

# Municipal Representation, Municipal Representatives in the Age of Dualism<sup>1</sup>

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The representation of free royal towns in the national assembly was one of the unequivocal indicators of a settlement achieving municipal rank in the post-Mohács period.<sup>2</sup> The political representation of the *towns*, however, had significantly changed by the onset of the Reform Age and it became one of the central components of legislative proposals. Changes in popular representation simultaneously implied the re-regulation of municipal representation, of the groups of electors of representatives and the scope of represented settlements. First, I will review this process in this paper, and then, I will provide a brief overview on the representatives of Dualist Age towns.

## Urban representation in the Reform Age

As of the National Assembly of 1825–1827, the voting rights of towns became curial as all represented settlements had only one vote of county rank in the lower house of the National Diet.<sup>3</sup> According to István Szijártó M., this situation developed because the 18th century counties came under domination of the wealthy lesser nobility (*bene possessionatus*). During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the county delegates came to occupy the major positions in the legislature.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, by 1825, the role of members of the upper house shrank almost to their veto power and the influence of chapters and towns also reduced to have only one vote. The aforementioned transition coincided with the introduction of the practice of vote counting leading to significant changes in the legislative decision making mechanism. Previously, *per capita* voting was held on rare occasions<sup>5</sup> Thus vote counting and the drastic reduction of urban and clerical votes took place simultaneously and these processes linked irreversibly. The reform of

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<sup>1</sup> The preparation of this study was supported by the OTKA K 134378 (Parliamentarism in the era of Dualism from a regional perspective) project.

<sup>2</sup> Németh 2006: 113.; 114–117.

<sup>3</sup> Antal 2011: 15.

<sup>4</sup> Antal 2011: 15.

<sup>5</sup> Szijártó M. 2010: 296.

the internal structure of the towns was considered to be a prerequisite for increasing urban votes.<sup>6</sup> In the lack of such reforms, the rather narrow group of urban electors, seen as oligarchic and not sufficiently “patriotic”, was not deemed suitable to have representation equal to that of the county nobility on the Diet.<sup>7</sup>

It is well-known that one of the central issues at the 1843–1844 Diet was the urban reform. By then, aside from sole arguments of power techniques, new elements occurred in the basic argument of the centralists. Ágoston Trefort and László Szalay, centralist politicians and urban delegates, urged the full transformation of legislation, which would have provided key positions for the already established towns with popular representation.<sup>8</sup> The dominant opinion of the opposition was included in the bill proposed by Móricz Szentkirályi.<sup>9</sup> Yet his proposal was not acceptable for the representatives of royal free towns, who prepared their own proposal. The latter two proposals differ from each other in several aspects, but I will highlight only those that regulated the granting of burgher rights. According to the proposal of the opposition, the change would have weakened or even eliminated the system of oligarchic power exercised by the towns. Both sides agreed that the only possible way to increase the number of Diet votes could have achieved with the simultaneous increase of the proportion of groups with civil rights (meaning the extension of suffrage) included in the civic law. However, the urban delegates’ extension proposal was more exclusive. It would have excluded the Jews from burgher rights, whereas, Szentkirályi insisted on extending the right to them. They also argued for a restricted introduction of property-based burgher rights. According to their proposal, those could have been given only above a determined minimum value of the real estates. Accordingly, it was 1500 forints in large, 1000 forints in medium, and 500 forints in small towns. In case of merchants and craftsmen settling in towns and paying their taxes to the municipal government, the time limit of acquiring mandatory burgher rights was

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<sup>6</sup> Antal 2011: 16.; Czoch 2009: 26. The topic not discussed in the study, the national expectations related to cities and towns and their relation to political weight is discussed in *ibid*:28–39. Regarding the number of urban votes and the connection with the inner structural reform *vide*: Settling the issue of free royal towns. *Jelenkor* é. n.10. (1841. April 24.) 33. 130–131. The unknown author clearly advocated the introduction of popular representation in case of towns and established a connection with the demand for increased voting rights at the National Diet. Secret voting should be subject to the results of a survey of economic status and intellectual capacity as he argued “only such an expansion of the franchise could help in avoiding the evil of nepotism, the most frequent cause of urban political abuses.”

<sup>7</sup> Related to this rather cliché type of statement (delegates only represented the position of a rather narrow local elite) we have to point to Gábor Czoch’s observation concerning the relative instability of local support of the position of the urban delegates. The municipal government of Kassa asked Ferdinand V to allow all burghers to participate in the election of delegates which was granted in 1843. Thus the delegates of Kassa not only represented the municipal elite, but of all the town dwellers. Czoch 1998: 69.

<sup>8</sup> Bérenger – Kecskeméti 2008: 264–265.

<sup>9</sup> Concerning the text of the draft: Kajtár 1992: 36–41.

determined to be 1 year by the urban proposal. Both sides agreed on the limit of burgher rights based upon income (400, 300, and 200 forints in large, medium, and small towns respectively), however, the representatives of towns specified the professions which could have taken this opportunity. The towns' proposal also would have granted burgher rights to spinsters and widows meeting the given criteria. According to Gábor Czoch, the understanding of urban delegates displays a dual demand. On the one hand, compared to the proposal of the opposition, the scope of the inhabitants who would have been given burgher rights was determined in a narrower sense. On the other hand, they wanted the new burghers to be attached more tightly to the town. Such intentions imply an insistence on the preservation of traditional urban communities.<sup>10</sup> The drafters of the proposals did not agree on the role of the cities either. Delegates of the nobility emphasized population size, economic significance, and the commercial and cultural role of the settlements; in other words, they applied the functional municipal approach on the contemporary network of Hungarian settlements. Conversely, the cities took primarily the number of people with burgher rights into consideration, and they regarded this social group as a free community with unquestionable moral values.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, by the mid-1840s, a domestic political issue had been developed, which could have been resolved with the integration of broader groups of urban population into the political life, and with the differentiation of the position of cities at the Diet, and with the transformation of the group of settlements with authorized parliamentary representation.

### **The regulation of municipal representation at the time of the transition toward popular representation**

The regulation passed by the last feudal Diet can be interpreted in light of preceding events. The internal dividing line of the 1847-1848 Diet is March 1848, and this turning point can be observed in case of the municipality-related article. At the opening of the Diet, the government presented a 170 section proposal to the Estates,<sup>12</sup> who in return decided to prepare their own draft legislation, which was discussed first

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<sup>10</sup> Czoch 1998: 69–70.; There is no accurate data available concerning the rate of burghers or burgesses within the city populations as we do not have exact data concerning the latter. It can be safely stated that it was 2,3% in Pest, 5-6% in case of Pozsony, Kassa, and Győr, and 11% in Debrecen in the first half of the nineteenth century. Tóth 2006: 245.

<sup>11</sup> Regarding the dispute vide Czoch 1998: 71–72.

<sup>12</sup> Antal 2011: 18.

at a district session on January 18, 1848.<sup>13</sup> Since other researchers<sup>14</sup> have analysed the debate in detail, I will forego this issue, but I must emphasize that political representatives of the time still considered a draft law, which would have not only included the reform of the internal structure of cities but the regulation of their role at the Diet as well. Thus, the draft legislation not only dealt with settlement-related issues but the question of political representation at the Diet.<sup>15</sup>

However, after the revolution, the question was not on the agenda anymore and the April Laws regulated the heretofore uniformly treated problem at two different places. The reform of urban representation at the Diet and the voting right was allocated into the jurisdiction of the parliament based on popular representation and the internal structure of cities became subject to the municipal article.

The scope of settlements authorized to elect representatives on their own right was identified differently in the two parts of the country merging into a Union. In Hungary representation was based on population, while in Transylvania paragraph 3 of Article 7 of the Act of Union was applicable. Pursuant to Article 11 of 1791, towns were considered under royal control and allowed to pay taxes in one amount (*loca taxalia*) and Marosvásárhely, Kolozsvár, and Gyulafehérvár had 2 votes while 13 other privileged communities<sup>16</sup> had 1 vote. Consequently, out of the 69 votes Transylvania was entitled to, 19 belonged to settlements previously enjoying privileges pursuant to estate rights.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, at the disputes of the Transylvania Diet it was revealed that two free royal towns, Erzsébetváros and Szamosújvár were omitted from the legislation, thus after resolving the conflict Transylvania received four more municipal seats at the Assembly.<sup>18</sup>

During the March and April debate of Article 5 in the Pozsony Diet it was becoming clearer what the significance of the transition, executed by the county delegates of the opposition, could mean to the towns. The mandates of the new National Assembly was meant to be determined on the basis of population size. According to the principle developed by Kossuth, a representative seat was established after 15-20,000 people in

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<sup>13</sup>The debate started with the speeches of municipal delegates but they couldn't agree on whether the internal structural reform and the right to vote at the National Assembly be regulated by one legislative article or in a separate manner. (On the detailed treatment of the debate vide. [Hungary and Transylvania, Diet] *Jelenkor* 17. (1848 January 27.) 12. 45–47.).

<sup>14</sup>For detailed discussion vide: Antal 2011: 21–40.

<sup>15</sup>The text is published: Antal 2011: 90–94.

<sup>16</sup>This applied to the following 13 settlements: Abrudbánya, Vízakna, Vajdahunyad, Hátszeg, Szék and Kolozs from the counties, and Oláhfalva, Székelyudvarhely, Kézdivásárhely, Sepsiszentgyörgy, Illyefalva, Csíkszereda and Bereck from Székely Land.

<sup>17</sup>For a detailed discussion of the issue vide: Dósa 1861: 74–76., 94–95.

<sup>18</sup>Egyed 2001: 62.

larger settlements, and the limit was 30,000 in the “flatlands”.<sup>19</sup> It is not coincidental that the delegates insisted on retaining the estate-based representation in the case of all legal authorities. While the counties were given a minimum of two seats, the population size of the free royal towns that were considered to be unreliable from a “nationalistic” point of view was closely monitored. This type of distinction is especially discernible if we compare the municipalities of Transylvania considered Hungarian by the gentry with that of the actual Hungarian settlements. While in the former, everyone preserved their legislative role, in Hungary the scope of free royal towns and mining towns authorized to send their own delegate to the diet was significantly restricted.

In order to explore the impact of the parliamentary representational reform, first, it is important to identify the free royal towns participating in the estate-based national assembly of the Reform Period. I fulfilled this task by exploring the data referring to the 1830, 1843-1844 and 1847-48 national assemblies.<sup>20</sup> I have placed the given settlements on a map displaying the 17 privileged towns of Transylvania along with the unique position of Zilah following the re-annexation of the Partium and its omission from the 1848 National Assembly. Out of the previous 48 privileged settlements, 21 were granted the right for independent representation. Out of the 27 towns omitted in 1848, 6 were located in Croatia (Zágráb, Körös, Varasd, Kapronca, Zengg, Károlyváros) which meant that only a half of the free royal towns of Hungary could enjoy this privilege. Furthermore, 29 new towns received the right for independent representation, thus not counting Croatia, the list contained 49 settlements instead of the previous 42.

The delegates who were drafting the legislative article could rely on the work of Elek Fényes titled *The Description of Hungary*. In case of the newly formed urban districts, the Hungarian National Assembly insisted on the observation of the earlier guidelines. Since the average population size of the voting districts was 17,243 only 5 were not included in the 13 and 23 000 population figure-based track. Körmöcbánya, Besztercebánya, and Esztergom were below the limit with 5,052, 5,630, and 8,236 respectively, and Békéscsaba and Hódmezővásárhely could elect only one representative as well based on their population figures of 24,033 and 32,393 respectively. In the settlements not considered by the reform or to which the reform did not apply, the population was less than 10,000 and 18 of them had a population size of less than 5 000. Seven settlements, however, either had or exceeded a population size entitling it to the lowest possible mandate number of 3 with the following population figures: (Breznóbánya 5.262, Nagybánya 5.415, Lőcse 5.611, Kőszeg 6.823, Szakolca 6.852,

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<sup>19</sup> Barta (szerk.) 1951: 688., 703.

<sup>20</sup> Vaszary 1885: 16–17.; Kovács 1894: I. 94–97.; Pálmány 2011: 2314–2315., 2444–2446., 2476–2478.

Nagyszombat 7.717, Eperjes 9.947).<sup>21</sup> The scope of towns with independent representation significantly changed and this category previously dominated by German voters showed the dominance of the Hungarian electors.<sup>22</sup> The reform process did not stop here as separate suffrage regulations applied to settlements with municipal legal status.

The first three sections of Article 5 established the conditions for electability.<sup>23</sup> According to the first section, “those who could cast votes in the election of delegates to the National Assembly in the counties and the districts” continued to enjoy the same privileges. In free royal towns and council led municipalities, the right to vote was given to any native or naturalized man over age 20 belonging to any officially recognized denomination and if he met one of these requirements: 1. possession of house or land with a value of 1300 ft; 2. an establishment either as a craftsman, merchant, or factory owner with at least one apprentice; 3. at least 100 forint annual income from his estate or capital base or 4. “regardless of income”, the involvement in one of the enumerated professional careers. Point “e” of the Section provided suffrage to those as well who did not meet any of the abovementioned requirements but were citizens of free royal towns and “enjoyed the privileges of burgesses.” The interpretation of the given specification was rather problematic as in the beginning it was applied to “people of citizen rank” living in market towns as well.<sup>24</sup>

Andor Csizmadia, based upon documentation from the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1848, established the size of the general and voting population of most electoral districts.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, we are in the possession of data pertaining to 37 Hungarian municipalities. The average voting rate was 6,2% and some values displayed significant dispersion. The highest voting rate was in Esztergom with 19.24% and lowest elector rate was identified in Kecskemét.

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<sup>21</sup> In order to determine the population size of the given settlements I relied on Fényes’ work Fényes 1847

<sup>22</sup> The breakdown of the mandates was the following: Pest 5, Debrecen 3, Pozsony, Szabadka, Szeged and Miskolc 2-2, 42 other settlements had 1 mandate each, thus in addition to the 19 districts in Transylvania the municipalities had 58 seats and possessed 17% of the mandates at the Lower House of the Diet. This proportion is approximately 6% lower than the free royal towns would have received in case of the Lower House’s acceptance of the motion of the opposition in the 1843-44 National Assembly.

<sup>23</sup> 1848: *Art. V.* 1848: 1–3.§.

<sup>24</sup> On this issue vide: Pap 2016: 156–158.

<sup>25</sup> Csizmadia 1963: 326–328. It must be noted that Andor Csizmadia listed such settlements among urban districts which were allocated to counties by the Article and were merely considered district centres. These settlements were not included in the inquiry.

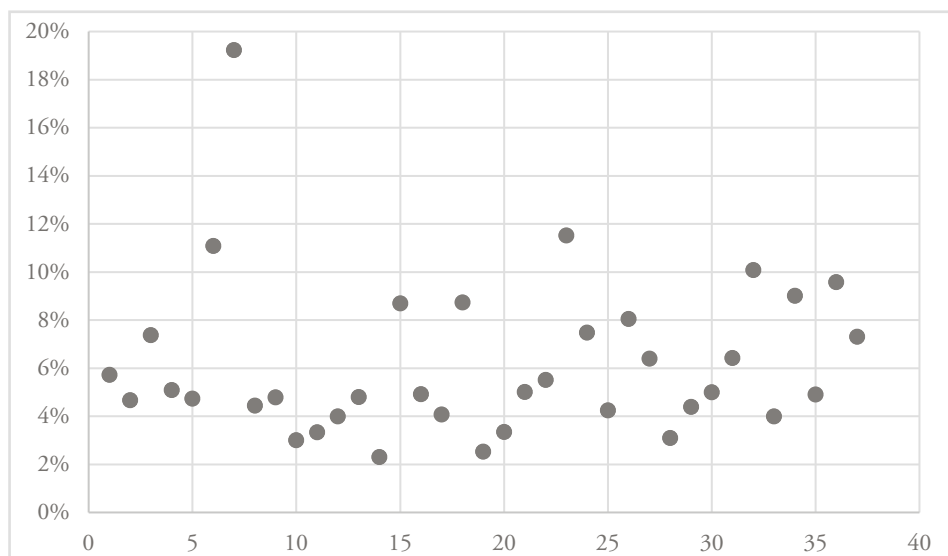


Figure: The voter proportion of urban districts in 1848

The figure clearly illustrates that in most districts (21) the 3 and 6% of the residents were registered as voters. This rate is equal to the average proportion of persons earlier granted citizenship rights in the free royal towns. Thus, the extent of the expansion of voting rights did not exceed significantly the rate of town dwellers granted citizenship rights.<sup>26</sup> The average voting rate of Hungarian urban constituencies and its dispersion was approximately equal to that of the country districts.

The question of suffrage was also included in Article 18.<sup>27</sup> In 1848, rules of local and parliamentary elections in towns (free royal towns, mining towns, and council led towns with the first level trial courts) and the extent of the applicability of the census were determined differently. Accordingly, towns were allocated into four categories according to population size. A settlement with a population less than 12,000 was considered a small town, a population size between 12 and 30,000 qualified for medium town status, and a settlement with a population of above 30,000 was considered a large town. Pest, however, was allocated into a separate category. Suffrage or voting rights regulations were differentiated according to such

<sup>26</sup> Prior to 1848, citizenship rights did not automatically include the suffrage, since the leaders and delegates of towns were elected by a small circle of the local elite. Such findings are noteworthy because of the comparison of the free royal towns, where the previously obtained rights were considered to be a spate category with the displayed values of settlements, who had just obtained representation in the National Assembly.

<sup>27</sup> 1848: *Art XVIII*. 1848

categorization and the national and local election system significantly differed from each other<sup>28</sup> as it is illustrated by the following table.

	Small town	Medium town	Large town	Pest	Parliamentary census
Previous law	Regulations apply across the board (uniform regulation)				
Property ownership (one year ownership except inheritance)	300 Ft	700 Ft	1.000 Ft	2.000 Ft	300 Ft
Industry, commerce	one year mandatory residence, employing one apprentice				employing one apprentice
Income realized on capital	200 Ft	400 Ft	600 Ft	1.000 Ft	100 Ft
Intellectuals, professionals (according to rent, mandatory one year residence)	40 Ft	60 Ft	80 Ft	100 Ft	no restriction

Figure: The census base of local and parliamentary elections in towns according to the relevant legislative article (1848–1871)

Electability was not connected to such rigorous and restrictive conditions as it only required a longer term residence in one location. It must be pointed out, however, that the towns, although in a narrower sense than the National Assembly, were established on the foundation of popular representation. Unlike in the case of counties, the last estate-based National Assembly called for renewal in urban districts. Naturally, this distinction was more than a mere coincidence as the opposition did not push for the reduction of the influence of the gentry gaining positions during the Reform Period, but they considered the replacement of boards that had been previously elected by an exceedingly narrow group of burghers necessary. Thus the policies of the liberal gentry, which provided the fundamentals of the forming Batthány government, enjoyed only a minimum level of support among the conservative urban elite. This was the reason for the expansion of the suffrage in the general elections of the National Assembly.<sup>29</sup> The suffrage established the basis of municipal assemblies was significantly narrower,

<sup>28</sup> For detailed information vide: Pap 2016: 151–154.

<sup>29</sup> At the beginning of April 1848, Kossuth called for the introduction of popular representation in case of counties, but he could not gain the support of other ministers and according to a compromise solution, a temporary legislative article was passed, which was to be modified by the next National Assembly. On the debate concerning the country regulations vide: Urbán 1986: 206–212., Stipta 1995: 29–33.; Lately András Gergely has pointed out that Kossuth called for the introduction of general suffrage. His study provides an excellent historiographic summary of the debate. Gergely 2005: 584–594.



which resulted in the return of the old elite into positions of power. This regulation can be considered as a special compromise, since the transformation equally broadened the parliamentary base of the elected liberals - by including new Hungarian settlements and removing unreliable, mostly German inhabited free royal towns – and ensured the local power of those, who possessed citizenship right in the sense of estates.<sup>30</sup> Such a distinction was applicable until the passing of Article 18 in 1871, when the municipal right to vote became subject to lighter regulations than that of the national parliamentary election.

### The regulation of municipal representation in the age of the Dual Monarchy

Article 5 of 1848 only temporarily determined the outlines of popular representation, and after the Compromise several laws addressed the composition of the National Assembly, the question of suffrage and, consequently, the representation of towns. After the Hungarian –Croatian Compromise, Pozsega and Eszék were transferred to Croatia, but the most significant changes were seen in Transylvania.

Article 18 of 1871 regulated the right to participate at local elections in rural communities. According to a proposal submitted by Pál Rajner, Minister of the Internal Affairs, those citizens of age could obtain the right to vote in council-led towns, “who had been paying local taxes (land, house, or income) either for their own estate or income for at least two years.”<sup>31</sup> A month later, another document was presented to the Parliament including the justification by the Minister of the Internal Affairs. The measure proposed by the legislative draft, namely that “only those people can elect, or can be elected, who are eligible to vote in the national parliamentary election, implies that the representation of municipalities cannot be established on broader foundations, that the representation of the country, namely, the House of Representatives. Even the possibility of raising the question of whether the majority of the House of Representatives can represent the conditions of the country better, or the majority of the municipal committees, must be discarded.”<sup>32</sup> The majority opinion drafted by the legislative aides of several parliamentary departments on December 14,

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<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, we have very little information concerning the conversion of the representation of towns to popular representation as voter registers are rarely processed, Yet, regarding Kassa serious research revealed that the scope of electors voting on the municipal or local elections did not change and those granted citizenship earlier met the conditions of the census. While the leadership of the town was not changed radically, the respective positions were restructured. According to István Kajtár in free royal towns only 70-75% of electors eligible to vote on national parliamentary elections had the right to vote in local elections as well. Czoch 2015: 1031–1032.; Kajtár 1992: 50.

<sup>31</sup> *Documents of the House of Representatives* 1861: 1869–1872. vol. 5 455. 24.

<sup>32</sup> *Documents of the House of Representatives* 1861: 1869–1872. vol. 5. 485. 190.

1870 was closer to the original proposal and refined its text. The right of suffrage received a broader interpretation again and eligibility to vote in national elections or meeting the census for the National Assembly or literacy were only required in case of electability.<sup>33</sup> The article was discussed in the spring of 1871, but instead of these issues the institution of virilism was the main point of focus. The final version of the bill was signed by the Monarch on June 7, 1871 and stated that “all local residents from the age of 20 are granted the right to vote if they pay land, house, property, or income taxes from their earnings or estate for over two years. Those who do not pay other taxes than personal income tax can only have the right to vote in case they are not under the authority of their master and the same applied to “aliens”, who had been residing in the given municipality for 2 years and continuously had been paying their taxes. Minors with estates, women, and legal entities had an indirect vote. At the same time people, who were conscripted into military service, convicted criminals (for the term of their sentence), people filing for bankruptcy and officials who paid local taxes at another settlement were excluded from local suffrage. Meeting the population size or census-based requirements of national parliamentary elections and literacy were pre-requisites for electability.<sup>34</sup> Article 22 of 1886 left this regulation intact. The problems of the 1848 transitional period were resolved by the extension of the suffrage and increasing the number of potential voters at local elections. According to Article 17 of 1867, Israelite residents were granted the right to vote in elections. Another noteworthy aspect was that previously granted rights as a separate category was not included as an option for the entitlement for election. Because of that, theoretically, it was possible that someone, who had lost his right to vote, preserved his right to stand for election under the former regulatory framework. Unfortunately, the fluctuation of the number of voters has not been covered by a nation-wide survey – it seems that this question has not been yet under the radar of researchers – but it is documented that the number of electable citizens was significantly decreased after 1872.<sup>35</sup>

The Articles of 1848 temporarily regulated the right to vote in national elections. The general debate on the new suffrage law was finally started on July 1, 1874, and the discussions were closed on July 7, followed by the detailed dispute as of July 8.<sup>36</sup> Since I have already presented a detailed description of the debate and especially the segments applying to Transylvania in one of my earlier studies, here I will focus on

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<sup>33</sup> *Documents of the House of Representatives* 1861: 1869–1872. vol. 7. 715. 198.

<sup>34</sup> *Documents of the House of Representatives* 1861: 1869–1872. vol. 10. 1052. 185–186.

<sup>35</sup> In 1872 the list of electable citizens in Eger included 2.222 persons and this number was decreased to 1.213 in 1875. The reason for the decrease can be found in the revision necessitated by the interim mortality rate. Berecz 2016: 30.

<sup>36</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives: 1872–1875*. vol. 11. 152. 1874 July 2.; On the background or preceding developments leading to the Article vide: Gerő 2017: 75–106.

the section related to the towns.<sup>37</sup> One of the significant aspects of the debate was the right to vote under the regulation of previous legal specifications and its applicability to the towns. The burghers of free royal towns eligible to vote in 1848, were entitled to elect representatives according to the old regulations. Nevertheless, the burghers were not even mentioned during the debate, and the arguments centred around the suffrage of nobles, of the Székely people and the unique situation of Transylvania.<sup>38</sup> Regarding the towns, the main problem was the changing of suffrage on the basis of property ownership. The proposal submitted by the government would have amended the urban house ownership based electoral right that it had been bound to the house interest tax paid by the owners. The ground for that restriction was that the regulation of proving the value of house for electoral rights was not well established.<sup>39</sup> However, the Central Committee of the House of Representatives proposed modifications including this particular issue as well. The Committee found reasonable to demand the existence of three sections of a house, instead of the assessment of a minimum taxation.<sup>40</sup> Tamás Péchy, the representative of the Left-Centre Party of the Szikszó district, attached his opinion to the Committee's proposal, in which he rejected the three sections per house rule by claiming that the market value of urban houses matched the threshold sum required by the original laws of 1848.<sup>41</sup> The issue of the property-based suffrage was discussed on the July 9 session. According to the proposal, which was modified in the spirit of the opinions of the Committee, burghers were only eligible for vote if their houses under property taxation consisted of three sections or chambers at least. One of the most active participants of the debate, Balázs Orbán, spoke up in defense of the burghers of Marosvásárhely. He passionately argued that a house with a value of 315 fts had been previously accepted for entitlement to vote, however, the three-section house, required by the new regulation, worth more than "several thousands of forints". Orbán accused the government of persecuting the residents of towns and condemned the board for a narrowmindedness, which would result in "the expulsion of the most educated, most patriotic, social class displaying

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<sup>37</sup> Pap 2017: 129–154.

<sup>38</sup> Pap 2017: 141–142.

<sup>39</sup> According to sections 2 a of Article V of 1848 and sections 3 a of Article II of the Transylvania Act, houses in free royal towns and council-led towns can be considered to have a value of 315 fts, if they were assessed according to the house tax based on 16 fts net income or if according to section 10 of the same article they belong to Category III *Documents of the House of Representatives: 1872–1875*. 16. 692. 257.

<sup>40</sup> *Documents of the House of Representatives: 1872–1875*. vol. 17. 745. 326. "The right to vote is granted to such residents of free royal towns and council-led towns who own a house in which their spouses or children of minor age live, and it contains at least three segments after which house tax is paid, regardless of temporary exemption from taxes;" *ibid.* 333.

<sup>41</sup> *Documents of the House of Representatives: 1872–1875*. vol.7. 745. 355.

the highest level of commitment to Hungarianness” and took the proponents of the legislation to task for the “toppling of the strongest column supporting our progress and being.”<sup>42</sup> The problem, however, did not only apply to Transylvania. Rezső Beliczey, the representative of the Left-Centre Party also objected to this regulation to protect the interests of Gyula.<sup>43</sup> Szapáry only replied to Beliczey’s words, and questioned the proper assessment of houses valued at 315 forints.<sup>44</sup> He pointed out that it was much easier to estimate the value of houses based on the number of sections rather than identifying the properties’ actual market price. The final version of the article included the three-section restriction as a requirement for urban suffrage according to the recommendations of the Committee.

However, the population size and number of voters in electoral districts displayed certain anomalies. The vital need for change was discussed during the debate of both the electoral law of 1874, and the regulation of new administrative system of 1876. The debate on the article regulating the establishment of voting districts took place during the time of the Tisza administration at the end of April in 1877. The governmental proposal submitted on April 28, concentrated on the settlements in Transylvania. Accordingly, Abrudbánya, Csíkszereda, Illyefalva, Hátszeg and Vajdahunyad would lose their right for autonomous representation, Szamosújvár, Gyulafehérvár and Erzsébetváros would only be able to elect one representative instead of the previous two, while Brassó and Nagyszeben would have two representatives in the new Parliament. Furthermore, the newly unified Budapest, would have two additional seats.<sup>45</sup> During the debate, Kálmán Tisza noted that they aimed to attach all settlements with less than 300 voters, except for Erzsébetváros, to county districts. Moreover, apart from the two crucial Saxon towns Brassó and Nagyszeben, the government refused to increase the number of urban mandates.<sup>46</sup> As a result of the discussions, the proposal of the government was modified in two segments, and one of the changes applied to the towns. Ede Zsedényi, the liberal representative of the Szepesszombat district, spoke up for the right to vote of the residents of Abrudbánya and Verespatak and suggested that the mandate of Kolozs should have been transferred to these settlements due to their importance to the national economy. He justified his proposal by the following words: “The Hungarian residents of Abrudbánya and Verespatak, due to the fact that they are dispersed in this area, has always maintained a close relationship with their representatives and their votes has been driven by patriotic spirit.” Kálmán Tisza

<sup>42</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*: 1872–1875. vol.11. 364–365. 1874. July 9.

<sup>43</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*: 1872–1875. vol.11 365–367. 1874 July 9.

<sup>44</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*: 1872–1875. vol.11. 367. 1874 July 9.

<sup>45</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*: 1875–1878. vol.10. 287. 1877. April 28.; For the justification of the Article vide *Documents of the House of Representatives*: 1875–1878. vol.14 539. 182–183.

<sup>46</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*: 1875–1878. vol.10. 300–302. 1877 April 28.

assigned this case to the House of Representatives because the exchange between the mining settlement with larger population but less voters and Kolozs with a smaller population but more voters did not take a serious effect on the already established system. Subsequently, the House accepted the modifications.<sup>47</sup> Thus, according to Article 10 of 1877, Csíkszereda, Illyefalva, Kolozs, Hátszeg and Vajdahunyad became a county district centre, while Brassó and Nagyszeben, omitted from Article II of 1848, received two mandates each. The number of settlements decreased by one due to the unification of Budapest, thus after 1877, 62 settlements divided into 81 districts had their own right to elect.

The electoral system reached its final form in 1876 and did not go under any changes until 1910, the time of the last election during the Age of the Dualism. In case of both the electoral right and the electoral system, no general changes could be observed, at least not those, which would have been codified. Nevertheless, the well-known discrepancies of the population and voter rate of districts persisted, and these inconsistencies especially affected the towns.

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<sup>47</sup> *Journal of the House of Representatives*: 1875–1878. vol. 319–321. 1877. April 30.

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