

Empirical Support for Duverger's Law Continued

Strategic voters and Strategic Entry

Review: On Thursday we examined evidence for the “mechanical effect” of electoral laws on legislative representation

Log district mag	District Mag	Example	“representativeness ratio”
0	1	UK, US	.45
1	3 or 4	Japan, Ecuador	.59
2	8	Belgium	.73
3	24	Italy, Czech Rep.	.86
4			1.00
5	120 to 150	Israel, Netherlands	1.14

Votes are transferred into seats in at a 1 to 1 ration only when district magnitude is large

The strategic consequences of the mechanical effect

- When district magnitude is low,
 - supporters of small parties may see a “sincere vote” as a wasted vote.
 - Potential leaders of small parties may see starting a new party as “fruitless” and, instead, work within existing parties.

Observational implication

The link between affection for a group/cause/interest and “voting” for a party or leading a party should be stronger when district magnitude is high.

Put differently,

Low district magnitude electoral systems discourage the formation of some parties that would have formed if the electoral system was more “permissive”

Where does “affection” for a party come from?

- Sociological approach to political parties identifies “cleavages” in society. These divide an electorate into groups with common interests/policy goals.
 - Rural/urban
 - Capital/Labor
 - Religious
 - Ethnic
- Something, we’re not sure what, determines whether a cleavage becomes “politicized”, “mobilized”, “salient”

Cleavages become politically salient,

- when members of different groups take different positions on the most salient political issues of the day
 - All citizens have some common interests and some divergent interests. A cleavage is “salient” when it divides the electorate into groups such that the between group variance on issue positions is larger than the within group variance on issue positions

Example

When a cleavage becomes “salient” a “constituency” for a party arises.

- According to Lipset and Rokkan, once universal male suffrage is established, parties systems become “frozen”.
 - After that, if a cleavage becomes “salient”, existing parties will alter their platforms to absorb it.
- According to Duverger’s Law, a party is formed to respond to this “constituency” if and only if electoral laws are sufficiently “permissive”

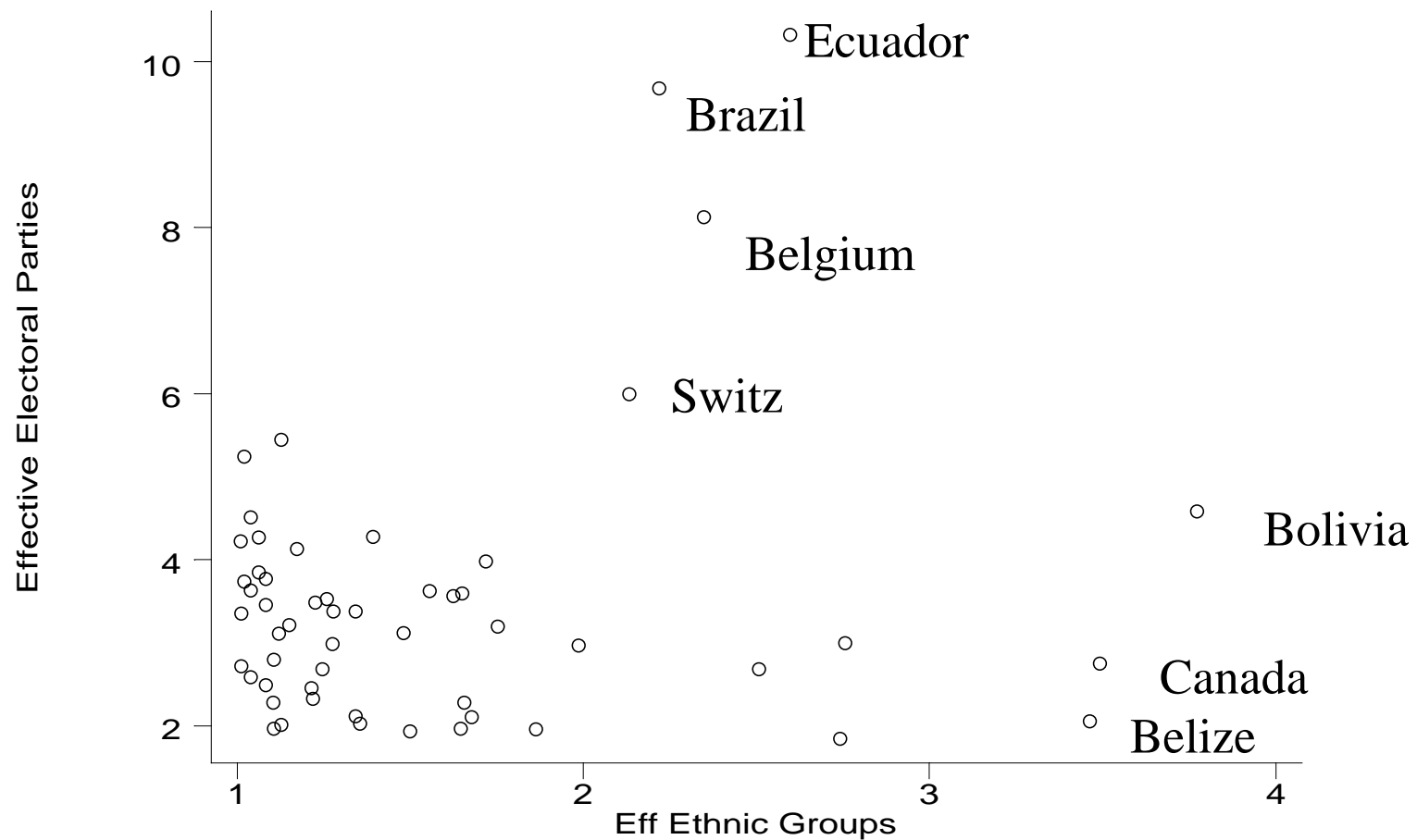
The sociological sources of parties

- Would be nice to know how many different cleavages exist in each polity, and which ones are “salient”
 - Would allow us to examine the link between cleavages and party formation directly.

Effective Number of Ethnic Groups

- A common proxy is “Effective Number of Ethnic Groups” ($1/\sum g_i^2$) (where g is the proportion of a population in a particular group)
 - To use this to capture all cleavages is to assume that other cleavages (religious/class/sector, etc.) are either highly correlated with ethnic ones or are constant across all cases.

The link between Eff Ethnic Groups and Electoral Parties



The Determinants of the Effective Number of Parties

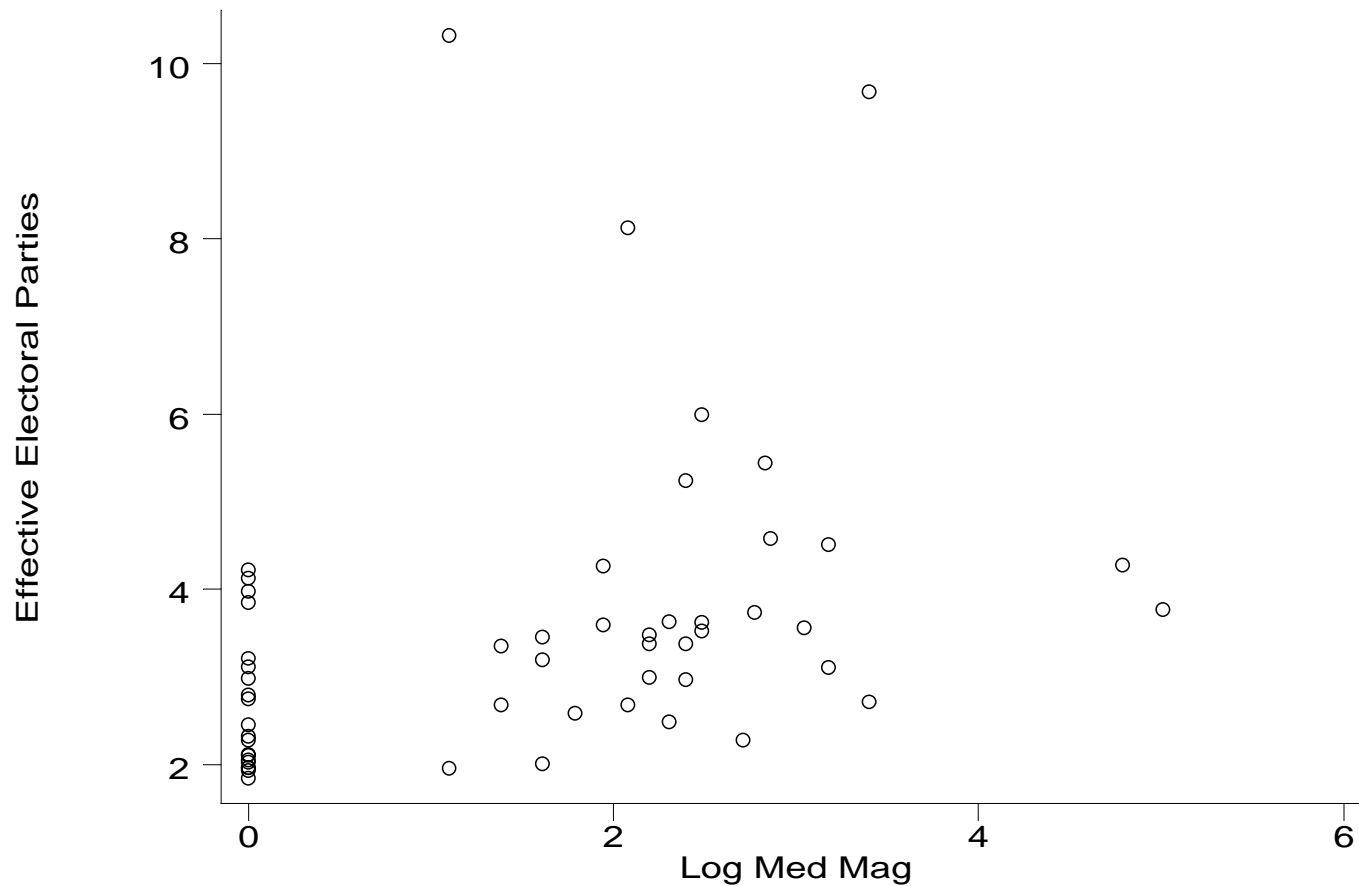
<i>Dep. Var. Effective Number of Parties (vote)</i>	<i>Model</i>			
	(1)	(2a) ¹	(3a) ¹	(4a) ¹
	<i>Social</i>	<i>Institutional</i>	<i>Controlled</i>	<i>Interactive</i>
Constant	2.759 (0.663)**	2.440 (0.251)**	1.587 (0.476)**	2.431 (0.554)**
Effective Number of Ethnic Groups	0.490 (0.399)		0.529 (0.254)*	0.031 (0.307)
Log Median Magnitude		0.478 (0.119)**	0.508 (0.116)**	-0.257 (0.315)
Log Med Mag * Eff Ethnic Groups				0.539 (0.208)*
R-squared	0.03	.64	.68	0.72
Observations	51	51	51	51

¹Coefficients for controls for Upper Tier, Eff # Pres. Parties, Proximity, and Effpres*Proximity Not reported
* sig at .05 level. ** sig at .01 level

So, by itself, ethnic heterogeneity

- Is a poor predictor of the number of parties.
Compare this with the effect of institutions.

The link between district magnitude and electoral parties



The Determinants of the Effective Number of Parties

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On Average,

- An increase of a logged district magnitude is expected to increase the number of parties by about $\frac{1}{2}$ an effective party.

This is not a big effect, since an increase in 1 logged district magnitude is equivalent to moving from a single member district system to a 4 member district system (such as Japan)

This is not surprising, because our theory tells us that

Institutions are Filters, not creators of parties

- According to Duverger's Law, a party is formed to respond to this "constituency" if and only if electoral laws are sufficiently "permissive"

The Determinants of the Effective Number of Parties

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Electoral Laws determine the effect of ethnic fractionalization on the number of votes

Log district mag	District Mag	An additional Effective Ethnic Group Leads to		Example
0	1	.03	Additional parties	UK, US
1	3 or 4	.56	Additional parties	Japan, Ecuador
2	8	1.108	Additional parties	Belgium
3	24	1.647	Additional parties	Italy, Czech Rep.
4		2.186	Additional parties	
5	120 to 150	2.72	Additional parties	Israel, Netherlands

Conclusion

- Heterogeneity creates the demand for parties
- Institutions influence the incentive to form/and or support additional parties
- If you have a homogenous society you're likely to have few parties no matter what electoral system you choose.
- If you have a heterogeneous society, which institutions you choose will influence the number of parties you have