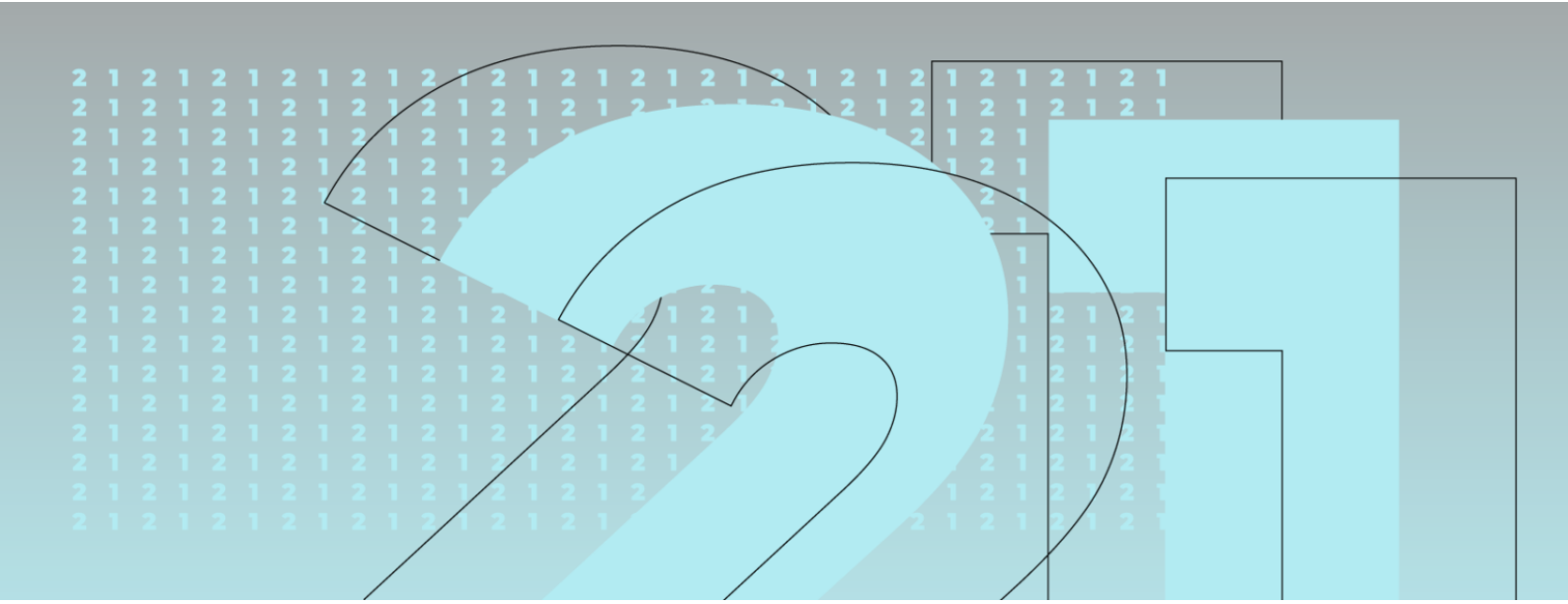


Before the battle

An interactive election map and parliamentary seat allocation calculator for the 2022 elections

Dániel Róna, Lívia Kósa,
Iván Hóka, Aliz Keszthelyi
2020

21

The 21 Research Centre has created an interactive electoral map with which citizens can predict the number of seats the opposition and the current ruling party, FIDESZ would win based on their (expected) national vote share. By what margin the share of votes would need to change by 2022 for the opposition to win the next election? What can we expect based on the current poll data, how many seats will the opposition win in 2022 given that the main opposition parties have already agreed to nominate only one candidate against Fidesz in each of the 106 constituencies? It seems that the next parliamentary election will be a battle between two forces - a united opposition and the Fidesz - similarly to 2006 when the two main forces were MSZP (the socialist party, which has shrunk considerably since then) and Fidesz.

Brief explanation of the Hungarian election system

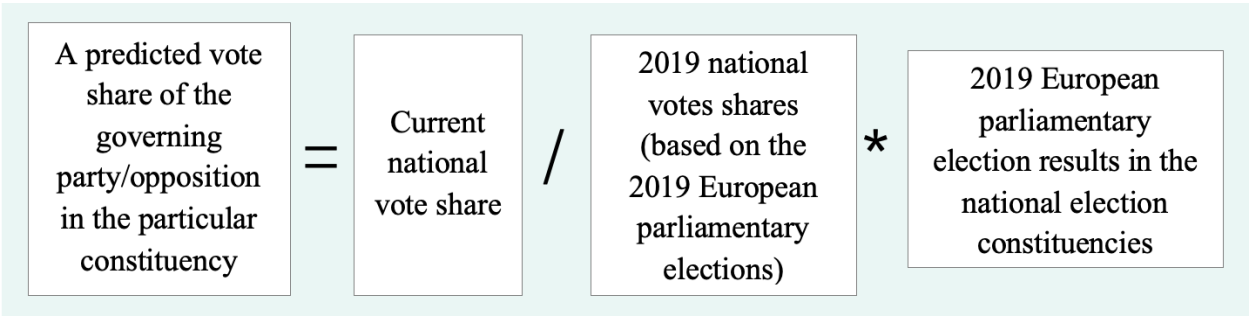
There are two ways in which parties delegate MPs to the parliament and in line with this, citizens have one vote for a party list and one for a constituency candidate. There are 106 constituencies and each of these constituencies' citizens elect their preferred candidates (who enjoy the support of the national parties). The other way candidates get to the parliament is from their party lists to which citizens also vote during national elections. These party lists are closed and the ranking of the candidates in the lists are determined by the parties themselves. Another component which adds to the list votes is the 'loser-compensation'. This means that votes for candidates who have lost in their constituencies, will count towards their party's national list votes. Another factor which adds to the party list/national votes is the 'winner compensation' which is best illustrated by an example. Let's say candidate A received 1000, and candidate B received 400 votes in a constituency in which both ran for the seat. The votes of candidate B will count towards his/her party lists based on the rule of loser compensation. According to the rule of winner compensation, candidate A's votes above 401 (because the candidate would have already won by receiving 401 votes) will count towards A's party list.

The 21 Research Centre created an interactive electoral map as well as a tool for predicting the number of seats that could be won by each political side given their current national support. This model provides insight into how electoral maps might look like in case Fidesz or the opposition would win the majority of parliamentary seats. This election prediction model also shows based on the users' guesses of the national vote division, which constituencies are likely to be won by the opposition and which by the Fidesz party. The users can adjust the predictions of each constituency in order to change the supposed outcome based on their own hypothesis. While they are adjusting the map, an interactive tool shows how the division of seats in parliament would change given different vote shares in the constituencies.

The election prediction model is mainly based on the results of the 2019 European parliamentary election broken down to the national constituencies (the EP election results are additionally adjusted by 2019 municipal elections). Therefore, our model's assumption is that the geographical share of votes would be similar in the 2022 national elections to the previous two elections. Further assumptions are that Fidesz will receive 300 000 votes from Hungarian citizens living outside Hungary (which has been the case in previous national elections as well) and that the one 'nationality representative' who has long been loyal to the governing party, will vote with Fidesz, as they usually do. Two other assumptions are that far right party, '*Mi Hazánk*' (translates to 'Our homeland') and a joke party, '*Kétfarkú Kutyapárt*' (translates as Two-tailed dog party) will not get enough votes to be above the 5% qualification threshold, therefore, they are not expected to win any seats in the parliament (based on current trajectories). The opposition's vote share is calculated by adding together the vote ratios of the main opposition parties (DK, liberal democrats; Momentum, young progressives; MSZP, the socialist party; Jobbik, right-wing party; Párbeszéd and LMP; both green parties) in the 2019 European parliamentary elections.

Another important assumption of our model is that the geographical patterns of public support for the parties remain the same. It means that for example if the user assumes that Fidesz's popularity has doubled since the last election, it would show that the party has doubled its vote share in all constituencies - yet, the pattern remains the same.

With the above assumptions taken carefully into consideration, our model uses the next function to calculate the vote share:

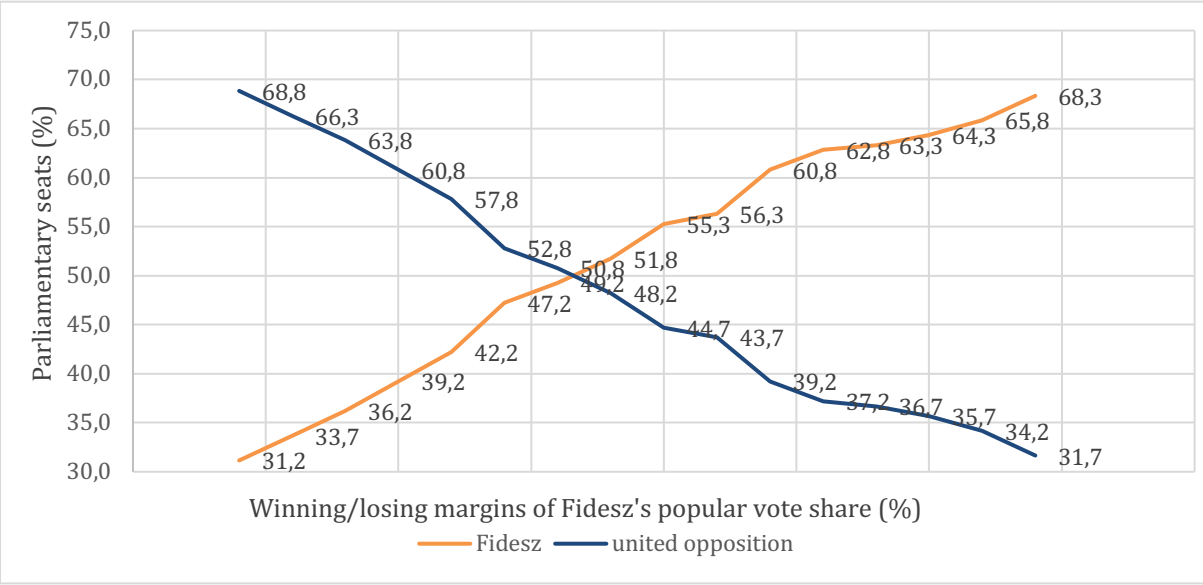


The simulation follows this path:

Our model calculates the votes in each constituency based on the users' inputs and decides one-by-one about the constituencies, which party's candidate is predicted to win it. Then, the system also calculates the margin of the win in the particular constituency and adds these votes to the national party list. Same happens with the votes of the losers of the constituencies, their votes will also be added to their party lists. In the following, the model aggregates the votes for the party lists and adds the votes by Hungarian nationals

living abroad to these as well. Finally, the parliamentary seats will be allocated to each party based on the D'Hondt method.

1. Table. Results of the election simulations (seat share %)



The graph shows a substantially uneven playing field: while a Fidesz victory by 4 percentage points would result in a 61-39 share of mandates in favor of the government, the same advantage for the opposition would only grant them a minimum majority (51-49). The opposition needs 15% advantage to gain two thirds of the mandates of parliamentary seats (constitutional majority). The reason for that is the prevalence of a larger eligible voter population (approximately 80,000 people) in the oppositional constituencies, compared to the ones in the ruling party's constituencies (around 75,000 people). Consequently, one vote for the opposition worth less than one for Fidesz.

Important conclusions:

1. In order to win a majority, the opposition needs about 3-4 percentage points more than Fidesz.
2. In case of an equality of votes (47-47%), Fidesz wins 55-45% majority of the seats in the parliament. Furthermore, even with a slight (2 percentage points) advantage for the opposition, the government can expect a 52-48 mandate majority outcome.
3. To win a two-third majority in parliament, Fidesz would need a 14 percentage point lead. These results almost precisely match the ones of Tóka from 2019.
4. Additionally, it is visible how significantly the cooperation of the opposition on a constituency level improves the overall position of the opposition. In 2018 the overall advantage of the opposition by one percentage point has led to a two-thirds majority for Fidesz. Compared to the 2014 election, where there was no strategic coordination within constituencies on the opposition's side, the difference is even more striking: the opposition parties who secured seats in

parliament gained a 9 percentage higher support domestically than Fidesz, yet, the ruling party still managed to win a two-third majority.

What do the calculator and the election map tell us about the local single-seat constituencies, which could decide the 2022 elections? After running numerous simulations, it is evident that in a substantial number of these constituencies, there won't be a tight race between the opposition and the government. Within the political duopoly established in 2019, the capital as well as a great part of the agglomeration, and a few cities with county rights became strong bases of the opposition – while the smaller villages remain governmental territories. Assuming that the geographical share of votes would be similar to the last EP elections, more than 15 percentage points advantage for the government would be needed in order for them to win even one district in the capital – 6 percentage points lead for the opposition to get them even one district from Bács-Kiskun county (the largest county in Hungary located in the south). Considering our current knowledge both scenarios seem unlikely. Thus, the outcome of the 2022 election will be determined by the swing constituencies. As in two-party systems, most constituencies - besides from a few surprises - are comfortably predictable. The model also suggests that the opposition needs 55 to 58 constituencies (52-55% of the overall 106) to win in order to gain a majority in parliament. All in all, there are 30 constituencies on which the opposition can most steadily count on; the ones in the capital and a few bigger cities in the countryside. On the government's side we are looking at an even greater advantage: with 42 constituencies secured for Fidesz to win. Therefore, the race will play out in the remaining 32 constituencies, of which the opposition needs 25-28 to win the majority of seats in parliament. The united opposition will only have a chance if they are able to significantly improve their support among the population of small villages, since the aforementioned battleground constituencies are overwhelmingly populated by them.

21 Research Centre