

THE DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE MONGOLIAN PARTY SYSTEM, 1992–2020

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Introduction

Since its democratization in 1990 (see Fish 2001; Fritz 2002; Fritz 2008; Fish and Seeberg 2017; Aagaard Seeberg 2018), Mongolia has held eight elections (1992–2020) to its unicameral parliament – the Great State Khural. Previously, Mongolia’s electoral system has attracted only scant attention in comprehensive comparative studies of electoral institutions (Maškarinec 2017; Maškarinec 2019a; Jacob and Schenke 2020) and of politics generally (Croissant 2007; Reilly 2007; Croissant and Schächter 2010; Croissant and Völkel 2012), although Mongolia is one of the few countries (if not the only one) of post-communist Asia which experienced successful long-term democratization and consolidation (Fish 2001; Fritz 2002; Schneider and Schmitter 2004; Soni 2013). The success of these processes was not precluded even though the country lacked the many prerequisites which are normally considered favourable for democratization (see Fish 1998).

At the same time, and contrary to many post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe which transitioned to democratic systems with proportional representation at the national level, Mongolian voters chose their representatives through plurality-majority or semiproportional electoral systems (with exceptions of elections of 2012). More importantly, since Mongolia’s democratic transition in 1990, frequent changes have been characteristic of its electoral system. So, as well as in previous elections, also Mongolian electoral politics in last parliamentary election of 2020 was affected by a reform adopted by the parliament half-a-year before the election. An amendment to the act on elections into Mongolia’s legislature introduced for the 2020 election plurality vote in multi-member districts (MMDs), the so-called unlimited vote,

or multiple vote (like in the years 1992 and 2008), instead of first-past-the-post (FPTP) system in single-member districts (SMDs) used in 2016. In contrast, Mongolia used a specific modification of the two-round (TR) plurality-majority system in the elections of 1996, 2000 and 2004, and a mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) system in 2012.

More importantly, as most of the electoral systems tended to exaggerate disproportionality (see below) and favour the two largest parties, the post-communist Mongolian People's Party (MPP)¹ and the Democratic Party (DP), Croissant and Völkel (2012) classified Mongolia between 1990 and 2008 as having a two-party system with one dominant party and, similarly, Reilly (2007) considered Mongolia as having a two-party system between 1992 and 2004 (especially in 2004). However, although the tendency to bipolarization of Mongolian electoral politics was interrupted in the election of 2012, when the introduction of the MMM reoriented the party system (for the first time in Mongolian history) to multipartism (see Maškarinec 2019b), the implementation of the FPTP in 2016 suggested possible restoration of bipartism (see Radchenko and Jargalsaikhan 2017).

Finally, while all previous Mongolian elections resulted in power alternation between governing and opposition parties, the parliamentary election in 2020 brought about one novelty, namely the second landslide victory of the MPP in a row. Thus, not only did MPP retain its dominant party status (with the exception of the 2012 election, the post-communists never received less than 40% of the vote), but for the first time, an incumbent party managed to retain a one-party government for the following electoral term, which suggests future possible transformation of the Mongolian party system.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the effects of the electoral reforms in all Mongolian elections between 1992 and 2020 by analysing national and district-level results. Especially, we address the question to what extent the pattern of the electoral competition (at the electoral level, as well as at the level of representation) has changed between elections, with regard to the type of electoral system, and whether the shape of the party system still varies between asymmetrical or more symmetrical two-party competition (as suggested Croissant and Völkel [2012]), or has transformed in another

¹ The Mongolian People's Party (MPP) is the former ruling party which had governed the country during the whole non-democratic period. Between 1924 and 2010 the MPP used the name Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP). However, in November 2010, the party congress decided to rename the party to the Mongolian People's Party (MPP). In this chapter, we use the label of MPP for the former MPRP.

direction. Due to the frequent electoral engineering, Mongolia could serve as a very useful case for testing development of electoral competition and party system types.

Methods and research design

We take different approaches to studying electoral competition at the level of Mongolian electoral districts.² First, we use the Gallagher (1991) disproportionality index (LSq Index) to measure the disproportionality of an electoral outcome, i.e., the difference between parties' shares of the votes and their shares of the seat in parliament. Second, we use Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) effective number of parliamentary parties (*ENPP*) as a measure of parliamentary fragmentation, and effective number of electoral parties (*ENEP*), calculated in each district, as a measure of concentration in the distribution of votes across parties.

Third, we use Siaroff's (2000) typology of party systems to analyse the shape and transformation of Mongolian party system. As mentioned Croissant and Völkel (see 2012: 238–239), despite some criticism, this typology offers several advantages, compared for instance to famous Sartori's (1976) typology of competitive party systems. More importantly, Siaroff's (2000) typology takes into account the absolute and relative size of the parties, and, in contrast to Sartori's (1976), it offers a clear definition of quantitative indicators (below), thus enabling the classification of individual party systems.

Siaroff uses the number of parties with at least 3% of the seats (P3%S variable) to distinguish between three overall categories of party systems: (1) two-party systems; (2) moderate multiparty systems; and (3) extreme multiparty systems. However, in the next step, Siaroff expands the categories, using three additional factors (the two-party seat concentration—2PSC; the seat ratio between the first and second party—SR1:2; the seat ratio between the second and third party—SR2:3), into more precise eight different types of party systems.

² In the elections under TRS (1996, 2000, 2004) and FPTP (2016) there were 76 SMDs, while in the elections under unlimited vote there were 26 MMDs (M = 2–4 in 1992 and 2008; M = 1–3 in the nominal tier of the MMM in 2012), or 29 MMDs in 2020 (M = 2–3), respectively.

Table 1. Siaroff's typology of party systems

Party system type		Classification criteria
Two-party system		$P3\%S = 2-3$; $2PSC \geq 95\%$
Two-and-half-party system		$P3\%S = 3-5$; $2PSC = 80-9\%$; $SR1:2 < 1.6$; $SR2:3 \geq 1.8$
Moderate multiparty system with one dominant party		$P3\%S = 3-5$; $SR1:2 \geq 1.6$
Moderate multiparty system with two main parties		$P3\%S = 3-5$; $SR1:2 < 1.6$; $SR2:3 \geq 1.8$
Moderate multiparty system with a balance among the parties		$P3\%S = 3-5$; $SR1:2 < 1.6$; $SR2:3 < 1.8$
Extreme multiparty system with one dominant party		$P3\%S \geq 6$; $SR1:2 < 1.6$
Extreme multiparty system with two main parties		$P3\%S \geq 6$; $SR1:2 < 1.6$; $SR2:3 \geq 1.8$
Extreme multiparty system with a balance among the parties		$P3\%S \geq 6$; $SR1:2 < 1.6$; $SR2:3 < 1.8$
Operationalization		
P3%S	Number of parties winning at least 3% of the filled parliamentary seats.	
2PSC	Sum of the percentage of seats for the two parties obtaining the most seats in parliament.	
SR1:2	Ratio obtained by comparing the seats of the party with the largest number of seats to the seats of the party with the second-largest number of seats.	
SR2:3	Ratio obtained by comparing the seats of the party with the second largest number of seats to the seats of the party with the third largest number of seats.	

Source: Adapted from Siaroff (2000: 69–71).

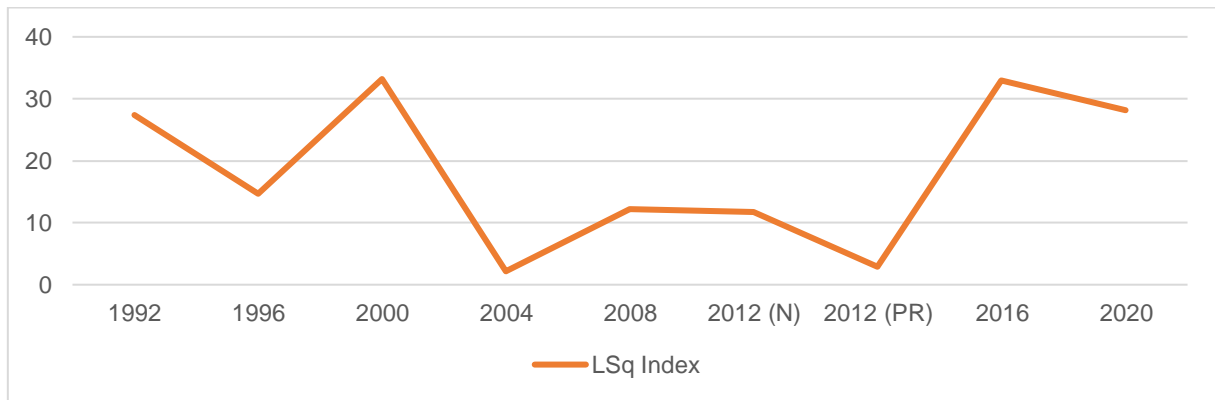
Notes: When calculating the effective number of parties, the parties running in the coalition are counted as one entity. Similarly, independent MPs are counted as one entity in the case of the P3%S indicator, and in Table, independent MPs are listed in parentheses.

Fragmentation and concentration of Mongolian electoral competition in a historical perspective

After the transition to democracy in 1990, Mongolian political competition was characterized by contestation between the former ruling party, MPP, which had governed the country since 1921, and political parties established after 1990 (parties of the so-called “democratic camp”). However, while the post-communist MPP inherited an extensive organizational structure from the communist period and also preserved high electoral support within the country’s (especially rural) population (see Gluchowski and Grotz 2001: 495–509; Rossabi 2009: 236–250), the opposition was characterized by frequent establishing and merging of parties (see Fritz 2008: 775–782; Radchenko and Jargalsaikhan 2017: 1038–1041).

Nevertheless, these changes in the political landscape were largely enacted by the same political leaders, who were merely switching from existing groups to new ones. The permanent fragmentation of the party spectrum was also facilitated by the absence of any substantial ideological or programmatic differences between Mongolia’s main parties (see Barkmann 2005: 58–60; Prohl and Sumati 2008: 372–382; Sumati 2009: 99–106). Overall, electoral systems generally favoured the larger parties, as evidenced, for instance highly disproportionate electoral outcomes measured by Gallagher (1991) disproportionality (LSq) Index (Figure 1). This index is especially useful for comparing proportionality across electoral systems and across time. In Mongolia, the LSq Index was the lowest in 2004 and 2012 parliamentary elections (reaching 2.16 or 2.84) and the highest in 2000 and 2016 elections (equalling 33.19 or 32.91), although also in 1992 and 2020 elections the value of LSq Index approached 30. So, low disproportionality does not go hand in hand with the type of electoral system, but rather the fragmentation of the “democratic camp” was decisive for the shape of the party system and disproportionality of electoral outcomes.

Figure 1. Gallagher’s disproportionality index for parliamentary elections, 1992–2020



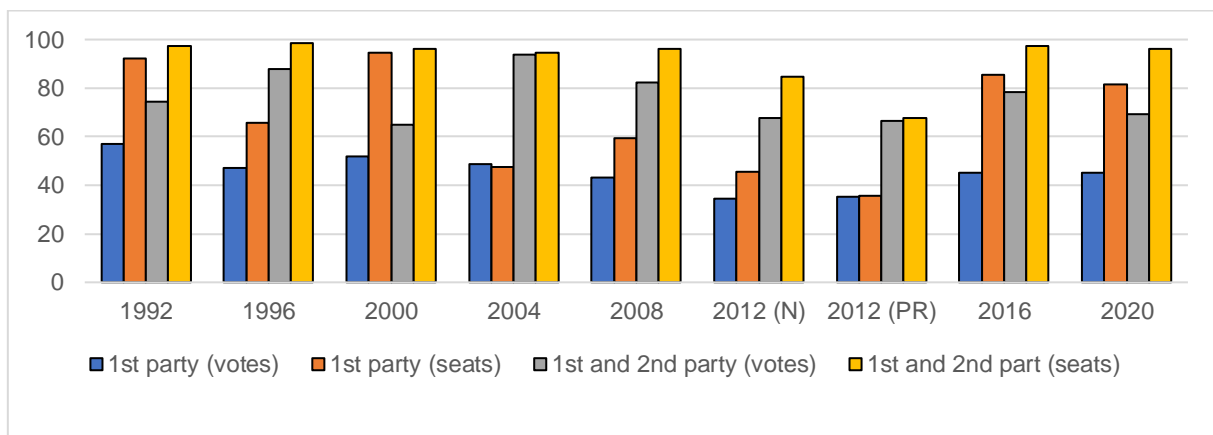
Source: SEC (2020), author’s own calculations.

Note: 2012 (PR): LSq Index value in the proportional (list) tier; 2012 (N): LSq Index value in the nominal (district) tier.

Figure 2 presents the percentage of the votes and seats received by the two nationally strongest parties (the MPP and the DP, or its predecessors). The results demonstrate that the tendency to rise of two-party competition was (at the level of representation) interrupted only in 2012 elections (especially in proportional tier), and only in this election the combined share of seats of the top two parties fell below 90%. However, comparison of seats received by two strongest parties suggested asymmetrical competition between top two parties as in half of elections (1992, 2000, 2016, 2020) only one party, the MPP, received the vast majority of the seats. More importantly, the tendency to symmetrical two-party competition, which was strengthened by the establishment of the DP in 2000,³ almost disappeared in last two elections.

³ The Democratic Party (DP) was established in 2000 by a merger of several parties established after the Mongolian democratization in 1990, especially the Mongolian National Democratic Party (MNDP), the Mongolian Social Democratic Party (MSDP), the Mongolian Democratic Party (MDP), the Mongolian Believers’ Democratic Party (MBDP), and the Mongolian Democratic Renewal Party (MDRP) (see Sanders 2010: 209–210).

Figure 2. The vote for the top two parties, 1992–2020

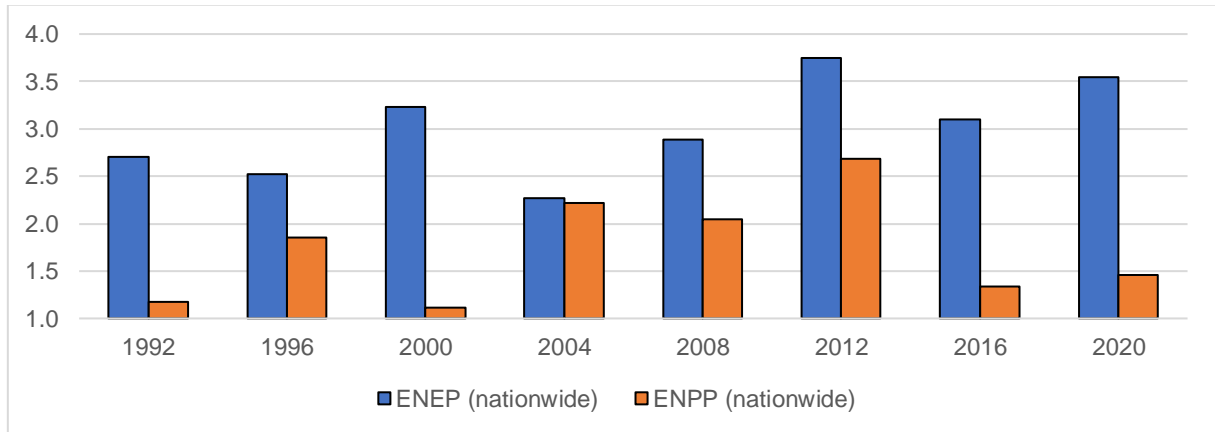


Source: SEC (2020), author's own calculations.

Tendency to asymmetrical competition (or disruption of the bipolarization of Mongolian electoral competition) confirmed also values of *ENPP* (as a measure of parliamentary fragmentation), which in four elections (1992, 2000, 2016, 2020) oscillated between 1 and 1.5 (Figure 3). In contrast, only outputs of three elections (1996, 2004, 2008) suggested symmetrical two-party competition, and while the introduction of the MMM in 2012 resulted in emergence of multiparty competition – the effective number of parliamentary parties ranged between 2.68 (the district tier) and 3.35 (the PR tier), transition to FPTP in 2016 and unlimited vote in 2020 confirmed some expectations attributed to these electoral systems (see Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005: 35–47). Furthermore, results of both elections suggested the complete disruption of the tendency to multiparty competition observed in the elections of 2012. This finding was also confirmed by the *ENPP* value (1.34 or 1.46, respectively) which, at the parliamentary level, indicated a shift to one-party dominance.

On the other hand, values of *ENEP* (as a measure of concentration in the distribution of votes across parties) showed in first four elections (with exception of 2000 election) tendencies to two-party competition. Especially a concentration in the party system before the elections of 2004 (formation of an election coalition Motherland – Democracy Coalition [MDC] between the DP, the Motherland – Mongolian Democratic New Socialist Party [M-MDNSP], and the Civil Courage – Republican Party [CC-RP]), when the main opposition parties ran against the MPP as a single coalition (like in the year 1996 in contrast to 2000), brought the party system closer to a two-party format (insofar as the MDC is viewed as a single contender), as indicated by the *ENEP* value of 2.27.

Figure 3. Distribution of *ENPP* and *ENPP*, 1992–2020 (nationwide)



Source: SEC (2020), author's own calculations.

Note: 2012: values of *ENEP* and *ENPP* in the nominal (district) tier.

Disruption of the bipolarization of Mongolian electoral competition (at the electoral level) thus occurred no earlier than 2012, together with the introduction of MMM. Although the *ENEP* value grew from 2.27 to 2.89 between the elections of 2004 and 2008, this growth was caused less by the electoral system change than by the fact that in contrast to 2004, when all major opposition parties ran against the MPP as the MDC, of which the DP was the main constituent, in 2008 the MPP was challenged by several opposition parties, although, in contrast to the past, the DP maintained the position of the strongest opposition party by far (see Bulag 2009: 129–131; Maškarinec 2014: 186–188).

Similarly, the trend against bipolarization of Mongolian electoral politics before the elections of 2012 was caused not only by the transition to MMM but, more importantly, also by the party system's deconcentration which, in contrast to the past, was not caused by parties of the 'democratic camp', but by the post-communist split, when some dissenting party members, led by former Mongolian president Nambaryn Enkhbayar, broke away and, in January 2011, formed a new party under the original name, the MPRP (see Radchenko and Jargalsaikhan 2017: 1047–1049).

Furthermore, Enkhbayar's MPRP formed an electoral coalition, the Justice Coalition, together with the MNDP, and the 2012 election results confirmed that the Justice Coalition's position was significantly different from that of third-place parties in past elections. The Justice Coalition received 11 seats (14.47%), which amounted to a historical success because no other third party in Mongolia had won more than one seat

since 1992 (see Barkmann 2005: 49–61; Maškarinec 2019b: 237–239), and the *ENEP* value grew from 2.89 to 3.62 (PR tier) or 3.75 (nominal tier) between the elections of 2008 and 2012.

Deconcentration of the party system before the 2012 election was also confirmed by a comparison of the number of candidates. The average number of candidates per seat dropped from 7.9 in 2000 to 3.2 in 2004. This was even lower than in 1996 (4.0 candidates per seat). Also, the values of the 1996 and 2004 elections were similar to those of the 1992 and 2008 elections (3.9 and 4.7 candidates per seat, respectively), when Mongolia applied the unlimited vote. It was only the introduction of MMM in 2012 that brought about a significant increase in the number of candidates per seat. That number grew to 7.2, but while the nominal tier saw 4.0 candidates per seat, even less than in 2008, that value grew to 12.6 in the list tier (through which only 28 of the 76 seats were distributed), which confirms the list tier's strong effect on party system fragmentation (see Maškarinec 2019b: 240–243).

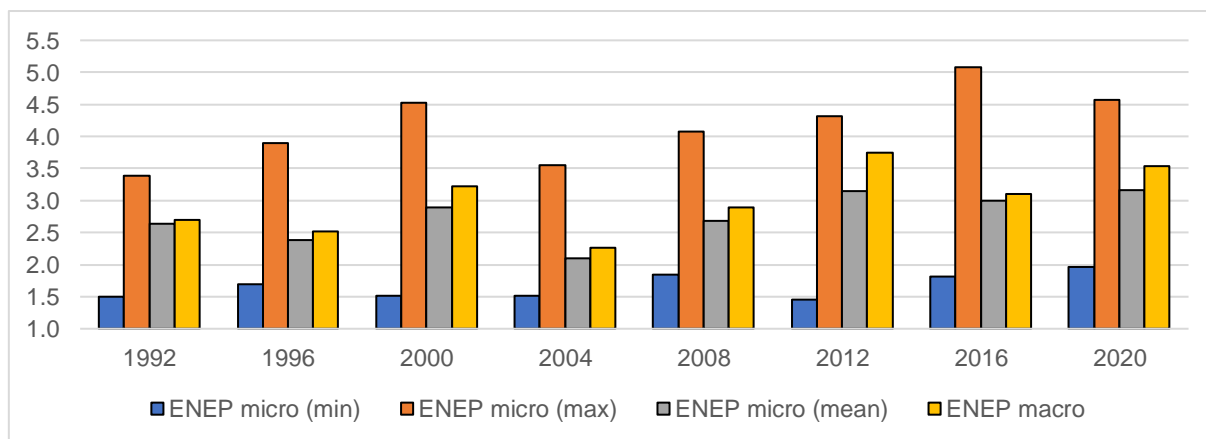
Although the introduction of FPTP for the 2016 election resulted in a lower number of candidates per seat,⁴ persistent deconcentration of the party system (at the electoral level) confirmed also level of the *ENEP* value of 3.10 which was the highest in all Mongolian elections, except the 2012 elections, when Mongolia used MMM. Overall, the results of the 2020 election confirmed the continuing disruption of two-party competition. The governing MPP received 62 seats (81.58%), i.e., three fewer than in the year 2016, while the DP obtained 11 seats (14.47%) compared to 9 seats in 2016. However, while the *ENPP* value (1.46) indicated, at the parliamentary level, a continuation of the MPP's one-party dominance, value of *ENEP*, measuring of concentration in the distribution of votes across parties, rose to 3.54.

Finally, Figure 4 plots the *ENEP* in Mongolian MMDs and SMDs for all elections confirming the findings presented above. The minimum value of *ENEP* ranged from 1.50 (1992) to 1.96 (2020), the maximum value of *ENEP* ranged from 3.38 (1992) to 5.08 (2016) and the mean value of *ENEP* ranged from 2.10 (2004) to 3.17 (2020). But more importantly, in the last three elections the mean value of *ENEP* exceeded the value of 3.0, suggested that even the implementation of FPTP in 2016 or unlimited vote in 2020 did

⁴ The average number of candidates per seat reached: 3.9 in 1992, 4.0 in 1996, 7.9 in 2000, 3.2 in 2004, 4.7 in 2008, 7.2 in 2012 (4.0 in nominal tier compared to 12.6 in the list tier), 6.6 in 2016 and 8.0 in 2020.

not entirely disrupt the tendencies to multiparty politics which had been fostered in the 2012 election due to contamination across the components of the mixed system.

Figure 4. Distribution of *ENEP* at the district level, 1992–2020 (1996–2004 and 2016: n = 76; 1992, 2008, 2012: n = 26; 2020: n = 29)



Source: SEC (2020), author’s own calculations.

Note: 2012: *ENEP* micro (min) – minimum value of *ENEP* at constituency level, *ENEP* micro (max) – maximum value of *ENEP* at constituency level, *ENEP* micro (mean) – average *ENEP* in the aggregate of constituencies, *ENEP* macro – nationwide *ENEP* value.

Classifying Mongolian party system type

As we mentioned above, Croissant and Völkel (2012) suggested that the Mongolian party system alternated between being extremely asymmetrical two-party system in the elections of 1990, 1992 and 2000 and rather more symmetrical two-party system in 1996, 2004 and 2008. When we start with the election of 1992 in which Mongolia used the unlimited vote, the election results confirmed the expectations attributed to this system, as the ruling post-communist MPP captured 70 out of 76 seats (92.11%) with 56.90% of the vote, while its two main rivals – the Alliance coalition of the Mongolian National Progress Party (MNPP), the Mongolian Democratic Party (MDP) and the United Party (UP), and the independently running Mongolian Social Democratic Party (MSDP), gained only four seats, or one seat, respectively, notwithstanding the vote share of 17.49% and 10.08%, respectively; the one remaining seat was captured by an independent candidate (see Agwaandorjiin 1999: 212–231; Barkmann 2005: 49–50;

Prohl and Sumati 2008: 41–42). Thus, electoral competition in 1992 took place between the MPP, as the only strong party nationally at that time, and all other parties.

When we move to three elections in which Mongolia used TRS, we see that electoral competition in 1996 was, in stark contrast to 1992, in line with the assumptions of two-party competition. The winning Democratic Alliance (DA) captured 50 out of 76 seats (65.79%) with 47.05% of the vote, while the incumbent MPP won only 25 seats (32.89%) with 40.49% of the vote. The one remaining seat was captured by a candidate of the small Mongolian United Heritage Party, sometimes also called the Mongolian Traditional United Party. Contrary to the elections of 1992, no independent candidate was successful (see Agwaandorjiin 1999: 212–231; Barkmann 2005: 53–57; Prohl and Sumati 2008: 44–48).

The shape of party competition before the 2000 election was significantly affected due to total fragmentation of the governing DA shortly before election (see Rossabi 2005: 69–96). As a result, in the 2000 election, the MPP was challenged by four different successors of the DA. So, parties of the former government coalition experienced a bitter defeat, while the post-communist MPPP enjoyed a landslide victory and restored its dominant (ultradominant) position. The MPP gained 51.64% of the vote, taking 72 of a total of 76 seats (94.74%), while the DA obtained only one seat with 13.35% of the vote. Similarly, the M-MDNSP captured one seat with 11.03%, and the CCP-MGP election coalition (coalition of the Civil Courage Party and the Mongolian Green Party) one seat with 3.61% of the vote; the one remaining seat was captured by an independent candidate. In contrast, the MSDP (which had taken 13 out of DA's 50 seats in the election of 1996) remained without parliamentary representation, although it gained 9.14% of the vote, and so did the MDP with 1.82% of the vote (see Barkmann 2005: 58–61; Prohl and Sumati 2008: 47–49). This result confirmed that the electoral competition in 2000 took place between the MPP, as the only strong party nationally at that time, and all other parties (see Maškarinec 2018: 522–524).

In contrast to 2000, the 2004 election results confirmed strong tendencies to concentration in the party system, which resulted from the emergence of the DP or the MDC, respectively. Once again, like in the year 1996, the 2004 election results brought the party system closer to a two-party format. The ruling MPP defended its top position, yet with 48.83% of the vote, it obtained only 36 seats, half the number from 2000. The MDC coalition fell behind the MPP by less than 4% of the vote (44.85%) and won 34 seats. One seat in the parliament was obtained by the Republican Party (RP), with a vote

share of 1.39%, and three seats by independent candidates (see Schafferer 2005: 742–746; Prohl and Sumati 2008: 51–52).

Neither did the reinstating of unlimited vote for the election of 2008 result in any major transformation of the Mongolian party system. The MPP was challenged by several opposition parties, although, in contrast to the past, the DP maintained the position of the strongest opposition party by far. The ruling MPP achieved a clear victory, as the party was able to transform 43.06% of the vote to 45 seats (59.21%), the DP obtained 39.21% of the vote but only 28 seats (36.84%), while remaining three seats were captured by two small parties and one independent candidate (see Bulag 2009: 129–131; Maškarinec 2014: 186–188). In short, the 2008 election results confirmed the party system's tendency to bipartism and the fact that other parties needed to nominate highly popular candidates in order to achieve electoral success.

However, the tendency to bipolarization of Mongolian electoral politics was interrupted in the election of 2012, when the introduction of the MMM reoriented the party system (for the first time in Mongolian history) to multipartism. The DP won 31 seats (40.79%), an increase of 3 seats compared to 2008. In contrast, with 25 seats (32.89%), the ruling MPP lost almost half of its seats from the previous election, although it maintained the position of the second largest party. The Justice Coalition ranked third with 11 seats (14.47%), which amounted to a historical success because no other third party in Mongolia had won more than one seat since 1992. The parliamentary Civil Will – Green Party (CWGP) came in fourth with two seats, i.e., the same number which both parties had secured in 2008, before they merged. Finally, independents won three seats, compared to one in 2008 (see Maškarinec 2014: 186–188).

However, the MMM, too, was short-lived, as a FPTP was implemented in Mongolia for the first time before the election of 2016. The winning MPP captured 65 out of 76 seats (85.53%) with 45.09% of the vote, while the incumbent DP won only 9 seats (11.84%) with 33.12% of the vote. The two remaining seats were captured by a candidate of the MPRP (compared to 11 seats of the Justice Coalition in the previous elections) and one by independent candidate. The election results thus showed (at the national level) the complete disruption of the tendency to multiparty competition observed in the elections of 2012 (see Dierkes 2017: 129–133; Maškarinec 2018: 517–518). On the other hand, Mongolian party system was after elections of 2016 far from the assumptions of symmetrical two-party system, as electoral competition in a high number of districts was characterized by asymmetrical bipartism, with clear advantage of the MPP

over the DP, a relatively high number of SMDs with balanced three-party competition, or a high number of SMDs with strong third-place parties or where the competition took place between one of the nation's main parties (typically the MPP) and some other party (see Maškarinec 2018: 522–525).

Finally, the results of the 2020 election confirmed the continuing disruption of two-party competition. The governing MPP gained 44.96% of the vote, taking 62 of the total of 76 seats (81.58%), i.e., three fewer than in the year 2016, while the DP obtained 11 seats (14.47%) with 24.48% of the vote. Furthermore, the MPRP-led Our Coalition captured only one seat with 8.07%, like the Right Person Electorate Coalition with 5.24%; the one remaining seat was captured by an independent candidate.

When we return to the effort to classify Mongolian party system using Siaroff's (2000) typology of party systems, we see that party system indicators (Table 2) provide a somewhat unexpected picture, compared to district-level competition. Based on Siaroff's typology, it would be possible to classify the Mongolian party system after all elections (with the exception of the 2012 election) as two-party system, with regard to the first two indicators (P3%S and 2PSC), which are crucial for classification in Siaroff's typology; this conclusion is valid even taking into account independent candidates, because their success has never played a major role in the functioning of Mongolian party competition.

The number of parties with more than 3% of seats (P3%S indicator) ranged from one to two (the MPP supplemented by the DP, or one of its predecessors, respectively), with the exception of the 2004 election, when independents (counting as one entity) received 3.95%, and also the 2012 election after the introduction of MMM. Similarly, the share of seats won by the two largest parties (2PSC indicator) exceeded 95% in all elections except the 2012 elections; in elections of 2004 two largest parties received 94.74% of the seats. Overall, the only significant transformation of Mongolian party system occurred after the introduction of MMM in 2012, indicating by rise of parties with more than 3% of seats (P3%S indicator) to three or more, together with a significant decrease in the share of seats of the two strongest parties (2PSC indicator) much below 95%. However, as the MMM system distributed the seats by two very different mechanisms – 48 seats by plurality vote in 26 electoral districts (nominal tier), and the remaining 28 seats via proportional representation (list tier), it seems more appropriate to evaluate both MMM tiers separately.

Table 2. Party systems indicators in Mongolia, 1992–2020

	P3%S	2PSC	SR1:2	SR2:3	ENPP
1992	2	97.37	17.51	3.98	1.17
1996	2	98.68	2.00	24.92	1.85
2000	1	96.05	71.77	1.00	1.11
2004	2 (3)	94.74	1.00	35.89	2.22
2008	2	96.05	1.61	27.91	2.05
2012 (N)	3 (4)	84.78	1.17	4.50	2.68
2012 (PR)	4	67.86	1.11	1.29	3.35
2012	4 (5)	78.38	1.15	2.46	-
2016	2	97.37	7.22	8.97	1.34
2020	2	96.05	5.64	11.00	1.46

Source: SEC (2020), author's own calculations.

Note: 2012 (PR): values of indicators in the proportional (list) tier; 2012 (N): values of indicators in the nominal (district) tier.

Here, in the nominal (district) tier we see the transformation of the party system to the category of the two-and-a-half-party system. The number of parties with more than 3% of seats (P3%S indicator) reached 3 (without independents), the share of seats won by the two largest parties (2PSC indicator) decreased to 84.78% (i.e., in the range of between 80–95%), there was a relatively balanced share of seats between the two strongest parties (SR1:2 indicator) and, conversely, a higher difference between the share of seats of the parties with the second and third largest number of seats (SR2:3 indicator), although significantly lower than in most previous elections. In contrast, in the proportional tier, there is already a shift to the last category of moderately fragmented multiparty systems, specifically moderate multiparty system with a balance among the parties.

In this type of party system (moderate multiparty system with a balance among the parties), the number of parties with more than 3% of seats (P3%S indicator) is between

3–5 (4 in Mongolian case) and, at the same time, there is already relatively small differences not only between the shares of the seats of the first and the second party (SR1:2 indicator), but also the second and third party (SR2:3 indicator). In Mongolia, the level of these indicators reached 1.11 (a value under the upper limit of 1.6) or 1.29 (a value under the upper limit of 1.8), which was mainly due to the relatively weak reductive effect of the electoral system influencing by only a 5% threshold for party lists, as in list tier a single district (with 28 seats) covered the entire country.

Furthermore, if we try to classify MMM as a whole, we see that in terms of classification the Mongolian party system still corresponds a category of moderately fragmented multiparty systems, specifically moderate multiparty system with two main parties. The main reason for the change of category was the increase in the difference between the share of seats of the parties with the second and third largest number of seats (SR2:3 indicator), which almost doubled compared to the list (proportional) tier the of the MMM, together with the predominance of nominal seats within the MMM (63.2%), which deviates the outcomes of elections in favour of larger parties.

However, the classification of Mongolian party system as two-party system for most of elections is relatively problematic. For that reason, Croissant and Völkel (2012) differentiated between symmetrical and asymmetrical two-party competition in Mongolia between 1992 and 2008 elections and generally classified Mongolia as two-party system with one dominant party for the whole period of 1990–2008 (Croissant and Völkel 2012: 247), i.e. categories which Siaroff's typology does not include. More importantly, as we mentioned above (using the values of *ENPP* and *ENEP*), Mongolian party system showed the increasing trend against bipolarization of electoral politics, which was caused not only by the transition to MMM in 2012, because persistent deconcentration of the party system prevailed also after the introduction of FPTP for the 2016 election, or unlimited vote for the 2020 election.

So, the problem with the use of Siaroff's typology arises especially when, given the outcome of the elections, we consider that in many Mongolian elections the difference between the share of the seats of the two strongest parties was very high; the extreme in this respect was the year 2000, when the value of the SR1:2 indicator reached 71.77, but also in the last two elections of 2016 and 2020 the values of this indicator were very high (7.22 and 5.64). But this is irrelevant in Siaroff's typology, because in case of two-party systems only sum of the percentage of seats for the two strongest parties (2PSC indicator) is relevant indicator, while the share of seats between the two strongest parties (SR1:2

indicator) plays role in classification of party systems only systems where at least three parties received more than 3% of seats (P3%S indicator), i.e., in multiparty systems.

More specifically, in Mongolia, the sum of the percentage of seats for the two strongest parties (2PSC indicator) obscures the fact that this indicator was in four parliamentary elections (1992, 2000, 2016, 2020) fulfilled de facto only by the gain of the strongest party. In all of these cases, it was the MPP which obtained 92.11% (1992), 94.74% (2000), 85.53% (2016), or 81.58% (2020) of the seats, and the MPP' dominance confirmed also the values of the ENPP (Table 2).

Even the Mongol case thus confirms Wolinetz's (2006) critique of Siaroff's typology, which suggests that rather than classifying patterns of inter-party competition, that does not change significantly between elections, it is a classification of party power patterns that are based on specific election results and can vary significantly between elections. In contrast, in the classical Sartori's (1976) understanding of party systems, party system is defined as "the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition" (Sartori 1976: 44).

Moreover, based on the application of the Siaroff typology in Mongolia, we could add that this typology fails to distinguish between the form of party competition in nominally two-party systems, where there is asymmetric competition between two (if any) main parties and the position of one of them approaching or reaching a dominant position. At the same time, this may be a situation typical of the newly emerging and transforming party systems in countries of the third wave of democratization, but not only for them. Siaroff (2000: 72) himself finds a similar anomaly in the case of Turkey (1950–1957) and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (1990), where the median value of SR1:2 indicator reaches 6.67 or 2.13 (compared to other European two-party systems, where the median does not exceed 1.4), but argues that even though Turkey or the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus were close to one-party predominant systems,⁵ due to a limited time period (three elections in Turkey and one elections in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), it seems unnecessary to create a new category of party systems (Siaroff 2000: 72). However, Mongolian case (with the mean value of SR1:2 indicator

⁵ Sartori (1976) defined a predominant party system as one in which alternation in power through elections is not ruled out but the same party nevertheless wins a majority of parliamentary seats in three or more consecutive general elections.

reached 3.82) shows, that this problem can be relevant even after a much longer period of time.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the effects of the electoral reforms in all Mongolian elections between 1992 and 2020 by analysing national and district-level results. Especially, we address the question to what extent the pattern of the electoral competition (at the electoral level, as well as at the level of representation) has changed between elections, with regard to the type of electoral system, and whether the shape of the Mongolian party system still varies between asymmetrical or more symmetrical two-party type, or has transformed in another direction.

Having used some alternative methods, we have come to several conclusions. First, while Croissant and Völkel (2012) classified Mongolia between 1990 and 2008 (using Siaroff's typology of party systems) as having a two-party system with one dominant party, our first aim was to expand their research to the present and include to analysis three last elections between 2012 and 2020. Our results, based on Siaroff's typology, then show, that it would be possible to classify the Mongolian party system after all elections (with the exception of the 2012 election) as two-party system. Thus, the only significant transformation of Mongolian party system occurred after the introduction of MMM in 2012, where we can speak about transformation of the Mongolian party system to: (1) a two-and-a-half-party system (the nominal [district] tier); (2) a moderate multiparty system with a balance among the parties (the proportional [list] tier); and (3) a moderate multiparty system with two main parties (the MMM as a whole).

More importantly, also our research thus confirmed the problem with the use of Siaroff's typology in countries where the electoral competition takes place in nominally two-party systems with asymmetric competition between two main parties and where the position of one of them approaching or reaching a dominant position. This was also true for Mongolian electoral competition in last two elections, in which the MPP reintroduced its dominant (ultradominant) position.

These conclusions confirmed also analysis using the *ENPP* (as a measure of parliamentary fragmentation) which has shown that the tendency to symmetrical two-party competition was present in less than half of the elections, and it almost disappeared in last two elections. So, transformation of the party system does not go hand in hand with

the type of electoral system, but in most cases rather the fragmentation of the “democratic camp” was decisive for the shape of the party system, resulting in the frequent one-party (the MPP) dominance. Similarly, values of *ENEP* (as a measure of concentration in the distribution of votes across parties) showed the increasing trend against bipolarization of Mongolian electoral politics, which was caused not only by the transition to MMM in 2012, because persistent deconcentration of the party system prevailed also after the introduction of FPTP for the 2016 election, or unlimited vote for the 2020 election.

More importantly, as this type of party competition existed in last two parliamentary elections of 2016 and 2020 (i.e., for the second time in a row), it cast doubt on the DP’s position as the credible government alternative to the MPP. For the Mongolian case, this implies that the national-level dominance of the MPP has deeper consequences, namely the absence of a real contender to the post-communist MPP, one that would embody a genuinely credible government alternative for the voters, especially in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar where minor parties and independents have considerably risen in strength. If this trend continues, it may result in transformation of the Mongolian party system, for instance to a predominant party system.

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