met¹⁸, and therefore all candidates were allowed to contest the runoff.

Though the overall turnout declined further, from 65 in the first to 45 percent in the second round, all the 171 runoffs produced valid results. For the second round, the national leaders of HDF, the ISHP and the CDPP signed a general agreement to the effect that they would call their voters to support the strongest candidate of the three parties in the second round, but hardly any candidate retired because of this agreement. The Young and Free Democrats reached a more far-reaching agreement, which provided for the mutual withdrawal of the standing candidates of the two parties in favour of the one achieving the better results in the same district in the first round. With the exception of three constituencies, where the

candidates defied the instructions of the party leaders, this agreement was observed, but the results usually did not live up to the expectations. Several local coalitions were also formed for the runoffs. The most significant of them were in some Eastern counties, where apparently effective agreements were reached by the local Small Holder and Free Democrat organizations about the mutual withdrawal of candidates in favour of each other's. By and large, 6 HDF-, 15 AFD-, 1 AFD-AYD-, 9 AYD-, 4 CDPP- and 6 ISHP-candidates retired voluntarily (i.e. they were otherwise eligible for contesting the runoff) between the two rounds.

Table 4 about here

The two-ballot system is known to favour effective electoral coalitions over relatively extreme and isolated parties (Bartolini, 1984). As we saw above, the Hungarian parties engaged in some exercises in this field; nevertheless, the general impression of commentators was that - with the ISHP-AFD collaboration in eastern Hungary - these coalitions did not have a great imprint on the final results. In retrospect, the erstwhile voters of the eliminated and retired candidates are believed to have had a strong tendency to abstain from voting. Some of them nevertheless voted, and their votes, though probably quite dispersed, apparently favoured the party which was then perceived as the most centrist over the more radical ones, i.e. the Hungarian Democratic Forum over the liberals. Thus, the gap between HDF- and AFD-vote increased from 2.2 percent in the first to 10.5 percent in the second round, and not only because the Free Democrats had considerably less candidates in the second round. In terms of seats, the AFD took the lead in 63 districts in the first round, but managed to win only 35 at the end, whereas the HDF-candidates had a plurality in 76 districts in the first round, and finished with 111 single-member seats altogether. Similarly to the AFD, other parties and the independents also tended to lose more contests in the second round than what could have been expected on the base of a naive extrapolation of the results in the first ballot.

The probably most interesting aspect of the results in the single-members is the degree to which Democratic Forum became overrepresented in terms of the ratio between seats and votes. The HDF-candidates obtained 23.9 and 41.2 percent of the popular vote in the first and second ballot respectively, but won in 64.8 % of all the 176 single-member districts, and 64.9 % of the 171 seats in competition in the runoff. In the single-member districts alone, the index of proportionality¹⁹ is 76.3 if we concentrate only on the results of the runoff (thus ignoring the results of the first round), but it decreases to 59.1 if we compare the distribution of votes in the first round with the final distribution of the seats. We can compare this second figure to

the ones obtained with a similar two-ballot system in the French Fifth Republic²⁰: in 1958, 1962, 1967, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1981 and 1986 the index of proportionality had a value of 70.4, 86.3, 82.3, 70.1, 84.7, 88.1, 81.5 and 89.1 respectively. Thus, the same electoral arrangement tended to result in a much less proportional representation in Hungary, 1990, than in France at any time between 1958 and 1986. The cause of this huge difference presumably lies partly in differences between the party systems (the popular vote was apparently more fragmented in Hungary than in the Fifth Republic), but possibly also in the relatively small geographical variations in party support in Hungary.

The results in the multimember constituencies

As table 5 witnesses, five parties gained a greater proportion of the mandates than that of popular vote in the multimember constituencies. The Hungarian Democratic Forum alone won 24,7 percent of PR-votes and 33,3 percent of county level mandates, summing up to a +8,6 percent bonus. These gains were realized to a great extent on the expense of the parties not passing the four percent threshold. Only one of the later parliamentary parties, the Young Democrats got a smaller share of the mandates allocated on the county level than that of the list votes. By and large, the index of proportionality was rather low on the county level by the standards of PR-systems: the five parties benefited by the chosen version of proportional representation gained 18,1 percent greater share of the county level mandates than of the PR-votes (thus, the index of proportionality was 81.9).

Table 5, 6 and 7 about here

This bias was partly due to the two-thirds rule. Had the largest remainder method been followed without this modification, the 32 seats which remained unallocated on the county level in the 1990 election would have benefited mostly the smaller parliamentary parties. In this hypothetical case (shown by table 8), the HDF would have won only one, and the AFD only three more seats on the county level, whereas the ISHP and the Socialists would have got eight more seats each, the Young Democrats nine, and the Christian Democrats three more. The figure is low in the case of the CDPP since they did reasonably well under the actual electoral arrangement due to large regional variations in their electoral support. Comparing this hypothetical distribution of mandates with the distribution of list votes (shown in table 5), it appears that the differences between a party's percentage share of votes and that of mandates would have been relatively equal and virtually unrelated to the size of the respective parties' electorate. Both the HDF and the AYD would have obtained a 2.2 percent greater

share of mandates than that of votes, and the same difference would have been 2.95 for the AFD, 4.06 for the Small Holders, 3.58 for the Socialists, and 0.77 for the Christian Democrats. In this hypothetical case the index of proportionality would have been 84.2. With the exception of the CDPP and those eliminated by the four percent threshold, the electoral formula would not have favoured the larger parties against the smaller ones in the multimember constituencies, and had there been no votes cast for other parties than the six passing the four percent threshold, the index of proportionality would have been in the high nineties in the case of list votes.

Table 8 about here

Therefore, the relatively small size of many counties was not a real obstacle to the emergence of a very close correspondance between the distribution of mandates and that of votes. The major determinants of the index of proportionality were (on the county level) the large number of votes cast for very small parties and - to a markedly smaller extent - the mentioned modification of the largest remainder method by the two-thirds rule. In democratizing elections held in Europe under different variants of proportional representation, proportionality rates quite comparable to the Hungarian county level index of proportionality (81.9) were achieved in Spain in 1977 (84.3) and in Greece in 1974 (81.1), though a much higher degree of proportionality was observed in Portugal in 1975 (90.2), in Germany in 1949 (91.7) and in Italy in 1946 (97.1)²¹. By and large, it appears that even that part of the Hungarian Election Law, which was meant to produce proportionality in representation, showed a relatively, though not unprecedently strong bias in favour of the stronger parties. As it was pointed out above this was mostly due to the presence of parties obtaining between 1 and 4 percent of the list votes nationally.

The final distribution of mandates

The final distribution of votes was, of course, also affected by the allocation of compensatory mandates on the national level. Table 9 shows the number and percentage of single-member, county level and compensatory mandates won by each party. Apparently, the compensatory mandates favoured those parties which had a relatively large number of remainder votes from the single-members. The last row of the table shows the index of proportionality on three levels. The national level compensation produced truly remarkable results. Although relatively few (90) mandates were allocated on this level, their contribution made the overall index of proportionality (79.3) fairly similar to the one we could observe when we calculated it for the

multimember constituencies alone (81.9)²². The Democratic Forum, for example, obtained 24.73 percent of the list votes and 23.93 percent of the first ballot votes in the single-members. The average of the two figure is 18.2 percent lower than the party's share of the mandates. The other overrepresented parties in the Parliament became the Free Democrats and the Small Holders: they had 2.4 and 0.1 percent greater shares of the mandates than those of votes.

Table 9 about here

Indeed, the designers of the election law intended to overrepresent in the Parliament all parties passing the four percent threshold on the expense of those parties which did not. If we compare table 8 and 9, we can see that the mixed electoral system did produce this result, but a hypothetical system of proportional representation would have done it even better, inasmuch as it would have eliminated even the two AA and the six independent candidates who managed to win single-member seats. There were several intentions behind the adoption of the mixed electoral system instead of the formula which was proposed by the historical parties. (This latter system would presumably have corresponded to the hypothetical model shown on table 8.) Firstly, the provisions about the single-member districts were thought to guarantee a higher popular acceptance of the electoral system than a pure proportional representation. Although we lack systematic evidence on this score, it looks somewhat improbable that the single-members did really have such an effect. Secondly, the single-member districts were presumably expected either to favour the Socialists directly (reckoning that their candidates might elicit a substantial personal vote), or, if the Socialists finished usually on the second place in the single-members, to favour their anticipated coalition partner (the Democratic Forum) directly, and the Socialists indirectly (through their numerous remainder votes being transferred into compensatory mandates). This calculus turned out to be shortsighted. The fortune of the Socialists declined sharply in the successive months, in the election they usually finished on the third or fourth place in the single-members. They did not become a major beneficiary of the compensatory mandates either. Comparing table 8 and 9 one can see that they would have done better under the electoral system whose adoption they wanted (and eventually managed) to prevent. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, their expectations regarding a future coalition with the Democratic Forum also became groundless.

The real effect of the mixed electoral system became a heavy overrepresentation of the Democratic Forum in the new legislature on the expense of all other parties. It is not entirely clear whether - in the eyes of the designers of the electoral system - it was a manifest function

of the single-members to make rise to an ideologically homogenous coalition, or it was only an unintended effect of it. Nevertheless, the distribution of mandates under the hypothetical PR-system (see table 8) would have been markedly different: the HDF-ISHP-CDPP coalition would have commanded only 50 (instead of the actual 62) percent of the seats. Therefore, they would have had either to involve a fourth party into the government coalition, or to constantly seek compromises with one or another part of the opposition. (Taken the huge gap between the liberals and the Socialists in 1990, there would have been no real prospect for any other alternative.) In either case, the style of Hungarian party politics would have been likely to become more consensual, and less adversarial than what it actually became with the overwhelming HDF-ISHP-CDPP majority in the Parliament. The virtues of consensual and majoritarian systems are certainly beyond the scope of the present analysis. The point to be emphasized is only that the Hungarian Election Law can hardly be evaluated outside the framework of that long-lasting debate.

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Table 1.: Size of constituencies.

Name of region (county)	Eligible to vote for party-lists *	N of seats in multimember constituency	Quota (in % of votes)	Number of single-member districts
Baranya	317135	6	14.28	7
Bács-Kiskun	419907	8	11.11	10
Békés	317241	6	14.28	7
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	579779	11	8.33	13
Budapest	1519231	28	3.45	32
Csongrád	332846	6	14.28	7
Fejér	307590	6	14.28	7
Győr-Sopron-Moson	318082	6	14.28	7
Hajdú-Bihar	405301	8	11.11	9
Heves	257364	5	16.67	6
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	326987	6	14.28	8
Komárom-Esztergom	234671	5	16.67	5
Nógrád	176379	4	20.00	4
Pest	707030	14	6.67	16
Somogy	263938	5	16.67	6
Szabolcs-Szatmár	421085	9	10.00	10
Tolna	193426	4	20.00	5
Vas	208029	4	20.00	5
Veszprém	282252	6	14.28	7
Zala	235837	5	16.67	5

*: The number of eligibles was slightly greater in multimember than in single-member seats, because citizens were allowed to vote for individual candidates only at their permanent residence.

Source: *Report of the National Election Committee*, 1990. *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 44, 13 May 1990 (In Hungarian), and the author's calculation.

Table 2: Allocation of seats in a four member regional constituency. Hypothetical example.

Party	Number of votes	Quota	Seats	Remainder votes*	Seats	Remainder votes**	Total seats
A	34.000	20.000	1	14.000	1	-6.000	2
B	22.000	20.000	1	2.000	-	2.000	1
C	12.000	20.000	-	12.000	-	12.000	0
D	11.000	20.000	-	11.000	-	11.000	0
E	9.000	20.000	-	9.000	-	9.000	0
F	6.000	20.000	-	6.000	-	6.000	0
G	4.000	20.000	-	4.000	-	4.000	0
H	2.000	20.000	-	2.000	-	2.000	0
Total	100.000		2	60.000	1	40.000	3
Unallocated seats:						1	

* : Votes remaining after granting one seat for each full quota.

** : Votes remaining after granting one seat for each full quota, and thereafter one for each two-thirds of the quota. These remainder votes are then to be aggregated on the national level and competing for the compensatory mandates, provided that the party in question obtained 4 percent or more of the valid votes cast in all multimember constituencies.

Table 3: Results in single-member constituencies. First round, 25 March 1990. 176 constituencies.

Electors	7798018			
Valid votes	4958580			
Invalid votes	109730			
	Votes N	Votes %	Seats contested	Number of candidates

Hungarian Democratic Forum	1186668	23.93	174	174
Independent Small Holders P.	529270	10.67	157	163
Christian Democratic P. P.	287578	5.80	105	105
AFD-AYD-CDPP joint candidate	6473	0.13	1	1
Alliance of Free Democrats	1077386	21.73	169	169
AFD-AYD joint candidate	29113	0.59	4	4
Alliance of Young Democrats	235558	4.75	81	81
H. Socialist Party	508753	10.26	173	173 (1)
Agrarian Alliance	161052	3.25	88	88 (2)
H. Socialist Workers' P. (comm.)	131422	2.65	95	95
Social Democratic P. of Hungary	104010	2.10	76	76
P. of Entrepreneurs	82477	1.66	62	63
H. People's Party	38647	0.78	45	45
Patriotic Election Coalition	161841	3.26	116	120 (3)
H. Independent Democratic P.	4617	0.09	3	3
H. Independence P.	2129	0.04	4	4
National Small Holders P.	12366	0.25	13	13
Christian Coalition of Somogy	4019	0.08	3	3
Freedom P.	4342	0.09	5	5
Collective Farms and Agrarian P.	5882	0.12	5	5
Independent Social Democratic P.	7564	0.15	5	5
Green P. of Hungary	19434	0.39	14	14
independents	342544	6.91	121	203
others	15435	0.31	13	13

(1) including one HSP-AA and one HSP-PEC joint candidates.

(2) including five AA-PEC and two Federation of Rural Communities - AA joint candidates.

(3) including three PEC-AA joint candidates.

Source: *Report of the National Election Committee, 1990. Magyar Közlöny*, No. 44, 13 May 1990 (In Hungarian). Typing mistakes found in the official report were corrected by the author on the base of the report of the Hungarian News Agency about the first round of the election, issued on 27/28 March 1990, and the computer-readable data-files on the election results released by the National Election Committee on 28 March 1990 and in August 1990.

Table 4: Results in the single member constituencies. Second round, 8 April 1990. 171 constituencies.

				Seats won		
	Votes	Votes	Seats	1st	2nd	
	N	%	contested	round	round	
Electors	7597128					
Valid votes	3409635					
Invalid votes	50163					

Hungarian Democratic Forum	1406277	41.24	154	3	111	
Independent Small Holders P.	355112	10.41	70	-	11	
Christian Democratic P. P.	127938	3.75	24	-	3	
AFD-AYD-CDPP joint candidate	7856	0.23	1	-	1	(4)
Alliance of Free Democrats	1046076	30.68	135	-	35	
AFD-AYD joint candidate	29017	0.85	3	-	2	(5)
Alliance of Young Democrats	63064	1.85	10	-	1	
H. Socialist Party	216561	6.35	57	-	1	
Agrarian Alliance	37317	1.09	8	-	2	(6)
H. Socialist Workers' P. (comm.)	8640	0.25	3	-	-	
Social Democratic P. of Hungary	922	0.03	1	-	-	
P. of Entrepreneurs	5292	0.16	4	-	-	
H. People's Party	1157	0.03	2	-	-	
Patriotic Election Coalition	27789	0.82	7	-	-	
H. Independent Democratic P.	3248	0.10	1	-	-	
H. Independence P.	-	-	0	-	-	
National Small Holders P.	734	0.02	1	-	-	
Independent Social Democratic P.	3947	0.12	1	-	-	
Christian Coalition of Somogy	-	-	0	-	-	
Freedom P.	-	-	0	-	-	
Collective Farms & Agrarian P.	-	-	0	-	-	
Green P. of Hungary	-	-	0	-	-	
independents	66280	1.94	10	2	4	(7)
others	2408	0.07	2	-	-	

(4) At the opening session of the Parliament he joined the group of independent MPs.

(5) One of them joined the parliamentary party of the AYD, another that of the AFD.

(6) At the opening session of the Parliament one of them joined the group of independent MPs, the other joined the parliamentary party of the AFD.

(7) At the opening session of the Parliament one of them joined the parliamentary party of the HDF.

Source: same as for table 3.

Table 5: Number of regional lists, percent of votes won and mandates allocated in multimember constituencies by party.

	Number of regional lists	Number of votes	Percent of votes	Mandates

H. Democratic Forum	20	1214.359	24.73	40
Alliance of Free Democrats	20	1050.799	21.39	34
Indep. Small Holders P.	20	576.315	11.73	16
H. Socialist P.	20	535.064	10.89	14
All. of Young Democrats	20	439.649	8.95	8
Christian Democratic P. P.	15	317.278	6.46	8
H. Socialist Workers' P.	19	180.964	3.68	-
Social Democratic P. of H.	18	174.434	3.55	-
Agrarian Alliance	18	154.004	3.13	-
P. of Entrepreneurs	13	92.689	1.89	-
Patriotic Elect. Coalition	20	91.922	1.87	-
H. People's P.	12	37.047	0.75	-
Green P. of Hungary	2	17.951	0.36	-
National Small Holders P.	3	9.944	0.20	-
Christian Coal. of Somogy	1	5.966	0.12	-
Collective Farms & Agr. P.	1	4.945	0.10	-
H. Independent Democr. P.	1	2.954	0.06	-
Freedom P.	2	2.814	0.06	-
H. Independence P.	1	2.143	0.04	-

H.= Hungarian or Hungary, P.=Party, P. P.= People's Party

Source: *Report of the National Election Committee, 1990. Magyar Közlöny, No. 44, 13 May 1990 (In Hungarian).*

Table 6: Percent of votes won in the multimember constituencies by selected parties by county.

County	HDF	AFD	ISHP	HSP	AYD	CDPP
Baranya	20.2	22.2	16.3	9.2	8.3	5.3
Bács-K.	23.2	19.9	19.2	7.9	7.4	4.7
Békés	23.8	17.6	21.9	10.2	5.8	-
Borsod-A.-Z.	23.6	15.9	9.9	14.1	8.2	9.3
Budapest	28.4	27.1	5.1	12.9	11.5	5.7
Csongrád	38.7	13.3	13.6	7.4	6.0	4.6
Fejér	24.3	25.1	12.4	10.0	8.5	-
Győr-S.-M.	20.5	25.3	11.9	8.8	10.6	9.8
Hajdú-B.	21.8	19.8	17.0	14.1	6.7	-
Heves	23.1	19.8	7.5	10.2	8.0	13.3
J.-N.-Szolnok	21.3	16.5	17.7	11.4	8.4	-
Komárom-E.	22.1	24.3	8.4	8.3	8.5	7.3
Nógrád	18.3	17.4	6.3	11.0	7.3	15.5
Pest	26.6	22.4	12.8	9.2	9.8	8.3
Somogy	16.4	15.7	19.8	18.0	7.7	-
Szabolcs-Sz.	22.5	14.8	14.5	10.8	8.5	9.6
Tolna	19.9	18.6	12.9	9.0	9.7	13.5
Vas	23.8	30.0	9.8	7.6	7.2	11.7
Veszprém	27.4	17.4	11.8	9.1	11.0	7.0
Zala	25.4	20.9	10.3	9.6	7.1	11.0

Source: same as for table 5.

Table 7: Number of mandates won in the multimember constituencies by the parties passing the four percent threshold nationally. The last column shows the number of unallocated seats.

County	HDF	AFD	ISHP	HSP	AYD	CDPP	Not allocated
Baranya	1	1	1	-	-	-	3
Bács-K.	2	2	2	1	-	-	1
Békés	2	1	1	1	-	-	1
Borsod-A.-Z.	3	2	1	2	1	1	1
Budapest	8	8	1	4	3	1	3
Csongrád	3	1	1	-	-	-	1
Fejér	2	2	1	1	-	-	-
Győr-S.-M.	1	2	1	-	1	1	-
Hajdú-B.	2	2	1	1	-	-	2
Heves	1	1	-	-	-	1	2
J.-N.-Szolnok	1	1	1	1	-	-	2
Komárom-E.	1	1	-	-	-	-	3
Nógrád	1	1	-	-	-	1	1
Pest	4	3	2	1	1	1	2
Somogy	1	1	1	1	-	-	1
Szabolcs-Sz.	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
Tolna	1	1	-	-	-	1	1
Vas	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Veszprém	2	1	1	-	1	-	1
Zala	1	1	-	-	-	-	3
Total (N)	40	34	16	14	8	8	32
Total (%):	33.3	28.3	13.3	11.7	6.7	6.7	-

Source: same as for table 5.

Table 8: Hypothetical allocation of mandates in the multimember constituencies, if the Hagenbach-Bischoff quota and the largest remainder method is used without any modification. (i.e. without the two-thirds rule).

County	HDF	AFD	ISHP	HSP	AYD	CDPP	Not allocated

Baranya	1	2	1	1	1	-	0
Bács-K.	2	2	2	1	1	-	0
Békés	2	1	2	1	-	-	0
Borsod-A.-Z.	3	2	2	2	1	1	0
Budapest	8	8	2	4	4	2	0
Csongrád	3	1	1	1	-	-	0
Fejér	2	2	1	1	-	-	0
Győr-S.-M.	1	2	1	-	1	1	0
Hajdú-B.	2	2	2	1	1	-	0
Heves	1	1	-	1	1	1	0
J.-N.-Szolnok	2	1	1	1	1	-	0
Komárom-E.	1	1	1	1	1	-	0
Nógrád	1	1	-	1	-	1	0
Pest	4	3	2	2	2	1	0
Somogy	1	1	1	1	1	-	0
Szabolcs-Sz.	2	2	2	1	1	1	0
Tolna	1	1	1	-	-	1	0
Vas	1	2	-	-	-	1	0
Veszprém	2	1	1	1	1	-	0
Zala	1	1	1	1	-	1	0

Total (N):	41	37	24	22	17	11	0
Total (%):	27.0	24.3	15.8	14.5	11.2	7.2	-

Source: author's calculation on the basis of table 6.

Table 9: Distribution of mandates at the various tiers.

	Single-member constituencies		Regional constituencies		Compensatory mandates		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
HDF	114	64.8	40	33.0	10	11.1	164	42.5
AFD*	36	20.3	34	28.3	23	25.6	93	24.0
ISHP	11	6.2	16	13.3	17	18.9	44	11.4
HSP	1	0.6	14	11.7	18	20.0	33	8.5
AYD**	2	1.1	8	6.7	12	13.3	22	5.7
CDPP	3	1.7	8	6.7	10	11.1	21	5.4
AA***	2	1.1	0	0	0	0	2	0.5
indepndnt.****	7	4.0	-	-	-	-	7	1.6
others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	176	99.8 ⁺	120	99.7 ⁺	90	100.0	386	99.6 ⁺
Index of proportionality:		59.1 ^x		81.9		-		79.3 ^{xx}

*: including one AFD-AYD candidate who joined the parliamentary party of the AFD.

** : including one AYD-AFD candidate who joined the parliamentary party of the AYD.

*** : including one Federation of Rural Communities - AA joint candidate who joined the parliamentary party of the AFD. The other elected AA-candidate was counted as an independent in the Parliament.

**** : including one AFD-AYD-CDPP candidate who joined the parliamentary caucus of independent MPs.

⁺: rounding error.

^x: based on the distribution of first ballot votes in the single members and the final distribution of the 176 single-member seats.

^{xx}: based on the final distribution of 186 mandates and the average of the percentage of list votes and percentage of first ballot votes in the single-members obtained by the party in question.

Endnotes

¹. The Opposition Roundtable was established on 22 March 1989 by the eight then most important organisations of the extra-parliamentary opposition, namely (in alphabetical order) the Alliance of Free Democrats, the Alliance of Young Democrats, the Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Society, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Hungarian People's Party, the Independent Small Holders Party and the Social Democratic Party of Hungary. The eighth member, the League of Independent Trade Unions was only an observer which neither had nor claimed voting rights. Among the later founded oppositional organisations only the Christian Democratic People's Party was admitted to the OR (on 7 June 1989). The primary rationale behind the creation of the OR was the desire to make the HSWP's attempts to divide the opposition unsuccessful, and this explains why the decisions in the Opposition Roundtable required an unanimous consent of the member organisations.

². The Third Side was composed of the former transmission organisations of the party-state (Federation of Partisans and Antifascists, Hungarian Democratic Youth Organisation, National Council of Trade Unions, National Council of Hungarian Women, Patriotic Popular Front) and the recently established pro-communist political organisations (Münnich Ferenc Society, Society for a Left Wing Alternative).

³. This was the chief executive created by the Stalinist 1949 constitution, with the Executive Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union serving as its prototype.

⁴. Actually, the accord said that a president would be elected by popular vote before the 1990 general election, but from the second free election onwards the President must be elected by the Parliament. This point was a key component of the compromise between the HSWP and the majority of the OR led by the Hungarian Democratic Forum. During the summer of 1989 it was generally believed that Mr. Pozsgay, the presidential candidate of the HSWP, would almost surely win a popular ballot. The reformcommunists considered it their vital interest to keep the presidency and grant this office as much executive power as could still be reconciled with the notion of parliamentary democracy. They reckoned that the only feasible way to achieve this would be to call a presidential election before the parliamentary election. Initially, there seemed to be a consensus within the Opposition Roundtable that these demands had to be rejected, but later on the idea of a weak, but popularly elected President was accepted as a temporary solution just in order to placate the HSWP. After the end of the threeilateral talks the Christian Democrats and the Hungarian People's Party also came out in favour of this arrangement as a permanent solution.

The League of Independent Trade Unions, the social democrats and the liberal AFD and AYD refused to give their names to this compromise. They did not want to defy the whole Threeilateral Agreement, therefore they refrained from using their veto power in the OR (on the decision-making rules of the OR, see note 1). Instead, they just refused to sign the Threeilateral Agreement. The AFD and the AYD successfully petitioned to the Parliament to call a referendum on four questions including the timing of the presidential election. (The Referendum Law passed in June 1989 requires a petition with a hundred thousand authorized signatories for calling a referendum.) The referendum of 26 November decided that the parliamentary election be held first. Because of the October 1989 constitutional amendment this automatically meant that even the first President would have to be elected indirectly. However, the old Parliament modified the constitution in February 1990 again by making the presidential elections direct. In May 1990, one of the very first acts of the non-socialist majority in the new legislature was to annul this later amendment and decrease the power of the presidency further. Though the Socialist Party successfully petitioned for calling another referendum on the method of presidential elections, the 29 July 1990 referendum became invalid because of the very low turnout. (According to the Referendum Law a referendum shall not be considered valid, if less than fifty percent of the electors cast a valid vote.) Though the low turnout makes the interpretation of the referendum results difficult (indeed, the opponents of direct presidential elections did nothing to mobilize their supporters), public opinion polls also suggested that the notion of direct presidential elections was indeed favoured by a solid majority of the general public.

Endnotes

⁵. The idea of a more or less corporatist second chamber enjoyed some support in certain segments of both the old and the new political elites, but in the obvious dearth of politically legitim interest organisations and local self-governments the question was not considered seriously in the roundtable talks.

⁶. Mentally handicapped people and convicted criminals can be denied the franchise by courts, but the latter only temporarily. As it will be pointed out later in this chapter, in practice electors must also have an officially registered address within Hungary, but this address need not be the one where they actually live. Therefore, homeless people are theoretically not excluded from the exercise of franchise, though they may face numerous practical difficulties (e.g. the lack of provisions for postal voting).

⁷. The local councils are not responsible to investigate the reliability of the population register, and there are several widely known sources of imprecision in it. Firstly, in some rare cases the name of a person is not deleted from the register immediately after he or she died (e.g. if the coroner and/or the police was unable to ascertain the identity of the dead person). Secondly, it is the citizen who has to report any changes in place of residence to the local councils concerned. There are numerous practical incentives to do so, but failing to do that is not sanctioned directly. Geographical mobility is rather low in Hungary (e.g. our best guess, based on a 1989-91 panel survey, is that about 7 percent of the adult population might have changed their address in that two year period). The chance that somebody can register as a permanent resident somewhere without having their names deleted from the register at their previous place of permanent residence is virtually nil. It is not uncommon, however, that people do not report the changes in their address to the local council. If they still want to vote at their new place of residence, they either have to follow the procedure which applies for those citizens who expect to vote in a different constituency than the one where they are registered as permanent residents, or to report the change in their address to the council at their new place of residence. These procedures themselves should not take more than a few minutes, but the first one may necessitate a long journey.

Thirdly, there can be (or rather must be) some people who are not registered at any local council. In principle, the local police issues, on the basis of information received from the local council, an identity card for each Hungarian citizen when he or she reaches the age of 14, and the validity of the identity card is subject to regular renewal (first at the age of 18 and in every fifteenth year thereafter). Hungarians are frequently asked to produce their identity card which is the only accepted proof of the correctness of the self-reported identity number and of Hungarian citizenship. The identity number is needed, for instance, for tax returns, social security administration and borrowing from banks, and the identity card is needed for signing any contract involving the person as a private citizen (e.g. job contracts). Anybody lacking an identity card can apply for one at the local police, but such requests are not fulfilled without a rather careful investigation of the validity of the documents (e.g. birth certificate) that the person produces. No identity card is issued without stamping in the permanent and/or temporary addresses of the holder. The Civil Law in 1990 was such that theoretically everybody had either an identifiable "address" where he or she was, in principle, entitled to stay for the night, or a legitim claim for being provided housing immediately by the council of his/her last identifiable address. In fact, one can imagine that some Hungarians either could afford to live without an identity card, or have neither identifiable address nor a legitim claim for council housing. Unluckily, we are not aware of any systematic evidence about the actual proportion of such citizens.

⁸. In fact, the Free Democrat negotiators claimed that advocating the virtues of single-member districts, they were speaking against their party's best interests, which laid with the introduction of a PR-system. Commentators, however, unequivocally condemned this argument as hypocrisy.

⁹. The AFD was thought to have many candidates who were currently not very well-known, but were considered to have much better odds if hundreds of personality centred campaigns were to take place instead of a nationwide competition between parties.

Endnotes

¹⁰. Indeed, such an *ad hoc* coalition turned out to be able to defeat even the most popular socialist politician in Somogy county where the Socialist Party had much better results than anywhere else. Mr. Horn (the Minister of Foreign Affairs) obtained a third of the votes in the first round and was still defeated in the second round by the HDF-candidate who received only 19 percent of the popular vote in the first ballot, but was also supported by the Free Democrats and the Small Holders in the runoff.

¹¹. The total number of valid votes cast in single and multimember seats were bound to be roughly equal. Assuming that a typical victorious candidate wins about 30 percent of the votes in the first round, and an additional 20 percent of the votes are cast for independents and small party candidates, about one half of the votes cast in the single-members in the first round is predestined to become remainder votes. With the size of the regional constituencies, the four percent threshold, the number of parties, and the methods of seat allocation given, it can happen only with an almost random (that is, very even) distribution of votes between party lists that a similar proportion (i.e. about 50 percent) of the list votes becomes remainder vote. In 1989, the expectation of the experts must have been that this would be far from the case in the 1990 election, and therefore the compensatory mandates would benefit the parties with the largest numbers of remainder votes in the single-members.

¹². It may be telling about these problems (which were only multiplied by the high rate of disproportionality between the distribution of votes and seats) that even some otherwise well-informed and highly reliable commentators, like e.g. Ms. Pataky of the Radio Free Europe - Radio Liberty Research Report, consistently kept reporting the 1990 percentage distribution of seats as the percentage distribution of popular vote.

¹³. One possible reason could have been that 74 of the 152 seats available on the county level were in 4, 5 and 6 member constituencies (see table 1). Had a full quota been required for gaining seats on the county level, the number of seats transferred for allocation on the national level would have been quite high. Suppose a district with two parties obtaining between 20 to 30 percent of the votes each, and all other parties finishing below 15 percent. According to the expectations prevailing in summer 1989, this would have been a fairly typical result (see chapter 5 in this volume). Unless there are more than six seats available in the county, this vote distribution produces only two full quotas, and something between a half and two thirds (!) of the seats remain unallocated on the county level.

¹⁴. The notice sent to the voters by the local election authorities about their entry into the electoral register and the location of the polling station had to contain also a letter of recommendation on which the name and party affiliation of the candidate were left blank. Only these pieces of paper, properly filled and signed, were to be used for the nomination of candidates. There were some petite, but widely publicized scandals around the use of these relatively unpopular "*kopogtatócédulák*" (literally 'knocking sheets'; i.e. party activists occasionally came to the door to recommend their nominees and to collect these formulars). A small radical group, the Hungarian October Party, known for its surrealistic protest actions, collected and publicly burnt several hundred of them to protest against the allegedly oligarchistic character of the election law.

¹⁵. In 14 counties, where the number of single member constituencies was less than 8 (see table 1), two constituencies had to be contested at the minimum.

¹⁶. If Budapest (by far the largest district) was not among the regional constituencies which the party was to contest, then minimum eight regional lists were needed to set up a national list.

Endnotes

¹⁷. In the nomination period (from late January to late February) every registered party was entitled to have altogether 10 minutes on its own in Radio *Kossuth* and the first channel of the Hungarian Television each, and in the first two weeks of the actual campaign (24 February - 8 March) the parties nominating at least one candidate were granted 10 minutes each, but in the last two weeks (11-22 March) rather substantial election broadcast times were distributed freely among the parties which had a national list (appr. 40 minutes for each). The internal rules of the Hungarian TV and Radio set certain limits to the quantity of paid election advertisements, but these were only rarely criticized by the political parties.

¹⁸. The turnout was highest in Budapest and the North-West, and declined rather steadily as one moved eastward.

¹⁹. This index is calculated by summing up the absolute difference between each party's share of seats and its share of votes, dividing the sum by two and subtracting the result from 100. In Western democracies, its value varies normally between 80 and 99, depending on the electoral formula, the fragmentation of the party system, etc. Plurality systems and the French two-ballot system tend to produce lower degree of proportionality than proportional representation does in case of relatively large district size (see Rose and Mackie, 1982: 410-412). The AFD-AYD, AFD-AYD-CDPP, etc. joint candidates were reclassified for the calculation of the index. Their results were always added to the results of the party which they joined, or would presumably have joined in the Parliament.

²⁰. For this calculation we used the French election results as reported in Rose and Mackie (1982: 136ff) and Leonard (1987: 55).

²¹. The indices for other European countries were calculated from data reported in Rose and Mackie (1982) and Leonard (1987).

²². We could compare the final distribution of the 386 mandates to the percentage distribution of first ballot votes cast in the single-members (see table 3), or to the percentage distribution of the list votes (see table 5). In both cases, the index of proportionality is about 78, but neither procedure is truly satisfactory. (For instance, since there were, by definition, no "independents" in the multimembers, the second procedure would suggest that the independents are overrepresented in the Parliament, while the first procedure would lead to the opposite conclusion.) Therefore, we rather compared the percentage distribution of mandates to the average of the two vote percentages.