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**In search of the possible patterns of the tactical voting among voters
in the capital**

- Doctoral dissertation thesis booklet -

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1. Reason for choosing the topic; main research theme of the dissertation; its focus selection

In my opinion, the study of citizens' voting behavior, the factors influencing it, and the possible manifestations of their behavior is of constant relevance in political science. Political parties, actors, and institutions, with their messages, actions, and decisions, keep voter preferences constantly in move, which movement can cause changes in the support for a political force or actor, or possibly a more serious reorganization of the party and/or political system. For this reason, the continuous observation and analysis of voting behavior provides political and social science with rich, often renewed knowledge and continuous discoveries that are worth following.

Beyond the research sphere, scientific analyses can also inform political actors and consultants, as the knowledge of the voter behavior, the direction of preference movement, and the election "outcome" can also carry messages for them. Political actors can develop their vote-winning strategies, policies, and communications in accordance with these messages, with which they wish to influence the voting society. However, the results coming from the research of voter behavior cannot only be "compasses" of the political market, not only can they be interpreted in the specific field of political science, but can also serve other fields, such as psychology, sociology, and economics with valuable discoveries. I find it to be a fundamentally diverse, fruitful research field that provides science, society, and people with permanent results, and which never loses its research relevance with its constant dynamics and complex effects. That is why I decided to explore a "slice" of voter behavior in more depth in the domestic context.

Research on voting behavior can be carried out from a variety of perspectives (partisanship, social class, rationality, economic, tactical, media, etc.). Analyses over the past decades have piled up a literature rich in contexts and empirical evidence, which attest to the complexity of the phenomenon and the constant relevance of its research.

The research focus of the dissertation is to get to know the possible tactical voting in Budapest during the 2018 and 2022 parliamentary elections. The following reasons justified the case selection:

On the one hand, the dissertation wanted to examine a smaller and more "unique" sample in the country, the results of which can more or less describe tactical behavior in a typical environment.

On the other hand, with the experience gained during the research conducted in this smaller environment, and with the methodological and theoretical strengths and shortcomings and errors coming to the surface, more sophisticated theoretical models, research and analysis methodologies can be developed for future research. Thirdly, the results from the capital can serve as a solid starting point for comparing analyses carried out in other areas and regions of the country exploring tactical voting patterns.

Fourthly, as a resident of the capital, I am interested in learning about the political and voting behavior of my own environment.

Fifth, for reasons of time and cost-effectiveness, it was more practical to select only the voters of Budapest, since the organization and conduct of the research was also “cheaper” in this case in terms of all energy resources. Research made on the entire country would have significantly exceeded the limits of the available resources in every respect.

The dissertation also focuses on the analysis of two parliamentary election years: 2018 and 2022. This is explained on the one hand by the fact that, according to the literature, single-round electoral systems operating with a strong majority principle fundamentally motivate tactical voting (Duverger, 1954; Cox, 1997; Harkányi, 2018), and since a similar system was introduced in Hungary in 2011, I consider it as a fruitful opportunity for research on the topic.

On the other hand, I based my choice on the assumption of Duch and Palmer and the “learning hypothesis” of Tavits and Annus, according to which voters have to adapt to a newly transformed political system and the new electoral rules that appear in it; they have to recognize them and learn how they work (Duch-Palmer, 2022). The hypothesis states that as the voters (and the elite) become more experienced with these rules from election to election, the incidence of tactical voting also increases in similar electoral systems (Tavits-Annus, 2006:74-76; Maskarinec, 2018:13-14). Although the complete political system did not change in our country after 2010, a new electoral system was introduced, the operation of which voters also had to get to know and the potential opportunities it offers. The 2014 parliamentary election was still quite close to the introduction of the new electoral system (2011), so according to the learning hypothesis, voters could not yet have known the tactical possibilities of this system. The 2018 and 2022 elections were so far away from the introduction of the new system that voters could already learn how it operates. That is why I preferred these years.

The third reason for the selection is based on the scientific finding saying that, as time goes by, voters provide increasingly inaccurate information about their political party preferences and voting behavior; or they no longer remember their previous votes at all. These two election years are relatively close, so I can collect more accurate and real information about tactical voting behavior from the perspective of reliability of the qualitative research of the dissertation (Schoen, 2011; Zaller-Feldman, 1992 ; Joslyn, 2003).

The fourth reason was the limitations of the content. Examining all the election years to date would require a huge amount of analytical work, which would go beyond the possible scope of this dissertation.

2. Structure of the dissertation, main theoretical points

The dissertation is exploratory in nature, therefore it poses research questions and does not seek to prove hypotheses, nor does it conduct explanatory research or analysis.

The dissertation is basically divided into five large parts. The first presents the three major basic traditions of voting behavior – the social psychological (psychological, party identification, etc.), the sociological and the rational. The description of the basic traditions is complemented by a more superficial presentation of specific variables or other voting models. All of this is necessary so that the theory of tactical voting and split-ticket voting could be clearly defined and distinguished, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to clearly designate its place among the basic traditions of voting behavior in the entire theoretical framework. The second larger unit discusses the theoretical approaches of tactical voting and split-ticket voting, often supporting the findings on the phenomenon with empirical results. The chapters of this block list the psychological and institutional incentives of tactical voting in separate chapters. In the same block, based on the detailed motivations and strategies, the dissertation attempts to create hypothetical models for the tactical behavior in the capital, mostly in the government (Fidesz-KDNP) - opposition dichotomy. The third major block selects the hypothetical models that seem most plausible based on the theoretical characteristics described, and sets research questions to explore them. The analyses and investigations are carried out in the fourth major block, and then the fifth major block contains the answers based on the results and the conclusions that can be drawn from them, supplemented with

further research opportunities. The first major block is preceded by a brief summary of the general domestic voting behavior and the political background context of the designated election years.

The specific/concrete research questions are only formulated after the theoretical framework has been presented, as they become most interpretable in the light of that.

The first block presents the three main basic traditions of the voting behavior. The first, the sociological tradition (Columbian School) basically emphasizes group-based voting; it rejects the individual focus of the rational and party identification models. According to the sociological approach, an individual's vote is determined by the individual's social position, and the vote cast is influenced by the quality of the relationship between the political party and the social group (Harrop–Miller, 1987:157; Lazarsfeld – Berelson – Gaudet , 1968). The trend essentially points out that “the cross on the ballot is an indirect expression of social identity,” (Harrop–Miller, 1987: 173), and “voting behavior is determined by group interests derivable from social position and the social environment” (Enyedi-Körösenyi, 2004:205). According to the sociological tradition, voters' political preferences can be derived from major social cleavages and mobilization along these lines. Preferences are thus influenced by the individual's situation, religious, ethnic, and class affiliation (Enyedi-Körösenyi, 2004:205).

In the party identification model (also called the Michigan model), “voting is an expressive, not an instrumental action” (Harrop-Miller, 1987:130; Campbell-Converse-Miller-Stokes, 1960). Its key element is party identification, which “means a strong political loyalty or affiliation to a party” (Körösenyi-Enyedi, 2004:205). According to tradition, the voters vote for a party because of their party affiliation, and not because of its program or argument. They do not really consider candidates or programs, but express identification with a party with their vote. According to this tradition, party preference becomes part of the voter's personal identity, and as a filter, they see and interpret political reality through it (Körösenyi-Enyedi, 2004:205). A positive attitude towards a party is embedded in the voter's self-image and it is difficult to be broken with rational arguments (Tóka, 2003:437). The assessment and evaluation of various political issues are made within the framework of partisanship, and voters generally agree with the parties' positions on that particular political issue (Chandler, 1988:30). This partisanship develops through (mainly family) socialization and can be strengthened within it (Harrop-Miller, 1987; Tóka, 2003; Campbell-Converse-Miller-Stokes, 1960).

The third – rational – model or basic tradition (Downs, 1957) claim that “the voters choose the party that is closest to their own interests, values and priorities” (Harrop-Miller, 1987:130). First, “the voter recognizes his/her own self-interests, evaluates alternative candidates on the basis of which one best serves this self-interest, and votes for the candidate (or party) he/she evaluates as most favorable” (Enelow-Hinich, 1984:145). To do this, “they make rational decisions by calculating which party is the best means to achieve their goals” (Harrop-Miller, 1987:130). If the voters vote rationally, they essentially support the party or candidate with whom they are most likely to achieve their self-interested political goals (Harrop-Miller, 1987:130), therefore, in the light of the model, voting is merely a tool (instrumental) for the voters (Harrop-Miller, 1987:146).

The second block explores the theory of tactical voting and split-ticket voting, which, once the definitions have been properly explained, can be stated to be best placed within the basic tradition of rational voters.

Tactical voting has been specified in various ways. McKelvey and Ordershook defined it as following: “in multiparty elections, a voter may be inclined to vote for his or her second-best-preferred party when the best-preferred party is unlikely to win” (Alvarez–Nagler, 2000:1–2; Cox-Shugart, 1996:299–300; McKelvey and Ordershook, 1972). This phenomenon is called tactical or strategic, or perhaps sophisticated voting behavior¹ (Alvarez – Nagler, 2000:57–58; Cox-Shugart, 1996:299–300). Daniel Muller and Lionel Page describe the phenomenon in one of their studies as “tactical or strategic voting refers to a situation where voters do not vote according to their sincere preferences, but typically with the intention of influencing the outcome towards a desired outcome” (Muller-Page, 2015:3839-3840). Fischer also refers to the intention to influence the outcome, writing that “a tactical voter is someone who votes for a party that they believe is more likely to win than their most preferred party, in order to best influence who wins in the constituency” (Fisher, 2004:157). Gary Cox approaches the concept from a decision theory perspective. He also emphasizes that if voters see no chance of winning for their “favorite” party, after recognizing the two candidates with a chance of winning, they rationally decide which one to vote for in order to actually influence the election results (Cox, 1997:71).

Rosema and Gshwend and Meffert emphasize the importance of fulfilling three criteria for tactical voting (Rosema, 2004:6):

¹I myself use the tactical term.

- According to the above-mentioned definitions, voters do not have to vote for their most preferred party (Rosema, 2004:6);
- Voters definitely want to influence the election outcome with their vote (Rosema, 2004:6);
- voters must have expectations regarding the elections. Namely, They use their electoral expectations to weight the parties and candidates and derive the most preferred benefit for them from this calculation (Gschwend-Meffert, 2017:343).

Most research on tactical voting focuses on candidates, but there may also be situations (even in proportional representation) where voters abandon their most preferred party (party list) due to its “unviability”. This is referred to in the literature as strategic list desertion (Harfst-Blais-Bol, 2018:54). Coalition tactical or coalition preference voting can also occur, in which the vote is given to another party instead of the most preferred party so that the most preferred government coalition could be formed for the voter (Meffert-Gschwend, 2010:340). Voter are only interested in the quality of the coalition that is formed, and therefore they are willing to cast a dishonest vote (Meffert-Gschwend, 2010; Irwin-van Holsteyn, 2012). The latter two phenomena are not addressed in the dissertation, nor in the thesis booklet.

The theory of tactical voting further assumes voters who (Miskó, 2024):

- are concerned with political outcomes and have preferences regarding different political parties (Fredén, 2016);
- calculate with the behavior of other voters and the possible behavior of victorious political actors after the election (Fredén, 2016);
- have expectations about the upcoming election results and the behavior of other voters (Meffert-Huber-Gschwend-Pappi, 2011);
- are rationally instrumental because they consider their vote merely as a means of influencing the election outcome (Herrmann, 2015);
- have information about the candidates’ chances and envision a close race (Rich 2015).

In tactical voting, voter do not vote for their most preferred party or candidate because, driven by some specific goal, motivation, or self-interest, they want to influence the outcome of the

election with their (tactical) vote. The main psychological motivations relevant to the research questions of the dissertation may be the following:

- The motivation of wasted-vote: voter do not vote for the candidate of their party that they consider to lose the competition; instead, they vote for the candidate of another party who is likely to win in the constituency, so that they do not waste their vote on an candidate, that cannot win, and thus they can still influence the outcome of the election by supporting the winning candidate (Duverger, 1959; Abramson-Alldrich-Blais-Diamond-Diskin-Indridason-Lee-Levine, 2010:63; Gschwend, 2007:4; Cox, 1997).
- Threshold insurance strategy: the voter votes for a candidate or a list of a party – usually a smaller one – so that it will definitely cross the electoral threshold and thus enter the legislature, or possibly will be a part of the preferred coalition government (Fredén, 2016).
- motivations related to party size: a party should participate in the legislature with as much seats as possible (Rosema, 2004)
- motivations related to policy preferences: certain policy directions preferred by the voter should definitely be included in the parliament, or possibly in the coalition government (Rosema, 2004).
- the removal or overthrow of the incumbent government, party or candidate currently in power (Johnston-Pattie, 1991; Galbraith-Rae, 1989)
- “most hated” party or candidate, weakening the composition of a possible coalition (Lanoue-Bowler, 1992; Gschwend-Meffert-Stoetzer, 2017).
- avoiding the concentration of power; ensuring checks and balances: in this case, the voter tactically votes against the major party that already has a chance of winning so that it does not gain excessive power or strong, exclusive control over political institutions after the elections (Meffert-Gschwend, 2017).
- strategic balancing: due to the achievement of a more balanced balance of power after elections, voters tactically do not vote for their most preferred party (Meffert-Gschwend, 2017).

In addition to psychological motivations, tactical voting also has institutional incentives from an electoral system perspective. In light of this, a majority-based, one-round electoral system with a low district magnitude (how many mandates can be allocated in a single-member district; the most ideal is one/M=1), a closed list and the connection of the individual and list tiers motivate

tactical voting (Harkányi, 2018; Aldrich-Blais-Stephenson, 2018; Duverger, 1954, 1959; Cox, 1994, 1997; Gschwend, 2009; Lago, 2012; Gschwend-Stoiber, 2014; Lago, 2008; Rosema, 2004).

The so-called Duverger's law is closely related to psychological and institutional incentives, as it states that voters turn away from their preferred candidate and/or party if they have no chance of winning and vote for a candidate with a chance of winning (psychological incentive), thereby not wasting the significance of their vote, and this behavior favors the development of a two-party system (institutional incentive), since the unviable parties with no chance of winning disappear from the political competition and system (Duverger, 1954, 1959; Cox, 1994). Numerous studies also examine this phenomenon in this paradigm.

The dissertation, considering the electoral system of our country, also operates with (tactical) split-ticket voting. In mixed electoral systems, voters have two votes, which correspond to two different electoral forms, thus they can pursue two different goals. With their vote following the proportional electoral form, they can vote for a party list, and with their vote following the majority principle, they can vote for individual candidates. If the voters cast their list vote for the party for the candidate of which they also cast their individual candidate vote, then they cast a "straight" vote, if they do not do so and vote for another party or candidate on one of the lists, then they split their votes. (Plescia, 2016:3; Gschwend, 2004:27; Bawn, 1999; Riera-Bol, 2017:584). Although vote-splitting can have many motives, split-ticket voting driven by one of the motivations mentioned above results in tactical split-ticket voting. In this case too, the voter's goal is to influence the expected "outcome" of the election by fulfilling some motivation or goal, and therefore votes tactically on one electoral tier – mostly on the individual list – and on the other according to his/her honest preferences. The literature believes that voters and vote splitters mostly express party preferences on the party list, by the way. (Plescia, 2016).

The remaining major blocks of the dissertation do not deal with the exploration of the theoretical framework, but with the possibilities of analyzing and interpreting the data. The following chapters of the thesis booklet contain a summary of these.

3. Research questions and methodology of the dissertation

The focus of the dissertation is on the examination of tactical voting in the capital in 2018 and 2022. More specifically, it seeks to answer whether *tactical voting exists among voters of Budapest, and if so, what patterns and directions it may take*. Since the available data and information do not allow for the examination of hypotheses, the dissertation only poses exploratory research questions based on the analyses conducted on this data.

The concrete research questions are based on hypothetical tactical voter models that were created based on the specificities described in the theoretical framework, which the thesis booklet does not undertake to present in detail, since many of them remain assumptions and theoretical ideas rather than plausible alternatives. In terms of their logic, these hypothetical models were developed based on the dichotomy of the ruling party (Fidesz-KDNP) - opposition, or the major party - minor party.

Concrete research questions only “ask” about scenarios that are considered plausible.

At the very beginning of the dissertation, three basic questions are posed, the purpose of which is to contextualize the reader’s expectations; to set the goal and the direction.

The basic and concrete research questions of the dissertation are as follows:

BQ/1: Is there any rational voters in the capital?

BQ/2: Was tactical voting (tactical split-ticket voting) observable among pro-government and opposition voters in Budapest?

BQ/3: Did the voters in the capital recognize the peculiarities of the electoral system that include the possibility of tactical voting?

CQ1: Do some of the voters in Budapest make rational calculations before voting?

CQ2: After rational calculations, did some of the voters of Budapest vote tactically in 2018 and 2022?

CQ3: Can tactical voting and vote splitting be suspected based on the constituency voting results of Budapest in 2018 and 2022, and if so, does this prove the validity of the Duverger’s law and equilibrium?

CQ4: Were there any pro-government tactical voters in Budapest in 2018 and 2022 who

CQ4/1: voted tactically on candidate and party list, mainly to avoid the concentration of power; so who did not cast a sincere ballot and did not support the candidate and party list of Fidesz-KDNP?

CQ4/2: voted tactically mainly on party lists due to certain policy or parliamentary composition (equal debate) considerations?

CQ5: Were there any opposition tactical voters in Budapest in 2018?

CQ5/1: who supported the opposition candidate who had the highest chance of winning in the single-member constituency so that the government could thus be overthrown?

CQ5/2: who voted tactically mainly on party lists due to certain political or parliamentary composition considerations?

CQ6: Were there any opposition tactical voters in Budapest in 2022?

CQ6/1: who supported the candidate of the Opposition Alliance² that had the most chance of winning in the single-member constituency for the purpose of overthrowing the government?

CQ6/2: who voted tactically mainly on party lists due to certain political or parliamentary composition (equal debate) considerations?

CQ7. Are voters of Budapest familiar with the domestic electoral system and can they use it appropriately in their tactical calculations?

The concrete research questions also remained in the opposition-government dichotomy. According to my ideas, there may be pro-government voters who split their vote in order to avoid excessive concentration of power and vote tactically for the most likely opposition challenger in one of the electoral tiers. They are most likely to achieve this goal by voting for the most likely opposition candidate on an individual candidate list. I also assume that they may have cast a tactical ballot on a party list due to political or parliamentary composition considerations. My concept is similar in the case of opposition voters, only instead of being motivated by avoiding concentration of power, they are interested in replacing/changing/overthrowing the government, and therefore vote tactically on the appropriate electoral lists.

If tactical voting is observable in the chosen two years, it can be stated that some voters are rational. They need to consume information and realize the power/possibility of their vote to influence the election outcome. If the patterns of the tactical voting reveal the specificity of the

² This term refers to the United for Hungary party collaboration.

individual electoral branch, which is the actual act of switching vote to individual candidates with high chance of winning, while the number of party alternatives in the election decreases, then proving the Duverger's law becomes possible.

Since the Hungarian electoral system is a one-round mixed electoral system with majority principle, with a connection between the two electoral tiers (Tóth, 2015), according to the literature, this system encourages tactical voting. One of the research questions seeks to answer whether voters in the capital are aware of this and, if so, whether they can use it properly. I assumed that if tactical voting can be detected, the answer is yes.

The dissertation uses mixed methodology, as it carries out both quantitative and qualitative analyses on the same phenomenon. Mixed methodology is defined as “research in which the researcher collects and analyzes data based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methodological features, then combines the results obtained and draws conclusions from them within the framework of a study or research program” (Teddlie-Tashakkori, 2006:15). The results and conclusions gained in this way must explain the same (examined and underlying) phenomenon (Leech-Onwuegbuzie, 2007:267). Its types differ in when the data collection takes place (time perspective: simultaneously or at a different time), which is the more specific research method (qualitative or quantitative), and how the integration of the two methodological branches is achieved (complementary, or one follows the other (Leech-Onwuegbuzie, 2007:267-268; Teddlie-Tashakkori, 2006:15; Király-Dén-Nagy-Géring-Nagy, 2014:97-98; Creswell-Creswell, 2018:218).

The dissertation uses a mixed methodology convergent parallel design. It is mixed methodology because it conducts both qualitative and quantitative analyses; it is a convergent parallel design structure because the qualitative and quantitative branches participate with equal weight in the interpretation of the results, one does not follow the other (not even in research design), and both branches only partially complement the other; and the data were collected at different times (Creswell-Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell-Creswell, 2018; Király-Dén-Nagy-Géring-Nagy, 2014).

Two types of quantitative research are conducted in the dissertation. One of them analyzes the vote numbers of the 2018 and 2022 data tables of the National Election Office (NEO), and the

other analyzes the variables of the third wave of the three-wave panel survey database carried out within the framework of the NKFI research framework of the Institute of Political Science (IPS) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with Number 119603. In the dimension of qualitative methodology, a focus group research supplemented with a vignette method was conducted.

The dissertation attempts to reveal the movement of votes and possible patterns of vote-switching from the analysis of the 2018 and 2022 NEO data, from which it attempts to draw conclusions and statements. However, since these are not suitable for revealing deeper motivations, their discovery is attempted by analyses done on the third wave of the IPS database for the 2018 election year, and by focus group research supplemented with the vignette method for the 2022 election year. Regarding tactical voting, since the data are not the same, we can obtain results from analyses conducted with each research method, which can explain the phenomenon separately, but can also complement it. These motivation-revealing research units were basically done with the intention of complementing it, since the analysis of territorial data is not suitable for individual-level conclusions.

The following analyses are performed on the NEO database:

- A brief summary of the election results introduces further analyses.
- The number of individual and party-list votes in each constituency is aggregated by party, and the difference between these is used to determine the extent and direction of the vote shift to individual candidates. The calculations are based on Plescia and Kmetty's assumption that party-list votes reflect voters' sincere preferences (Plescia, 2016:53; Kmetty, 2018).
- In the case of voters of the ruling parties (Fidesz-KDNP), Jobbik (2018) and the Opposition Alliance (2022), Gschwend's hypothesis that says major party supporters vote more tactically on party lists and sincerely on individual list is examined as an alternative. In their case, the difference between individual and list votes is also calculated to obtain a more precise picture of the tactical vote distribution of their supporters (Gschwend, 2004, 2007).
- Next, the Cox SF ratios and the Moser-Scheiner SFPR ratios are calculated and compared for each constituency. The SF ratio shows the ratio of the votes of the third and second-placed candidates, which can take a value between 0 and 1. According to the theory, the closer this number is to 0, the greater the gap between the votes of the second and third-placed candidates.

The third candidate, who was considered to be a weak candidate, was hardly voted for, and the race actually happened between the first two candidates who were considered to be strong candidates. The SFPR ratio shows the same at the level of party lists. Tactical voting took place, if the SF ratio in the given constituency was lower than the SFPR ratio (Cox, 1994; Moser – Scheiner, 2005, 2009). The results indicate whether tactical voting and split-ticket voting occurred.

- The election results are then further examined in a hypothetical model without vote-shifting. This model demonstrates the occurrence of tactical voting by comparing real election results with fictitious election results based only on party preference and without shifting votes. Finally, it determines how many seats each party would have won without tactical voting (Gerner, 2018).
- The fact of the vote-switching is validated by a simple linear regression model. According to the logic behind the model, in election year Y, the votes not cast for the individual candidate of party X (minus value) flowed into the additional votes for the individual candidate of party Z (plus value).

Three logistic regression models were conducted on the third wave of the NEO database to explore the possible motivations for tactical voting in 2018. The dichotomous variables are the vote for the individual candidate of the ruling party or opposition, the party list of the ruling party or opposition, and the fact of split-ticket voting (yes-no). The independent variables include questions on gender and age, satisfaction with the government, the importance of a strong government/opposition/diverse parliament after the elections, political interest, campaign following, knowledge of the importance of the candidate or the list vote, and personal voting. The models attempted to explore the motivations for tactical voting with these independent variables. The database did not contain specific questions asking about the act of tactical voting (I split my vote because...; I did not vote for my preferred party because...), so the above tried to find explanations. The number of elements in the database did not reach the required minimum after filtering for residents of the capital, it only counted a sample of 200 respondents, so the findings of the models are not representative; they only allow for cautious conclusions to be drawn. Also for this reason, the responses of the opposition subjects could not be examined separately.

The running of logistic regressions is preceded by descriptive statistical analyses, supplemented by crosstabs analyses.

The exploration of the possible motivations for tactical voting in 2022 is carried out by focus group research complemented with the vignette method (Vicsek, 2006). A total of four focus group interviews were conducted, also in the government (Fidesz-KDNP) - opposition dichotomy. The split-up was only made in terms of age (25-44; 45-65) in order to bridge the possible generation gap. Thus, subjects from two pro-government groups and two opposition groups were able to express their opinions on the phenomenon. With the vignette method, a fictional dialogue with two fictional characters about a fictional election was presented, hiding plausible motivations for tactical voting and split-ticket voting in it. Its aim was to introduce the topic of voter behavior, which can be considered sensitive, and to allow the subjects to express their views openly through the fictitious characters. Recruitment took place through a specific questionnaire and two main criteria had to be met: the subject had to be a resident of Budapest and had to participate in the parliamentary election in 2022 (Hazel, 1995; Finch, 1987; Cheah-Koay, 2022).

4. Brief outline of research/analysis results

A full interpretation of the analyses and results requires an outline of the political context that determined the electoral dynamics of the two electoral years. Already in 2018, prior to the parliamentary elections, a left-wing coordination had been established, primarily between the MSZP and DK, as a result of which these parties did not field individual candidates against each other in several constituencies, thus guaranteeing a candidate with a chance against the ruling parties. Other more relevant parties, such as Momentum, Együtt and LMP, did not fundamentally join this coordination, but in some electoral districts in the capital they withdrew their individual candidates in favor of the opposition candidate considered to be more viable. It also happened that an individual candidate from DK or MSZP-P (MSZP ran in an alliance with Párbeszéd) withdrew in favor of the Együtt or LMP challenger. However, LMP and Momentum fielded their own individual candidates in almost every district. However, thanks to coordination, in almost every one of the 18 individual constituencies in Budapest, a left-wing/liberal (mainly MSZP or DK)

challenger considered to be a viable candidate with high chance of winning appeared against the ruling party's candidate (Tóth – Szabó, 2018).

For the 2022 elections, this coordination was implemented at a higher level, because an opposition coalition bringing together six opposition parties (DK, Jobbik, MSZP, Momentum, LMP, Párbeszéd) was established under the name United for Hungary (Opposition Alliance), with a common program, a common list, and a common prime minister candidate – elected in the pre-elections (Szabó, 2022). During the 2018 and 2022 elections, websites and analyses appeared encouraging tactical voting, and prior to the 2022 elections, that could also be concluded from certain media content that the Opposition Alliance might have a chance to change government (Tóth-Szabó, 2018; Szabó, 2022).

It is also important to see that in these elections, two voting blocs practically faced each other: a Fidesz-KDNP voting camp (government parties) that can be considered united, strong, and stable, and the supporters of which almost never leave their party, against an opposition voting block that lacks a common identity and brings together fragmented “opposition voters” who were only held together by the desire for an alternative against the government, a change of government (Szabó, 2022; Tóth-Szabó, 2018).

The analyses and conclusions of the dissertation for the 2018 election year were as follows. In six Budapest single-member electoral districts (hereinafter referred to as SED), Fidesz-KDNP's candidates won seats, in seven MSZP-P's, in one Együtt's, and in another LMP's candidate won seats. In terms of vote shares, the winning candidate won 44% of the votes, while the second-place candidate won 37% of the votes (a total of 81%), which indicates the quasi closeness of the competition and the enforcement of the Duverger's law.

In the analysis, the party-list votes of each party were subtracted from the votes of the individual candidates of each party in all 18 constituencies, thus illustrating possible tactical switching. The basic assumption was that voters express their sincere preferences on the list branch and cast a tactical vote on the candidate list. After aggregating the results, three large groups of voters could be distinguished. One group included those “purely” tactical voters who voted for the most likely challenger of the SED despite the fact that their own preferred party had also fielded a candidate. This mainly included Momentum and LMP, as well as MKKP voters. The second group included those voters who were forced to vote for the most likely opposition challenger anyway because

their own party – mainly due to the withdrawals – did not field an individual candidate. I called them “partially forced tactical switch voters.” The third group included those voters – mainly Jobbik voters – who were willing to switch votes for both the governing party and the opposition individual candidate.

Basically, I labeled all of them as tactical behavior, because with the aim of influencing the election outcome or driven by some motivation (change of government, wasted vote principle, etc.), the voters were willing to support a candidate not from their preferred party.

In this election year, the rate of vote-switching was 30 percent, of which tactical voters in the classical sense, who supported the likely opposition challenger of the SED instead of their own party’s candidate, accounted for 7.1 percent. Within this, 45 percent of Momentum voters, 37 percent of LMP voters, 22 percent of MKKP voters, and 6 percent of Együtt voters voted tactically. Linear regression also supported the fact of vote-shifting.

Based on Gschwend’s idea, that says, strong, unified major party voters vote tactically on the party list branch and sincerely on the candidate list, the analysis was also conducted on the vote numbers of Fidesz-KDNP and Jobbik. 0.9 percent of the government supporters could have voted tactically on the party list, but this proportion is so small that we cannot really speak of party list tactical voting among the government supporters. In the case of Jobbik supporters, this proportion can be put at 27 percent, but in their case tactical voting on the candidate list is more likely to happen (according to analyses). Looking at the analysis made in the Cox-Moser-Scheiner paradigm as a whole, it can be said that there was tactical voting in 2018. The SF ratio measured an average of 0.26, while the SFPR ratio measured 0.79 (the SF ratio should be smaller than the SFPR ratio).

The analyses conducted within the framework of the hypothetical model’s fictional election also supported the tactical voting in 2018: in an election where mandates would be allocated without vote-shifting, according to their true preferences, Momentum would have received six seats instead of zero, and LMP would have received 11 instead of eight. According to previous analyses, supporters of these two parties were those who cast a tactical ballot.

Logistic regression models were used to explore motivations as analyses conducted on regional data are unable to do so and can only give rise to conjectures. In light of the results, voters who were more satisfied with the government’s work and who wanted a strong government after the

elections were more likely to vote for a pro-government individual candidate and party list, while voters who were more dissatisfied with the government's work and wanted a strong opposition after the elections were more likely to vote for the opposition actors (candidate and party). According to the model measuring vote splitting, those who followed the election campaign and knew that the individual candidate vote was more important than the list vote were more likely to split their vote. However, considering the sample as a whole, voters in the capital are more likely to not know that the individual vote is more important, and basically few people split their vote. They also took a more neutral position in terms of campaign following and political interest.

For 2018, it can be said that there were tactical voting and split-ticket voting, which were mostly motivated by dissatisfaction with the government and the desire for a strong opposition. Although it does not directly come from this, but these motivations may suggest that the main goal may have been a change/overthrow/replace of the government. However, the motivation models worked with a very low number of elements, so they cannot provide representative results, but can only make bed for conjectures and cautious conclusions.

The analysis of the territorial data of the 2022 parliamentary election shows fundamentally different patterns compared to the previous one. The ruling parties only won a mandate in one SED, while the candidates of the Opposition Alliance won in the other districts. In terms of vote shares, the winner received 49 percent of all votes in the capital, and the second place 41 percent. The closeness of the competition was also clearly visible in this election year, and the voters in the capital voted for one of the two candidates with a high chance of winning, while - since the opposition ran as a united party - the number of (viable) parties for the election decreased. These latter findings validate the existence of the Duverger's law.

It was difficult to define distinct groups similar to the previous election year as the vote differences were low and the direction of the vote was not always clear. However, the dissertation nevertheless attempted to do so. One group included those opposition voters supporting the Opposition Alliance who voted for an individual candidate in a given constituency who was not nominated by their own preferred party, but which party was a member of the Alliance. These were the partially forced tactical voters. Another group included those mainly MKKP voters who probably voted for both a government and opposition individual candidate. The third group

included those MKKP and Mi Hazánk voters who mainly voted for the individual candidates of the government parties.

The rate of vote-switching was only 2.3 percent, which was significantly lower than the rate of the previous year. This is likely due to the few viable alternatives running in the election and the existence of two large “party blocks”. More prominent vote-shifting was observed in district two, four, seven, eight, thirteen, seventeen and eighteen. The linear regression supported the fact of vote-shifting in this case as well.

The analysis carried out in the Gschwend model did not yield results suitable for drawing long-term conclusions, so I discard the measurable party list tactical voting among the supporters of the pro-government (only 0.09) and Alliance. The Cox-Moser-Scheiner ratios do prove tactical voting and vote sharing (SF ratio on average: 0.11; SFPR ratio on average: 0.13) and make it visible that the competition took place between two political actors on both the candidate and party list levels, but the almost quasi-two-party structure may distort this finding. The fictional election of the hypothetical model also proved that MKKP voters were tactical as they would have received four mandates instead of zero in the case of an election based solely on sincere party preferences.

It is more difficult to clearly prove tactical voting in 2022 based on the regional data. It is likely that the phenomenon should be sought among the supporters of the Opposition Alliance at the level of latent motivations.

Focus group research was undertaken to explore motivations in the election of 2022. Based on what was said in the group interviews, it could be established that although the pro-government subjects consider tactical voting (avoiding concentration of power; tactics due to a colorful parliament, etc.) to be conceivable on a theoretical level, they do not see it as viable in practice. They do not vote tactically themselves; they do not know anyone who would vote this way. They recognized and named some of the tactical motivations (candidate with high chance of winning, threshold insurance strategy, close competition), but they do not appear to fully understand the phenomenon. They take their self-interest into account, collect information before elections, but do not calculate with the behavior of other voters. They also considered split-ticket voting³ to be conceivable only within the same ideological blocks (Mi Hazánk), or perhaps due to economic or

³ The Two-Tailed Dog party as an alternative was also mentioned several times.

personal qualities (not everyone). They are rather unaware of the tactical incentive of the electoral system.

Opposition voters basically recognized and named many tactical motivations. They voted tactically and already split their votes (but not everyone; especially the younger ones). They mainly named the change/replace/overthrowing of the government, the weakening of the incumbent, disillusionment and the desire for change as motivations for their tactical voting. They also collect information and partly take the behavior of other voters into account (but not all subjects). They recognize their self-interest and vote accordingly. They emphasized that every vote counts. Some people also split their votes because of personal qualities (personal voting). They are not aware of the tactical incentive nature of the electoral system either; they considered the two-round electoral system to be motivating.

Regarding the 2022 election, it can be cautiously stated that tactical voting took place more among the supporters of the Alliance at the level of the latent motivations. They could vote for the common candidate with the aim of replacing or weakening the government, regardless of whether it was launched by their own preferred party. Of course, as in the case above, these are very cautious conclusions, since individual motivations cannot be inferred from territorial data analyses, and focus group research is not representative either.

5. Answers to the research questions, conclusions and relevance

In light of the analyses and cautious conclusions, the concrete research questions posed can be answered as follows:

CQ1: Do some of the voters in Budapest make rational calculations before voting?

Yes. In order to vote for the (opposition) candidates with high chance of winning, voters of Budapest need to know who they are, and to do this they need to gather information. The subjects of the focus groups also confirmed the gathering of information, the self-interest-based recognitions. They are not purely rational, however, because, for example, they do not really care about the behavior of other voters.

CQ2: After rational calculations, did some of the voters of Budapest vote tactically in 2018 and 2022?

Yes, because we could see which parties' (Momentum, LMP, MKKP, Jobbik) supporters voted for the most likely individual candidate.

CQ3: Can tactical voting and vote splitting be suspected based on the constituency voting results of Budapest in 2018 and 2022, and if so, does this prove the validity of the Duverger's law and equilibrium?

Yes, it can be suspected, and – especially during the 2022 election – we could also observe the confirmation of the Duverger' law. In the 2018 election, the parties were only “getting closer” to each other, but the Duvergerian aspects seemed to prevail.

CQ4: Were there any pro-government tactical voters in Budapest in 2018 and 2022 who

CQ4/1: voted tactically on candidate and party list, mainly to avoid the concentration of power; so who did not cast a sincere ballot and did not support the candidate and party list of Fidesz-KDNP?

CQ4/2: voted tactically mainly on party lists due to certain policy or parliamentary composition (equal debate) considerations?

Basically, no, there were no tactical pro-government voters in either year.

CQ5: Were there any opposition tactical voters in Budapest in 2018?

CQ5/1: who supported the opposition candidate who had the highest chance of winning in the single-member constituency so that the government could thus be overthrown? - Yes (voters of DK, MSZP-P, Momentum, LMP, Együtt, MKKP)

CQ5/2: who voted tactically mainly on party lists due to certain political or parliamentary composition considerations? - Rather not, no analysis results indicated this.

CQ6: Were there any opposition tactical voters in Budapest in 2022?

CQ6/1: who supported the candidate of the Opposition Alliance that had the most chance of winning in the single-member constituency for the purpose of overthrowing the government? – Yes (within the Alliance, voters of MKKP, partly Mi Hazánk).

CQ6/2: who voted tactically mainly on party lists due to certain political or parliamentary composition (equal debate) considerations?- Rather not, no analysis results indicated this.

CQ7. Are Budapest voters familiar with the domestic electoral system and can they use it appropriately in their tactical calculations?- Probably not, since no statements were made regarding specific incentives. It is interesting, however, that the voters in the capital still vote for the candidates with high chance of winning.

The conclusions that can be drawn are the following:

- Some voters in the capital cast sincere straight votes according to their party preference (mainly pro-government voters).
- Some voters in the capital vote tactically or split their votes based on tactical considerations.
- Voters in the capital may tend to vote within an ideological block - by splitting their votes - for an individual candidate or list of another party (e.g. 2018 vote-by-votes).
- Split-ticket voting is present among voters in the capital, but tactics aside, this may also be motivated by personal voting or economic considerations.
- The validation of the Duverger's law was also observable in our country, although it did not create a lasting transformation or party formation.

I guess, the main relevance of my dissertation is that, it - on the one hand - supported the results and findings of previous research in other ways, and on the other hand, it pointed out the tendency for tactical voting/split-ticket voting and vote-shifting, a tendency that political elites should definitely take into account when planning their future strategies and alliances.

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