

8. Hungary

Gábor Tóka

in the *Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Sten Berglund, Tomas Hellén and Frank Aarebrot. Cheltenham: Edgar Elgar, 1998, pp. 231-74.

Students of mass electoral behaviour have often argued that the bulk of the voters do not seem to respond strongly to the topical issues of the day, but continue voting according to long-established patterns. 'Critical elections' - marked by particularly intense contestation, a jump in turnout, and a sudden change in what kind of opinions and group identities will go together with a preference for one or the other party alternative - occur rarely, if at all. Electoral change is glacially slow.

This often noted dominance of persistent divisions over short term effects elevated the notion of cleavages to a central place in the study of electoral behaviour. This chapter will discuss how Hungarian political parties after 1989 mobilized or downplayed potential cleavage lines, and how the voters responded. It will also offer some thoughts on why this happened and how all this influenced the way the political system works. In this chapter, the cleavage concept will be used in a colloquial way, so as to avoid the theoretical issue of whether all persistent political divisions can be called cleavages. Thus, cleavage is 'a tendency in rocks or crystals to divide or split in certain directions' and 'the process of division of a fertilized ovum by which the original single cell becomes a mass of smaller cells' (*The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* 1995, 246) In other words, cleavages are assumed to divide a society politically only if that division is triggered by political events, but the way they divide camps is determined by factors that predate the triggering event.

General propositions

By now it is conventional wisdom that Eastern European cleavage structures are doomed to be weak. Strong cleavage mobilization presumes

organizational carriers and collective identities, over and above the political parties themselves. After decades of systematic destruction and officially encouraged erosion of social pluralism, the post-communist countries may have very little of cleavage politics. Ethnicity may at times be an exception, as ethno-linguistic identities were occasionally promoted by the Soviet-type regimes, but in all other respects Eastern European party politics is likely to be even more fluid than what is usual in new democracies. Established parties will split and decline, and new ones will emerge out of the blue with an astonishing regularity, as politicians will - quite rightly - expect that voters have only the shallowest of loyalties to the parties they supported previously (Mair 1996). Indeed, aggregate volatility (i.e., the percentage of the vote changing hands between different parties from one election to another)¹ seems to be much higher all over East Central Europe than in Italy and Germany after the Second World War, or in Spain, Portugal and Greece in the 1970s and early 1980s (Tóka 1997).² The 28.3 per cent net volatility between the 1990 and 1994 Hungarian elections is three and a half times higher than the West European average between 1885 and 1985, and comparable to the very highest West European figures registered in that period, such as the 32 and 27 per cent figures produced by the first elections in Weimar Germany.³

The excessive fragmentation of the party system, and the consequent difficulty of sustaining for long a legislative majority behind any government or coherent policy may be a scary but not necessarily inevitable result of volatile elite and mass behaviour. The stalemate in the fractionalized legislature will then provide ample justification for the expansion of presidential powers and rule by decree. While this scenario of curtailing democracy is familiar from some member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), it is certainly not what has been happening in Hungary in the 1990s. Quite to the contrary, Hungarian politicians and political analysts equally like to emphasize how much political stability their country has had since 1989 compared to other post-communist countries.

While the vigour of their reasoning may be taken as an indication that they themselves see something unexpected or unnatural in this somewhat overstated tranquillity, they seem to have a point. No significant constitutional change has occurred since May 1990; the election law has remained almost unchanged since October 1989;⁴ political violence remained unheard of and political freedom is well preserved (cf. Karatnycky 1997; US Dept. of State 1997; and previous editions of the same two reports). The number of working days lost because of industrial disputes has been among the lowest in Europe, and not a single no-confidence motion was tabled in the parliament. Elections have taken place strictly on schedule in March-April 1990 and in May 1994 and were, as this volume went to press, scheduled for May 1998.

It may be unwarranted to present all this as obvious signs of political maturity and success, but the appearance of stability is conspicuous enough to call for explanation. It is not that Hungarians have been particularly happy with their political system or their governments. In 1990 as well as in 1994, the incumbent government suffered a humiliating defeat, with the opposition winning, respectively, over 90 and over 80 per cent of the seats in the incoming parliament (Appendix 1). Comparative surveys like the Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, the New Democracies Barometer, and the International Social Justice Survey have always found Hungarians among the economically and politically most dissatisfied nations in Europe - even if not as wary of the transformation process as the people of Belarus, Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine (Commission 1991-; Rose and Haerpfer 1996, 25, 81; Alwin 1992). Table 8.1 demonstrates the dramatic depth of the persistent popular disenchantment in Hungary.

Table 8.1: 'On the whole, are you satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in our country?' Combined proportion of 'satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' respondents from the autumn of 1991 to November 1995, %⁵

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Albania	44	45	42	33	59
Armenia	n/a	11	8	9	18
Belarus	n/a	12	15	14	17
Bulgaria	46	40	23	4	14
Croatia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	55
Czechoslovakia	29	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Czech Republic	n/a	40	50	45	48
Estonia	36	31	41	36	39
Georgia	n/a	48	n/a	20	48
Hungary	34	23	21	25	20
Kazakhstan	n/a	n/a	n/a	14	23
Latvia	42	19	32	28	30
Lithuania	62	53	38	33	28
Macedonia	n/a.	49	47	36	40
Poland	35	37	41	27	57
Romania	43	30	34	32	39
Russia	18	12	17	8	6
Slovakia	n/a	23.	21	18	29
Slovenia	n/a	48	38	35	37
Ukraine	n/a	18	18	19	17

Neither do Hungarians show much deference to their political leaders. On the one hand, the transition to democracy did not involve revolutionary catharsis or the birth of a new state - which probably makes the absence of hugely popular political leaders and movements more understandable. On the other hand, non-elites appear to be perfectly able to organize on their

own, if not to sustain these efforts. In late October 1990, non-unionized taxi and lorry drivers organized a three-day long nation-wide road blockade within just a few hours following the announcement of an unexpected petrol price hike, which eventually forced the government to agree to compromise. In the Winter of 1992/93, a bevy of lower class citizens established the 'Society of Those Living Under the Subsistence Level' (LÉT) and swiftly collected vastly more than the required number of signatures to initiate a referendum (their proposed referendum question was whether you agree to dissolve the current parliament and call early elections, which the Constitutional Court did not allow to become the subject of a referendum).

Why, then, did the Hungarian political system prove so stable - or rigid, if you like? There are reasons to doubt that the stability and legitimacy of the constitutional framework was a product of developments in the party political arena, and thus in the cleavage structure (Tóka 1997). Rather, the stability of governments - given the considerable number of policy U-turns and cabinet reshuffles, one should rather talk of the endurance of prime ministers and, to a lesser extent, of coalitions - was probably more a result of the institution of the constructive vote of no-confidence than anything else (Szoboszlai 1996). In a similar vein, the dearth of protest and populism stemming from economic plight might be explained by a number of socio-structural features without much reference to party politics (Greskovits 1993, 1995).

In addition, the Hungarian transition to democracy was somewhat peculiar in that it allowed the negotiation of a comprehensive deal on constitutional reform before the first free elections (Munck and Leff 1997). The resulting document - formally an amended version of the 1949 Stalinist constitution, even though one constitutional lawyer figured that the only rule left unchanged was that the capital of Hungary is Budapest - removed the compelling need for a new constitution. No one is fully satisfied with the institutional framework that evolved, and there are a number of proposals for further reforms of the electoral system and of judicial review, for the introduction of direct presidential elections, for bi-cameralism, or for the introduction of references to social rights and corporatist intermediation in the constitution. Yet the lack of a sufficient consensus blocked any major institutional changes after 1990. As the fate of a number of legislative issues requiring a two-thirds majority and a degree of cooperation between government and opposition made clear, the situation is probably more a stalemate than tranquil stability. For instance, the parliament could not pass a law on the electronic media until December 1995, it struggled to fill vacancies in the Constitutional Court long after the constitutionally prescribed deadline, and spectacularly failed to get any results after years of negotiations on drafting a genuinely new constitution.

True, elite consensus almost certainly played a residual role in democratic consolidation. All parties kept endorsing and supporting democracy, even though they were not entirely certain that the other parties

would comply with the democratic rules of the game.⁶ A broad commitment to market, military and legal reforms, with an eye to integration into the European Union and NATO was also shared by the six main parties and the business, media and academic establishments.⁷ This consensus made the major parties extremely wary of political instability and mass mobilization on socioeconomic issues, and allowed for very effective sanctions against any deviants. Several major parties did, at one point or another, violate this gentlemen's agreement, but they backed down very quickly after the invariably unfavourable reception of their initiatives in the press and among the other parties.

This consensus was not perfect, but the minor disagreements over the importance of joining the EU and NATO, and the considerably wider, but ideologically not much more articulate inter-party dissent on economic policies did not serve as major building blocks of party identities. Previous studies of party elites by Herbert Kitschelt (1995) and Radoslaw Markowski (1995) show that party positions on economic issues in Hungary are less polarized than, more diffuse than, and not so critical for the definition of inter-party ideological distances as in the Czech Republic and Poland. In congruence with this, analyses of mass electoral behaviour found that social status and class are less important determinants of party preferences in Hungary than in most other East Central European and a number of Western democracies (Evans and Whitefield 1996; Tóka 1996). Table 8.2 presents bi-variate statistics on the impact of various attitudes on party preferences in some East European countries in late 1995. The important finding for the present chapter is that attitudes on foreign and economic policy issues apparently did not become as important determinants of party preferences in Hungary as in most other Eastern European countries.

Because party preference (i.e., which party the respondent would vote if there were an election) is not a metric scale but a nominal variable, we have to use the so-called uncertainty coefficient to measure how well we can predict party choice on the basis of responses to other questions. This coefficient tends to have very small numerical values even in the case of relatively strong relationships. For instance, using this measure we find that the impact of a social class variable (coded 1 for blue-collar workers and 0 otherwise) on party preference was just .04 in Great Britain in 1990 (see Tóka 1996, 116).

*Table 8.2: The impact of attitudes towards the market, the EU and NATO on party preferences in November 1995 (Uncertainty coefficient)*⁸

	<i>Uncertainty coefficient</i>		
	<i>Market</i>	<i>EU</i>	<i>NATO</i>
Albania	.071		
Armenia	.052		
Belarus	.044		
Bulgaria	.081	.057	.075

Croatia	.009		
Czech Republic	.059	.053	.079
Slovakia	.030	.019	.015
Estonia	.027	.017	.019
Hungary	.017	.015	.012
Latvia	.012	.011	.025
Lithuania	.031	.017	.032
Macedonia	.055		
Poland	.032	.013	.015
Romania	.025	.022	.021
Russia	.040		
Slovenia	.015	.022	.013
Ukraine	.053		
Georgia	.021		
Kazakhstan	.031		

The data come from the Eastern and Central Eurobarometer No. 6, in which the respondents in the Eastern countries aspiring for EU and NATO membership were asked how they would vote in a referendum on the entry of their country into these organizations. The responses to these two questions are much-much better predictors of party preference in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic than elsewhere. In other words, these are much more divisive partisan issues for these two party systems than for others. The explanation seems to be easy: these are the two countries among the nine in the analysis where the (former) communist parties were the least reformed and remained relatively orthodox during and after the transition to democracy. Poland, Estonia, and Hungary, with their thoroughly transformed post-communist parties are the other extreme. There, the issues of NATO and EU membership hardly differentiates between the supporters of the different parties.

A more complicated picture emerges when we move to the approval of a free market economy. This item predicts voting behaviour much better in the unlikely group of Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Macedonia than elsewhere. The cross-national differences are now less easily explained than those on foreign policy issues. It is true that the attitude in question seems to have the least to do with voting behaviour in Croatia, Latvia, Slovenia, and Hungary, and none of these countries has significant orthodox communist parties. But the Russian and Ukrainian successor parties of the CPSU give the impression of being ideologically more orthodox formations than the Macedonian, Armenian, and Albanian post-communist parties. Yet, attitudes towards the market do not appear to have had greater impact on party preferences in 1995 in Russia and Ukraine than south of the Balkan and Caucasus mountains. At first sight, the same comparison seems to defy Peter Katzenstein's ingenious proposal that small countries, because of their greater openness to trade, are more constrained in their economic policy choices than big countries. Thus, adversarial party competition on economic issues is more likely to appear in big, and

corporatist institutions in small countries (Katzenstein 1985). Obviously, Albania, Macedonia, and Armenia are small even in comparison to Hungary. Note, however, that their openness to trade may well have been lower in critical periods of their recent political development than that of Hungary, Slovenia and the Baltic states - indeed lower than that of Russia and Ukraine. The reasons are Albania's protracted policy of autarchy under Enver Hoxha, and the trade blockade against Macedonia and Armenia by some of their neighbours, coupled with ongoing warfare in neighbouring territories.

Formal testing of the hypothesis is difficult given the difficulties when it comes to evaluating the amount of unregistered foreign trade - i.e. smuggling - across some borders in Eastern Europe. But it seems clear enough that Hungarian party competition in the 1990s had little use for some traditional left-right issues related to foreign and economic policy. This, in turn, can probably be explained by two, interrelated factors: the reformist attitude of the former communist party and the high level of trade openness of the country, especially towards Western Europe.

Overall, political stability in Hungary probably benefited from the fact that the major issues of economic transformation became a matter of partisan controversy only to a limited extent. Nevertheless, this factor cannot explain why the Hungarian party system remained relatively stable. On the contrary, as an analysis of Polish, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian data showed, the less strongly related party preference is to attitudes on persistent and salient issues (such as market reforms), the easier it is for voters to move from one party to another (Tóka, forthcoming). Thus, the dearth of party competition on divisive economic issues should provide for more, rather than less instability in the party arena.

Yet, the same six parties which won parliamentary representation in the 1990 and 1994 Hungarian elections came out as front-runners in the opinion polls prior to the 1998 elections. Indeed, since the demise before the 1990 elections of the reformed communists now running as socialists (MSZDP), these six parties have been alone to surpass the legal threshold for parliamentary representation in public opinion polls. Furthermore, the 28.3 per cent electoral volatility in Hungary between 1990 and 1994 was clearly less than the 34 per cent scored in Poland between 1991 and 1993, the 54 per cent net volatility between 1992 and 1995 in Estonia, the 31.4 per cent 1992-96 volatility in the Czech Republic, and the volatility of more than 40 per cent estimated for Lithuania.⁹

The absence of disruption and upheaval in other elements of the political system presumably helped the stabilization of the party system. But this cannot be a sufficient explanation, as the absence of disruption was far less unusual in the post-communist world than party-political stability. Rather, the following factors can be emphasized:

First, the Opposition Roundtable (EKA) had dissolved itself by 1990 instead of remaining a heterogeneous and oversized electoral alliance

contesting the first elections on its own and doomed to break-up like the umbrella organizations in all the other countries covered in this volume (cf. Chapters 3–7, 9–11). Hungary was thus ‘spared’ at least one phase of organizational transformation which nearly all other East European countries went through when their popular fronts gradually disintegrated.

Second, the parties of the Opposition Roundtable gained real influence through the national roundtable talks with the communist establishment, and a monopoly of representing the anti-regime opinion in the process of transition. Thus, they attracted the best human, organizational and material resources available for competitive party politics in Hungary in 1989-90. This gave them considerable advantage over other parties which were founded after the Spring of 1989.

But this was not enough to safeguard the electoral viability of all the parties of the EKA,¹⁰ nor was it enough to prevent the entry of newcomers into the party arena. In the 1994 election campaign, two outsiders – the Agrarian Alliance (ASZ) and the Republic Party (KP) – showed evidence of having electorally attractive leaders, financial resources and grass-root organizations that should have been sufficient for gaining parliamentary representation - provided that their message to the voters was right. Yet they failed, probably because they lacked a truly unique ideological position within the party system. This was due not to their lack of imagination or talent, but rather to the nearly one-dimensional simplicity of the emerging cleavage structure, in which their position was difficult to distinguish from those of the triumphant Socialists (MSZP) and Free Democrats (SZDSZ). In other words, given the already high number of parliamentary parties, Hungary’s relatively simple cleavage structure acted as a gatekeeper against the entry of new parties.

Fourth, Hungary does have a politically mobilized cleavage line that has some hold over the electorate and the party elites. This cleavage divides society into two camps: a socially conservative, religious, somewhat nationalist, and anti-communist camp, on the one hand, and, on the other, a secular, morally permissive and generally less nationalist camp. The former camp wishes to see undone the historical injustices that occurred under communism. The latter camp – at the core of which are supporters of former communist regime and those who at least appreciate the modernizing and secularizing thrust thereof – would prefer to draw a thick line between past and present. This divide is cemented by being related to a large number of different issues. Another major reason for the persistence of this division is that it was reinforced by organizational carriers and collective identities throughout the entire communist era: active membership in churches (i.e. attendance at religious services) on the one hand, and (pre-1989) communist party membership on the other.¹¹ The religious cleavage is fairly well politicized in all predominantly Catholic countries of Eastern Europe (cf. Tóka 1996 on the impact of church attendance on party choice in different countries). The fact that it divides partisan camps more strongly in Hungary

than in Poland may go some way towards explaining why Hungary has lower electoral volatility despite the weaker mobilization of socioeconomic cleavages.

Finally, there is less to be explained about the stability of the Hungarian party system than sometimes appears to observers. As pointed out earlier, voters are not particularly loyal to their parties. Alas, some of the parties significantly changed their identity over time. Several of them became endangered species at one time or another, and at the time of writing chances are that the number of relevant parties will significantly decrease in the 1998 elections. Just as the simplicity of the cleavage structure may have served as a gate-keeper against the entry of new parties, it may be unable to sustain even the six party system as it existed between 1990 and 1997. At the very least, the one-dimensional party system had something to do with the fact that for a long time it seemed very difficult to distinguish between the Young Democrats (FIDESZ) and the Free Democrats (SZDSZ), and between the Christian Democrats (KDNP) and the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) in ideological terms. The ideological reorientation of FIDESZ in 1993–94 and of the KDNP in 1995–96 was directly linked to their failure to carve out unique ideological niches for themselves. This ideological shift contributed – at least indirectly and through its impact on opinion-makers – to the free-fall of these two parties in the public opinion polls of the respective periods. Thus, the tendency for some parties to engage in extremely risky, almost suicidal ideological manoeuvres seems to derive from the fact that it is rather hard to define distinctive and electorally viable ideological positions for as many as six parties in the largely one-dimensional ideological space of the Hungarian party system. If so, then the dearth of party polarization on economic issues does indeed undermine the six-party regime as it existed between 1990 and 1997.

Several of the above propositions do not easily lend themselves to formal testing. Thus, what follows below is merely a short history of the Hungarian party system that, at most, can demonstrate the plausibility of the above explanations of political stability and instability under Hungary's (first) post-communist party system.

The Evolution of the Hungarian Party System

After the Iron Curtain came down, all non-communist parties ceased to exist in Hungary. They began to re-emerge on the political scene in the autumn of 1987 to support the progress towards more political freedom and various other reforms. The historical parties were reorganized six to ten months after the breakthrough Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) conference of May 1988, when the most stubborn opponents of political liberalization were removed from the Politburo. Another forty or so non-communist parties emerged in the year after the official recognition of the multi-party system on the MSZMP's Central Committee meeting in February

1989. Only one of these newcomers, the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP), was invited to participate in the Opposition Roundtable (EKA). The EKA was founded in March 1989 by eight already existing opposition organizations and became the representative of the united opposition in the National Roundtable talks which took place in June–September 1989. Admission to the EKA was already a recognition of a party's potential strength and respectability, and the roundtable talks further increased the gap between outsiders and insiders. In the most crucial period of party formation, the Roundtable drew the attention of the media and potential party cadres on seven opposition parties and accelerated these parties' professionalization. Not a single of the opposition parties excluded from the Roundtable was to win more than 2 per cent of the votes in 1990.

On the other side of the Roundtable sat representatives of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP), a party soon to disappear. The October 1989 congress of the MSZMP announced the party's break with Marxism-Leninism and established a new party named the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP). The losing Marxist-Leninist faction rejected the new programme and helped organize a relatively orthodox communist party under the old MSZMP label. The reformist wing inherited the government positions and party assets, but not the ideological positions nor the members of the troubled old party - former MSZMP members were not automatically registered as MSZP members. In the 1990 election campaign, the party emphasized pragmatism, statesmanship, the need for economic reforms, its commitment to democracy, European integration, the party's role in maintaining political stability and the combination of social democratic, patriotic, moderately liberal and technocratic elements in the party's programme and leadership.

The voters presumably had little difficulty guessing what social groups and issue concerns the reorganized historical parties intended to speak for. From the autumn of 1989, the Independent Smallholders Party (FKGP), a moderately nationalist and religious agrarian centre party before 1948, had come out strongly in favour of the restoration of ex-farmers' pre-1948 property rights, a proposition emphatically rejected by all the other parties. The Social Democratic Party of Hungary (MSZDP), as well as the fiercely anti-communist FKGP, usually joined the more radical wing of the opposition in the political conflicts of 1989. The greatest concern, apparently, of the party-leaders was to dissociate themselves from the incumbent reform socialists who were also contesting the social democratic field. The Christian Democratic KDNP stressed the traditional religious issues and emphasized its moral commitment to protect the poor. In the 1989 referenda it supported the same option as the Socialist Party; in other respects it usually shared the views of the moderate opposition. All parties with some historical roots attempted to develop organizations following the traditional mass party model (Enyedi 1996).

The dominant actors in the Opposition Roundtable were not, however, the historical parties, but three newly created umbrella organizations of anti-communist mobilization, which represented a much broader ideological spectrum. In addition, the overarching issue promoted by these umbrella organizations – the transition to democracy – represented more transient concerns. But the high internal cohesion within the pre-existing social networks of intellectuals upon which these three organizations – the MDF, SZDSZ and FIDESZ – were based, made them the most successful non-communist actors in mobilizing human and material resources for politics. In Hungary's negotiated revolution, the media constituted the main channel of communication from parties to voters. This was kind of technique mastered by the otherwise discredited reform socialists within the MSZP as well as by the MDF, SZDSZ and FIDESZ politicians, who proved themselves masters compared to other teams, became the sources of most political initiatives, and were able to react promptly to any event. Unlike the historical parties and the reform socialists, the MDF, SZDSZ and FIDESZ did not have pre-determined fixed positions on any issue: they were free and - due to their doubtless skills and internal cohesion - able to adapt their policies to events and experiences as they was fit. For several years to come, these three organizations had the character of a professional electoral organization than of a mass party.

The transferability of the initial advantages into electoral superiority over less broadly based parties may seem less mysterious than the mere survival of these umbrella organizations in the ordinary business of party politics. Maybe they were 'organized along tribal lines' (as an insider put it), and - as the late MDF leader József Antall claimed - 'nobody beyond the Grand Boulevard [the dividing line between downtown and midtown Budapest] was interested in' their ideological debates, which reflected only the traditional micro-cleavage dividing the Hungarian intelligentsia (Körösényi 1991). But their founding fathers would never have acquired their undeniable charisma had they been unable to deduce from their ideological heritage a distinctive position on every single newly arising issue, thus maintaining the ideological cohesion of their parties. The mere fact that there were three of them forced these parties in a competition, which, in turn, provided sufficient incentives to keep each party united.

Before being formally established in the autumn of 1988, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) both had at least a decade-long pre-history. The SZDSZ was more or less the direct successor to the informal network of the dissent movement dating back to the late seventies. For the general public, the only visible difference between them and the MDF until late 1989 was tactical. The founding fathers of the MDF, aiming at a moral reorganization of the nation, advocated *Realpolitik* and tried to co-operate with the reformers in the communist party.

In terms of leadership, the MDF initially relied on a group of intellectuals under the guardianship of the reformist Politburo-member Imre Pozsgay. Many of the most influential founding fathers shared with Pozsgay a left-wing version of the pre-war *népi-nemzeti* (literally populist-national or *völkisch*-national) orientation. The *népi* ideology rejected both cosmopolitan capitalism and internationalist communism, sought a third way based on participatory democracy, a new national elite originating from lower class (preferably rural) families, and to some extent on collective ownership mixed with small and medium size private enterprises. The network of dissenters, reform-economists and sympathizers that rallied around SZDSZ tended to despise the *népi* ideology and missed no opportunity to point out its historical links to anti-Semitic and authoritarian tendencies.

Of all opposition groups, the MDF was the fastest and most efficient in building up a nation-wide party organization. By the Summer of 1989 it became recognized as the most likely non-communist contender for electoral victory in the next election, which was due no later than June 1990. Its relative moderation may have been a key asset in 1988 and early 1989, but it soon turned into a liability as the breakdown of communist rule speeded up all over the Soviet bloc in late 1989. Through a number of bold political initiatives, the SZDSZ turned from a small party apparently unable to obtain more than 5-8 per cent of votes into a formidable electoral machine matching the MDF both in terms of membership and popularity. The MDF responded to this challenge in two ways. It started presenting itself as a centre-right, strongly patriotic Christian party facing a cosmopolitan, radical and agnostic SZDSZ. On the other hand, the MDF claimed it was pursuing a more cautious approach than its liberal rival to the introduction of market economy and to economic recovery. Conventional wisdom has it that the SZDSZ was trapped by its previously successful strategy of radical opposition to the regime, and that its radical postures had turned into an electoral liability by the 1990 elections.

The Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) was established by a network of university students and young professionals that crystallized in the second half of the 1980s. Initially, FIDESZ became known mainly for its protest actions. Seeing its electoral niche eroded by its increasingly popular ideological twin, the SZDSZ, the Young Democrats fought for survival during the 1990 election campaign. The campaign strategy was based on maximizing the party's generational appeal so as to differentiate the party from the Free Democrats. In early 1990, the electoral strength of the Young Democrats was fairly limited; after the elections, however, the FIDESZ was the only party able to capitalize on the decreasing popularity of the MDF as well as of the SZDSZ.

Quite apart from the information overflow resulting from the exceptional circumstances of regime change, there was a non-trivial reason why the 1990 distribution of electoral preferences could not have been expected to

reflect very closely the distribution of the population along some underlying cleavage dimensions. The point is not, as journalistic accounts often suggested, that the parties had no 'clear programmes' apart from some vague anti-communism. Had the parties not had a considerable ideological cohesion already when they entered the legislature, party discipline within the ranks of the backbenchers would hardly have been as high as it actually was in 1990–91.¹²

The many allegations about the absence of clear programmes may be attributed to the lack of a relevance of a relevant record against which to evaluate the credibility of the new parties. The parties clearly and consistently propagated differences in priorities and policies, but the many issue conflicts between them were not yet incorporated into one all-embracing ideological super-dimension where the incumbent socialists were pitted against their anti-communist challengers. The future importance of the several partly cross-cutting divisions was unclear, since the communism versus Western-style democracy dimension was rightly believed to lose its relevance after the first election. Thus, the post-election period was to determine the dominant divide of the future as well as how the political parties were to unfold on the dominant dimensions.

Issue dimensions in 1989 and early 1990

The anti-communism factor, or, in other words, the radicalism vs. gradual change divide, pitted the small party of orthodox communists (MSZMP) against the liberals (SZDSZ, FIDESZ), the Smallholders (FKGP), and some smaller right-wing parties. From this perspective, the Socialists (MSZP) were somewhere near the Communists (MSZMP), while the Democratic Forum and the Social Democrats were close to the centre but still on the radical side. The Christian Democrats (KNDP) and the People's Party (MNP), i.e. the two opposition parties which in the 1989 referendum sided with the socialists to support direct presidential elections, were probably in the centre. The divide between the pro-market and the social protectionist parties ran mostly, but not entirely, parallel to this first dimension. Here again, the SZDSZ and the FIDESZ were on the one pole and the Communists on the other, but the exact ordering of the Socialists (MSZP), the Democratic Forum (MDF), the Social Democrats and the Smallholders (all being on the pro-market side) was somewhat uncertain. The Social Democrats and the Smallholders were more in favour of pro-market policies and full-scale privatization than the other two, but the first had an ambiguous attitude towards declining industries, and the second obviously had an affinity for agrarian protectionism. The People's Party and the Christian Democrats seemed to be somewhere on the social protectionist side.

The parties' attitudes towards class interests could not be easily inferred from their respective positions on the pro-market versus social protectionism axis. With recession and an inflation rate in the range of 25 to 30 per cent at the time of the elections, the parties were not inclined to

commit themselves to substantial increases in welfare spending, save for education and what was necessitated by the growing rate of unemployment. Under state-socialism, the actual flow of cash transfers and benefits in kind favoured middle and high status groups (Ferge 1991). Thus, one could easily pledge - as did pro-market Free Democrats - to divert more public spending to the poor without increasing the overall level of welfare spending. The Smallholders and the MDF also tended to hold out the prospect of a broad national bourgeoisie as a remedy to social problems, a position which might intimate that they were advocating the interests of would-be proprietors. The Free and Young Democrats, however, saw private property as economic necessity only, not as a moral goal in its own right (Körösényi 1991, 10). The rhetoric of the Free Democrats came very close to that of the Social Democrats and the Socialists who called for strong trade unions to protect the interests of wage-earners against what they believed was bound to become a small propertied minority. As if to make things even more obscure, the MDF pledged itself to restrict unemployment and pauperization. The Socialists, who took pride in speaking for the interests of wage-earners, were inevitably associated with the former *nomenklatura* and not quite credible on welfare issues after the austerity measures of the late 1980s. The Democratic People's Party and the Christian Democrats also committed themselves to the non-propertied poor, but their main issue concerns laid elsewhere.

Most parties seemed to agree that a nationalist-cosmopolitan divide was present and fairly important in 1990: in fact, the campaign apparently convinced some, like BBC correspondent Misha Glenny (1990), that this represented the dominant conflict dimension between the main contenders. On this dimension, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Democratic People's Party and probably also the Smallholders constituted the 'national' (*nemzeti*) pole, while the pro-Soviet Communists in the MSZMP along with the pro-Western Free and Young Democrats occupied the anti-nationalist end of the spectrum. Although the parties themselves rarely referred to it, commentators took the Christian Democrats' moderately nationalist and the Social Democrats' moderately anti-nationalist stands for granted. The Socialist Party was in a difficult position. As a heir to János Kádár's Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, it was open to the dual charge of having betrayed national sovereignty in and after 1956 and for not having made sufficient efforts to protect the Magyar minority in Ceaușescu's Romania. But the presence of Imre Pozsgay in the leadership secured a certain *népi* and 'national' credibility for the Socialists. As a matter of fact, practically no controversial and salient policy issues were associated with the nationalist-cosmopolitan dimension. The protection of the Magyar minorities living in neighbouring countries, the break with the Warsaw Pact and with the Comecon fitted the liberal just as well as the national agenda, and both sides seemed credible and outspoken on these issues.

The alignments on the rural–urban, religious–secular, and moral (as distinguished from narrowly political) libertarianism–authoritarianism dimensions largely coincided with the national–cosmopolitan divide. The Democratic Forum and the liberal parties seemed to have distinct, but not extreme, positions on these three dimensions. The MDF had its strongholds in provincial cities; it was moderately religious, slightly conservative on moral issues, and demanded a measure of respect for authority. The Free Democrats was a distinctly urban or even metropolitan phenomenon; along with the other liberal party, the FIDESZ, it was secular but outspoken on freedom of religion, mostly libertarian and always suspicious of authorities. In 1990, however, only the urban–rural dimension had salience. The agrarian–rural parties, particularly the People’s Party and the Agrarian Alliance (ASZ), were trying to mobilize against the privileges which Budapest and other urban centres were seen to enjoy at the expense of the countryside.

The coalition formula chosen after the 1990 elections strongly affected the future importance and combination of the potential ideological divides. The ‘reformist–anti-reformist’ conflict and the class cleavage was rated the most important by the citizens; and analyses of party manifestos, to some extent corroborated by mass survey data, suggest that these two cleavages pitted the liberal parties against the ‘Left’. (Tóka 1993).

With the socialist government out of power, ‘democratic anti-communism’ was likely to lose its importance for the structuring of the political field, but there were good reasons to believe that the social protectionist versus pro-market divide was to dominate the party system. Thus, the liberal and socialist camps were to remain poles apart even after the 1990 elections. Indeed, pre-election commentaries suggested the followings coalition formulas to be the most likely: MDF and MSZP with some smaller parties; SZDSZ–FIDESZ–FKGP (probably with the MSZDP); MDF–SZDSZ (probably joined by FIDESZ). This last formula was supposed to have the best odds.¹³

However, all these pre-election speculations failed to grasp the full impact of the newly created electoral system. In the elections, the MDF won more than 42 per cent of the mandates with somewhat less than a quarter of the (first round) votes. Altogether, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Independent Smallholders (FKGP) and the Christian Democrats (KDNP) had close to sixty per cent of the seats, and soon reached an agreement on the composition and programme of the new government. The FIDESZ also participated in the talks leading up to the formation of the new government, but it is a moot question whether it was included in these talks as a potential coalition partner or as a device to keep FKGP demands at bay.

The impact of the 1990 elections

The coalition formula replaced the previous political divides with a new one, that of Ins versus Outs, between a Christian–National coalition

government and its liberal and socialist opposition. The main emotional divide in early 1990 was between the Socialists and the radical opposition (SZDSZ, FIDESZ, FKGP), with the Democratic Forum close to the centre (Tóka 1993). By May 1991, the main divide became the one pitting the government parties against the liberals and the Socialist Party: by way of example, the more sympathy one had for the Free Democrats, the more likely he or she was to like the Socialists and the Young Democrats, and to dislike the Smallholders and the Democratic Forum.

Unfortunately, no systematically collected data are available on shifts in the parties' policy proposals and rhetoric after the 1990 election. Referring to external constraints, until 1992 the MDF leadership opted for monetary and privatization policies along the lines suggested by the liberal parties during the campaign, and it suspended its plans to increase the money supply and invest in education. Some rhetorical and tangible differences certainly remained between the government and the liberal opposition: the latter called for a smaller budget deficit, curtailed spending on bureaucracy, a little spending more on welfare, lower taxes and a quicker pace of privatization. Even so, fiscal policy and privatization were not very controversial areas in 1990-91. The constraints which the MDF had imposed upon also made themselves felt on the Christian Democrats and the Smallholders: The KDNP Minister of Welfare could not live up to his party's promises of social protectionism, and the FKGP Minister of Agriculture faced the a similar problem. The opposition parties, including the Socialists, bent over backwards not to align themselves with any kind of social protectionism. Thus, the differences between the parties' attitudes on most socioeconomic issues either diminished or lost their relevance altogether.

Some of the major controversial issues in 1990-91 were related to the sectoral interests represented by the two smaller coalition partners. In exchange for FKGP support, the Democratic Forum and the Christian Democrats had to give up much of their opposition to the Smallholders' restitution policies. Fearing that the government might score points among former owners of collectivized and nationalized property, the SZDSZ also shifted its position, but the Young Democrats and the Socialists all but rejected the idea of compensating pre-1949 owners. On the issue of financial compensation to the churches, one of the pet projects of the KDNP, polarization was moderate, but a few details divided the parties into two distinctive and united blocs, with the government parties speaking for a somewhat greater role of organized religion in social life than the opposition parties were doing.

The extent of central government power was a recurrent issue. Referring to the need for rational government, the MDF advocated a greater degree of central control over local governments, but also over education, national media, and state-owned companies. On this dimension, the liberal and socialist opposition was unified, and the Socialists and the Free Democrats

frequently claimed that the MDF wanted to create large clientelistic networks and subject ever more spheres of life to political control.

Finally, a major controversy surrounded issues of retroactive justice, on which the government parties repeatedly showed anti-communist zeal and determination to undo past injustices, while the liberals and the socialists insisted that retroactive justice violated the rule of law.

Overall, the government parties managed to act in concert even on such a matter as restitution, which had caused very pronounced disagreements between them before the 1990 election. The Socialist Party, which sought to affirm its position as a relevant player on the political scene, readily found issues where it could appear as an ally of the liberal parties. The liberal parties, on the other hand, mostly abandoned their anti-communist rhetoric, partly because the content of the practical issues related to it had changed since the Socialists lost power, but possibly also because they found a ready and willing ally in the Socialist Party. The difference between the Socialists and the once united opposition did not disappear entirely: a small number of bills (particularly trade union law) were passed only against the Socialists. But on the main controversial issues discussed below it had no relevance any more. Moreover, the anti-communist pole - previously the domain of the liberal parties and the FKGP - was gradually occupied by the three government parties.

Towards the break-up of the liberal bloc

The last three years of MDF-dominated government did little to reshape the issue agenda of Hungarian politics. True, the - more apparent than real - consensus on economic issues was weakened by increasing criticism by the MSZP, KDNP and SZDSZ of the allegedly corrupt and clientelistic practices in the privatization process; by the KDNP and the MSZP calling for greater social justice and a more equal sharing of the burdens of economic transformation by rich and poor; and by the SZDSZ and the FIDESZ talking more and more about cutting corporate taxes. But if anything, the battles on non-economic issues became ever more bitter as Hungary's media war escalated (Oltay 1993a; Pataki 1994a), and the emergence of the extreme right generated considerable anxiety (Pataki 1992; Oltay 1993b, 1994a) - even making a few pundits publicly panic in late 1993 over the possibility of a right-wing coup.

Most of the parties embarked on a course of organizational development and important changes in electoral strategy, even though the issue agenda remained essentially unchanged. The Christian-National bloc fragmented and lost its cohesion. At the same time, small but steady steps paved the way of a future socialist-liberal coalition through the establishment of the 'Democratic Charter' - a loose framework for protest action, organized by leaders from within the SZDSZ and MSZP along with other intellectuals who were wary of what they saw as the authoritarian propensity of the MDF

government (Bozóki 1996). But the probably most important steps were taken by the FIDESZ.

In the September–October 1990 municipal elections, the electoral coalition of FIDESZ and SZDSZ had defeated the government parties in a landslide victory in virtually all major cities. Beginning in early 1991, parliamentary and local by-elections were ever more often won by Socialist candidates, but the FIDESZ maintained a huge lead in the opinion polls, with the MDF and SZDSZ falling back to a 10–15 per cent level of support each by late 1991. The levels of support for the other mainstream parties were even lower and fluctuated within a rather narrow range. One popular theory has it that the heavy losses by the MDF in 1990–91 was a case of policy-blind pocketbook voting. But the newly acquired Christian–radical image, must have something to do with the fact that the MDF lost considerably more among secular than among anti-market voters (Tóka 1992; 1995).

Premier József Antall's strategy of maintaining the cohesion of the Christian-national bloc by policy compromises and his discrete manipulation of leadership elections in the KDNP and the FKGP worked out with the KDNP, but almost completely failed with the FKGP. József Torgyán, the former FKGP caucus leader, proved an absolutely unacceptable partner for Antall, and the Premier encouraged and aided those trying to remove Torgyán from all party offices. Torgyán managed to rally most of the FKGP organizations behind him in the conflict with the FKGP MPs who remained loyal to Antall and the government coalition. Once Torgyán had won the battle for leadership, he expelled his critics (i.e., the majority of the parliamentary club) from the party and took the party into opposition. For most of 1992–94, the parliamentary deputies of Torgyán's FKGP were one or two members short to form a separate caucus. The expelled MPs remained on the government benches as 'the Smallholder 35' caucus and eventually founded a party of their own, known as the United Smallholders Party or EKGP (Pataki 1994b). However, the EKGP had very little appeal on the Smallholders rank and file and lost out miserably in the 1994 elections.

A second series of defection from the government benches affected the MDF directly. By mid-1991, some sections of the MDF had lost patience with the failure of the MDF government to purge the economic and cultural elites of what they perceived as a hostile mix of the former *nomenklatura* and secular–cosmopolitan liberals. This growing dissatisfaction within the ranks of the MDF found its most radical expression in the views of the notorious editor of the MDF weekly, party vice-president István Csurka. The tolerance or even encouragement supposedly shown by the government and the MDF towards various extremists - from Csurka to skinhead gangs masquerading in fascists uniforms - became the most hotly debated issue in Hungarian politics. In a major embarrassment to the government, several MDF deputies questioned the legitimacy and permanence of the current state borders of Hungary, and at least one even called for a peaceful reunification of the entire Carpathian Basin (read: historical, pre-Trianon Hungary). In the year

following the publication of a notorious Csurka essay in the MDF weekly in August 1992, the Foreign Ministry counted approximately one thousand articles in the mainstream world press (approximately one half of all the entries found on Hungary) discussing Csurka's views, which were labelled fascist even by some fellow party members (Pataki 1992). The MDF was apparently paralyzed: the leadership sensed that Csurka's views faithfully reflected the frustration of many rank-and-file members, yet it could not agree with him either on policy objectives or on pre-election tactics. By way of example, Csurka argued that the 1994 elections were already lost; what remained at stake was the preservation of the ideological integrity of the party and a decisive increase in the social influence of the *népi-nemzeti* forces, requiring radical steps to promote faithful cadres in the media, the privatization agency, the civil service, in the boards of state-owned companies.

Csurka did not even refrain from making comments on the Premier's health. Antall had been known to be terminally ill since November 1990, and Csurka publically called upon him to nominate a successor. Coming on top of his public criticism of the beleaguered government, this *faux pas* alienated Csurka from the bulk of the party. Even so, the party leadership suspected that a left-liberal alliance aiming at the total delegitimization of the Christian-National bloc was emerging under the guise of the public outrage over Csurka's views. Thus, the MDF leaders were reluctant to turn against Csurka in a concession to the voices of 'anti-fascism'.

In June 1993, Csurka and his followers were eventually expelled from the MDF; they went on to found the Party of Hungarian Justice and Life (MIÉP) in August 1993. As an illustration of the delicate balance of forces within the MDF, the most vocal critics of Csurka were expelled at the same time (Oltay 1993b; 1993c). Even more important than the public image was the fact that Csurka had become a serious threat to the organizational unity of the MDF. First he had developed an organization parallel to the MDF called the Movement of the Hungarian Path; then he organized a strong faction within the MDF caucus which defied the government in the vote on the Basic Treaty signed with Ukraine.¹⁴ After Csurka had been thrown out, the conservative and Christian Democratic elements regained control of the MDF, but the party was unable to change its image accordingly in the run-up to the elections. The period of national mourning following Prime Minister Antall's death induced a surge of support for the MDF in the public opinion polls, but this effect proved short-lived and did not translate into increased electoral support; nor the consolidation of the party's position in the centre-right, nor the somewhat lax fiscal policies of the last 16 months before the elections and the 7 per cent real wage increase in the last 6 months before the elections (see Okolicsányi 1994).

In late 1992, a group of FIDESZ leaders engaged in a reorientation of the party. For one thing, they were anxious to prepare voters for the economic policy measures that a liberal government would implement after the 1994

elections. As anybody familiar with the mechanics of the Hungarian electoral system must have discovered, the 1992 opinion poll figures would spell a victory of a two-thirds majority in the incoming parliament for the SZDSZ-FIDESZ coalition. It was thus clear that the FIDESZ could easily afford to lose quite a few pocketbook-oriented and protest voters. Moreover, the strong showing of the Socialists in the by-elections alerted the FIDESZ leaders to the fact that the MSZP was the most serious contender in the electoral arena. Thus, the attractive prospect of a FIDESZ-SZDSZ government made it important for the FIDESZ to stop the SZDSZ from co-operating with the socialists, but most FIDESZ leaders envisaged the FIDESZ as the future leading force of the Hungarian right, rather than of the centre. This objective seemed better served by courting the Democratic Forum rather than the Socialists. As a defector from the MDF to the FIDESZ succinctly put it in an article before the 1994 elections: in a FIDESZ-SZDSZ-MSZP coalition, the SZDSZ would be the pivotal party, while the FIDESZ would hold that position in a MDF-FIDESZ-SZDSZ coalition.

Thus, early in 1993, the FIDESZ stopped espousing left-liberal views on religious and 'national' issues, voted against a routine adjustment of state pensions to the increase in nominal wages, and implicitly called for a boycott of the elections of union representatives to the social security council. They lashed out against the Democratic Charter and the SZDSZ for their supposedly exaggerated anxiety about the nationalist, as opposed to the Red, menace, thus building the track for the 'Warsaw express' (or infecting Hungary with the 'Lithuanian disease'), i.e., the return of the MSZP to power.¹⁵

The 1993-94 period proved electorally disastrous for FIDESZ. First, the Christian-National constituency was reluctant to switch to the FIDESZ immediately after receiving the news of the party's reorientation. The expulsion of Csurka from the MDF put an end to what ever hopes the FIDESZ might have entertained to the effect that at least the more conservative elements of the Christian-National camp might turn towards it. The image of the party was also tainted by two scandals related to party finances, which triggered an accelerated slide in the opinion polls. Moreover, as the FIDESZ lost and the MSZP gained ground in the polls, the rejection of any coalition with the MSZP implied a post-election coalition with the MDF – a prospect unattractive to large sections of the FIDESZ constituency. Within just one year time, the FIDESZ dropped from some forty to less than ten per cent in the public opinion polls. The new FIDESZ strategy certainly renewed the party's image and gave it an electorate in which the anti-market voters were not as over-represented as in some 1992-93 private polls made by the party. Even so, the decimated constituency remained distinctive in terms of age and oppositional attitude, rather than being identifiable through its pro-market attitudes (Tóka 1995).

With the MDF and the SZDSZ, followed by the FIDESZ, falling out of grace with the voters, the MSZP went on to win an overall majority of seats in the

1994 elections without any new items on the electoral platform, save the inclusion of a populist twist to its economic policy rhetoric and a more confident posture on non-economic issues (Oltay 1994b). The MSZP promised much the same as the liberals: a more competent and pragmatic leadership; greater economic prosperity; no government-promoted re-socialization of society in the name of systemic change, but a continuation of the economic reforms and privatization; no retroactive revision of past privatization deals but tightened control of privatization by parliament; the implementation of all the restitution laws enacted during MDF rule; and probably some improvements in the relations with Slovakia and Romania.

The SZDSZ went through a brief leadership crisis in 1991-92. After the resignation of retirement of its founding father, Péter Tölgyessy was elected party leader against strong resistance from veteran dissenters of the 1970s and 1980s. For about a year, the constellation of influential factions and a weak executive paralyzed the party. When Péter Tölgyessy came up for re-election in 1992, the old establishment had launched a better-known candidate than in the year before, and Tölgyessy suffered a crushing defeat. In the following years, the SZDSZ tried to adapt to electoral considerations in every respect save on some issues concerning economic policy, civic liberties and the constitutional framework. The nomination of a relatively unknown newcomer instead of the party leader for Prime Minister in the 1994 campaign testifies to the new style. By 1993-94, the SZDSZ emerged as the most united and probably most well-heeled Hungarian party. The 1994 campaign of the Free Democrats steered clear of divisive issues and controversial policy pledges, emphasizing the personal qualities and appeal of the parties leading candidates. Bits and pieces of evidence suggest that the SZDSZ did particularly well among pro-market voters in early 1994. In 1992-93, the supporters of the SZDSZ had not differed much from the national average in terms of their economic policy attitudes, but at the time of the 1994 elections the Free Democrats featured the most pro-market electorate of any party, just as it had in 1990 (cf. the impact of the PROMARKET variable on SZDSZ support in Table 8.5). As mentioned above, the SZDSZ had done preciously little to attract voters with pro-market attitudes and had had turned into a catch-all party. This presumably made the Free democrats attractive to the alternative to the triumphant Socialists, who were equally non-nationalist and secular, but somewhat anti-market.¹⁶

The New Party Space

Party positions

Clearly, the issue dimensions that defined the ideological identity of the Hungarian parties changed considerably between 1990 and 1994. The most comprehensive data set currently available about the issue positions of the Hungarian parties serves as the point of departure for an evaluation. These data derive from an international survey conducted by Herbert Kitschelt and

his associates just before the 1994 elections in Hungary (Kitschelt 1995; Kitschelt et al., forthcoming). In Hungary, a 129 mid-level party activists – e.g. heads of regional or municipal party organizations – were interviewed. They were recruited in nearly equal numbers from each of the six main parties. Among other things, they had to locate seven Hungarian parties on 16 twenty-point issue scales.

The original answers were recoded so that the resulting scores show how much closer to point 1 or point 20 the party in question was placed by the respondents, compared to their average placement of all the seven parties on the given question. Minus scores indicate a placement deviating from the average towards the first of the two response alternatives offered to the respondents, and positive scores the opposite. By way of example, the alternative positions on the first issue were ‘social policy cannot protect citizens from all risks, but they also have to rely on themselves. For instance, all costs of medical treatments should be paid either directly by everybody from his or her own pocket, or by joining voluntary health insurance schemes individually’; and ‘the social policy of the state must protect citizens from every sort of social risks. For instance, all medical expenses should be financed from the social security fund’.

Table 8.3 shows the mean issue placement of the seven parties on by the cross-party jury. With the exception of the question on environmental protection, the respondents apparently saw sizeable differences between the positions of the different parties on just about every issue. On economic issues, the FIDESZ and the SZDSZ were attributed the most, and the MSZP the least pro-market position. Foreign direct investments and the third issue item – which was essentially about the restitution of property rights, originally promoted by the Smallholders – are slightly deviant cases. The socialists and the liberals were seen to be more in favour of foreign direct investment than the average, while the Christian–National parties were believed to favour property restitution and the defence of supposed national interests from the intrusion of foreign capital.

*Table 8.3: The mean position of seven parties vis-à-vis other parties as perceived by a panel of party activists.*¹⁷

Variable		Rated party						
No.	Content domain	MSZP	FKGP	KDNP	SZDSZ	FIDESZ	MIÉP	MDF
1	social security	3.2	.1	1.6	-2.1	-2.8	.6	-.7
2	market vs. state	4.2	.4	1.3	-3.3	-3.6	1.8	-.8
3	mode of privatization	-.3	3.5	2.3	-4.5	-4.4	4.2	-.9
4	inflation-unemployment	3.5	.9	.8	-2.3	-2.2	1.7	-2.4
5	foreign investment	.9	-5.2	-1.2	5.4	4.7	-6.0	1.3
6	income taxation	.0	-1.6	-.9	2.5	2.3	-2.3	.1
7	immigration	2.9	-4.0	-.9	3.7	3.1	-4.7	-.1
8	women at work	-5.5	4.2	3.1	-3.1	-3.3	3.8	.8

9	abortion	5.9	-5.3	-6.4	6.8	6.6	-6.3	-1.2
10	churches and education	7.9	-5.6	-6.7	7.1	6.7	-5.8	-3.6
11	urban-rural	.7	-5.6	-.6	3.3	2.9	-2.5	1.8
12	authority-autonomy	3.6	-5.1	-4.6	7.1	7.1	-5.5	-2.7
13	environment	-1.3	-.1	.5	.6	1.8	-.8	-.7
14	censorship	-3.6	4.1	4.5	-6.3	-6.1	4.9	2.5
15	former communists	8.7	-6.2	-2.8	5.1	2.7	-7.0	-.5
16	basic treaties with neighbours	-6.5	6.6	2.0	-5.6	-4.6	7.9	.2

*Table 8.4: Principal component analysis of the issue variables in Table 8.3 (N=903). Matrix of factor loadings (after varimax rotation)*¹⁸

Variable	% of variance		
	47.6	13.3	7.5
<i>No. Content domain</i>			
1 social security	-.01	.77	.09
2 market vs. state	-.12	.82	-.20
3 mode of privatization	-.53	.60	.01
4 inflation-unemployment	-.02	.74	.03
5 foreign investments	.67	-.25	.34
6 income taxation	.37	-.42	-.13
7 immigration	.77	-.15	.03
8 women at work	-.80	.03	.18
9 abortion	.88	-.14	.13
10 churches and education	.91	-.06	.09
11 urban-rural	.55	-.46	-.28
12 authority-autonomy	.87	-.22	.20
13 environment	.08	.07	.92
14 censorship	-.82	.23	-.09
15 former communists	.87	-.02	-.15
16 basic treaties with neighbours	-.86	.10	-.01

Factor scores of rated parties:

MSZP	1.24	1.21	-.64
FKGP	-1.04	.16	.21
KDNP	-.63	.23	.05
SZDSZ	.96	-.69	.24
FIDESZ	.81	-.78	.55
MIÉP	-1.07	.31	-.17
MDF	-.27	-.45	-.24

For all intents and purposes, the underlying structure of the party space is stable, but the overall polarization of party positions seems to be much larger on non-economic than on economic issues. Comparing the Hungarian results to Bulgarian, Czech and Polish figures, Kitschelt (1995) found that

that the Hungarian party system was characterized by a high degree of ideological polarization on non-economic, particularly religious, issues, while polarization on issues of economic policy was unusually low.

The next relevant finding emerges in Table 8.4, which derives from a factor analysis of the items in Table 8.3. For each issue, one variable was created. For every respondent there are seven observations, one for each party. The question is how well whether we can predict well the perceived position of a given party on one issue from the position attributed to the same party on some other issues. If a small number of factors emerges, and all the original variables have high positive or negative factor loading on at least one of the factors, we have identified a relatively simple party space, where party positions on just about any relevant issue can be nicely predicted once we know the position of the party on some other issues.

In the given Hungarian data, the issue variables define essentially two dimensions. There are intimations of a third dimension or factor with an *Eigenvalue* higher than one, but this factor is almost exclusively defined by the deviant item on environmental protection. No less than 48 per cent of the variations in party positions across the 16 issues and seven parties can be explained by party positions on the first of the three factors. All non-economic issues except for environmental protection have very high loadings on this factor. Thus, preferences regarding any one of them are good predictors of preferences regarding any other. In other words, inter-party conflict on national, religious and other non-economic issues tends to be structured along a similar pattern; such issue dimensions or cleavages are not cross-cutting but overlapping.

Most economic policy items have a high loading on the second, but not on the first factor. This factor only explains a meagre 13.3 per cent of the variance in party positions across issues, and it does not correlate with party positions on non-economic issues. This is clearly an economically defined left–right cleavage, pitting the socialist MSZP against the two liberal parties (SZDSZ and FIDESZ) and the MDF. On the first and primary dimension, the Christian–National, anti-communist and slightly agrarian FKGP, the MIÉP, the KDNP and the MDF are differentiated from against the secular, cosmopolitan, and urban MSZP, FIDESZ and SZDSZ. Thus, the analysis of the elite perceptions of party space lends support to the notion of a fairly simple cleavage structure. It is dominated by a strongly polarizing cultural dimension, cut across by a much less important and less polarizing economic left–right cleavage. This sets Hungary apart from the Czech Republic and Poland, where economic issues play a much greater role in defining the major lines of conflict in the party system and where the number of cross-cutting issue dimensions tend to be higher (Markowski 1995).

The era of the socialist–liberal coalition

In the 1994 election the MSZP won 54 percent of the seats with just one third of the popular vote. On the one hand, they needed no coalition partners – on the other hand, they did not have to be afraid of having some. All factions of the party agreed that some coalition partners would be desirable to avoid being locked into an unfavourable position on the (ex) communist–democrat axis, and in order to broaden the base of support for new government which was bound to tackle a mounting budget and trade deficit. The Socialists rejected the FKGP and MDF as potential coalition partners because of their radical nationalist leanings and anti-communism. On the other hand, the FIDESZ and the KDNP plainly refused to co-operate in way with the MSZP. This left the SZDSZ as the only alternative coalition partner. The Free Democrats, with their credentials of anti-communist dissent and monetarist and pro-Western stance, seemed to be ideal for boosting the incoming government's legitimacy at home and its credibility among investors, creditors and Western governments. A coalition partner might also provide serve as a handy scapegoat in the event that the Socialist government failed to live up to the expectations of its voters.

When joining the coalition, the SZDSZ entertained high hopes of being able to ally with the right wing of the Socialist Party in sidelining the union leaders doubling as socialist MPs, a wish they shared with. But the Free Democrats also felt that they might lose electoral support if they were to reject an offer of governmental responsibility; in any case, they felt closer affinity with the Socialists than with the Christian–Nationals on the opposition benches.¹⁹

Conventional wisdom has is that the economic policies of the socialist–liberal coalition were liberal rather than socialist, but this did not prevent the liberals from losing ground in the opinion polls over the next four years. Support for the Socialists also fluctuated, but by the end of 1997 it was slightly over the May 1994 level.

In stark contrast to the period of MDF rule, the political agenda in 1994–98 was dominated by economic, social welfare and foreign policy issues. Foreign ownership of land, the Basic Treaties with Slovakia and Romania, the sale of electricity and gas companies to foreign investors, and the 1995 austerity programme were among the most divisive issues. All parties of the opposition unequivocally accused the government of betraying strategic national interests, the impoverished middle class, as well as the Magyar minorities in neighbouring countries. The MSZP and the SZDSZ cast themselves as advocates of the market bent on rolling back a spendthrift welfare state, and as champions of European integration and foreign investment. The issue agenda had changed, but the major divisions remained in conflicting ideas about statehood and nationhood.

With the government coalition firmly in control, the opposition struggled to form a potentially winning electoral alliance for the upcoming elections. The elections of 1990 and 1994 had taught Hungarian party strategists that the single-member districts were crucial for the success of the political

parties. *Ad hoc* alliances formed after the first round are unlikely to influence the voters of the eliminated candidates. In this light, the FIDESZ, MDF and KDNP leaders concluded that they were well advised to form a stable electoral alliance well in advance of the 1998 elections. But bringing the FIDESZ and the FKGP into an alliance proved all but impossible, and the MDF and KDNP held a grudge against the FKGP leader ever since he had led his party out of the Antall government. In the final analysis, this issue of electoral coalition-building turned out to be extremely divisive within the parties of the right. In March 1996, a new party – the Hungarian Democratic People’s Party (MDNP) – was formed by MDF deputies who defected on this very issue.

Mass Electoral Alignments

Table 8.5 presents data on the determinants of mass electoral behaviour (CEU 1992-). For each of the six major parties, there is a separate dependent variable coded 1, if the respondent preferred that party, and 0 if he or she preferred another party. The predictor variables were identical in all five surveys; they tap socio-demographic traits, religiosity, former communist party membership, and political attitudes. The regression coefficients measure the relative impact of each independent variable at each point in time on the preferences for each of the six parties; the statistical significance of this impact is also reported.

*Table 8.5: Logistic regression analyses of the determinants of party preferences in 5 CEU surveys: B-coefficients (standard errors in parentheses)*²⁰

Date	September 1992		December 1993		April 1994		June 1995		January 1997	
N of cases=	740		740		711		785		568	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
Dependent variable: <i>FIDESZ</i>										
YBIRTH	.04	(.01)	.05	(.01)	.06	(.01)	.04	(.01)	.02	(.01)
EDUC	-.07	(.14)	.03	(.19)	.08	(.24)	.23	(.21)	.29	(.20)
RURAL	.06	(.18)	-.22	(.23)	-.12	(.29)	-.50	(.24)	-.15	(.25)
PROFMANA	.01	(.34)	-.23	(.43)	-.91	(.52)	.51	(.46)	-.27	(.49)
WHITECOL	.46	(.35)	-.17	(.40)	-1.00	(.50)	.55	(.43)	.11	(.41)
FARM	-.36	(.41)	-.25	(.53)	-.78	(.69)	-.04	(.71)	.38	(.58)
BLUECOL	.11	(.29)	-.19	(.33)	-.49	(.35)	.53	(.37)	.00	(.34)
NOTCPMEMBER	.08	(.24)	.76	(.35)	.08	(.43)	1.10	(.43)	.98	(.46)
DEVOUT	-.08	(.34)	-.40	(.45)	-.85	(.70)	-.65	(.41)	.41	(.41)
NOCHURCH	.40	(.22)	.21	(.28)	.18	(.37)	-.37	(.27)	.27	(.32)
PROMARKET	-.06	(.08)	.15	(.09)	-.07	(.12)	.09	(.10)	.10	(.11)
NATIONAL	-.27	(.15)	.30	(.19)	-.04	(.23)	.29	(.20)	.28	(.20)
PROCHURCH	-.30	(.13)	-.16	(.15)	.34	(.20)	.16	(.15)	.06	(.15)
ANTICOMM	-.04	(.27)	-.25	(.33)	.30	(.42)	.17	(.35)	.30	(.39)

Dependent variable: *FKGP*

YBIRTH	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.00 (.01)
EDUC	-.62 (.27)	-.81 (.31)	-.45 (.27)	-.62 (.19)	-.27 (.17)
RURAL	.94 (.32)	1.04 (.35)	.27 (.31)	.25 (.20)	.08 (.21)
PROFMANA	-.66 (.81)	.89 (.78)	-.44 (.77)	-.95 (.49)	-.71 (.49)
WHITECOL	-.38 (.78)	-.17 (.80)	.61 (.58)	-.58 (.41)	-.29 (.39)
FARM	.48 (.55)	.29 (.64)	.68 (.59)	-.37 (.43)	-.55 (.57)
BLUECOL	.07 (.49)	.29 (.51)	.28 (.47)	-.32 (.29)	.11 (.30)
NOTCPMEMBER	.86 (.76)	1.18 (.76)	1.46 (.76)	.54 (.36)	.20 (.33)
DEVOUT	-.53 (.47)	-.38 (.51)	-.70 (.43)	.14 (.35)	-.63 (.36)
NOCHURCH	-.51 (.36)	-.37 (.38)	-1.17 (.34)	.22 (.27)	.06 (.26)
PROMARKET	-.07 (.16)	.04 (.15)	.11 (.14)	.09 (.09)	-.07 (.10)
NATIONAL	.26 (.29)	.14 (.31)	.41 (.25)	.13 (.19)	.17 (.18)
PROCHURCH	.25 (.21)	.12 (.21)	-.06 (.20)	-.04 (.13)	.35 (.14)
ANTICOMM	.72 (.48)	1.56 (.58)	1.25 (.49)	1.29 (.32)	1.86 (.35)

Table 8.5: (continued)

Date	September 1992		December 1993		April 1994		June 1995		January 1997	
N of cases=	740		740		711		785		568	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.

Dependent variable: *KDNP*

YBIRTH	-.01	(.01)	-.03	(.01)	.00	(.01)	-.03	(.01)	.01	(.01)
EDUC	-.10	(.30)	.08	(.28)	-.69	(.35)	.03	(.26)	-.48	(.33)
RURAL	-.09	(.42)	-.59	(.40)	-.42	(.46)	.03	(.33)	.09	(.43)
PROFMANA	-.96	(.79)	-.80	(.66)	1.30	(.89)	.05	(.72)	2.44	(.93)
WHITECOL	-.06	(.74)	.29	(.58)	-.11	(.92)	-.22	(.67)	1.02	(.85)
FARM	-.51	(.73)	.47	(.65)	.08	(.87)	-.19	(.68)	.78	(1.3)
BLUECOL	-.86	(.60)	-.48	(.51)	.47	(.65)	.36	(.53)	.74	(.70)
NOTCPMEMBER	6.40	(13.7)	.69	(.66)	-.29	(.66)	1.24	(.66)	-.78	(.62)
DEVOUT	.96	(.46)	1.14	(.42)	2.45	(.66)	.43	(.38)	.95	(.52)
NOCHURCH	-1.36	(.53)	-.81	(.44)	.10	(.70)	-1.44	(.41)	-1.04	(.53)
PROMARKET	.08	(.20)	.14	(.15)	.33	(.18)	-.05	(.14)	-.26	(.19)
NATIONAL	.88	(.37)	-.06	(.31)	-.15	(.35)	.45	(.31)	-.18	(.37)
PROCHURCH	1.08	(.27)	.61	(.21)	1.02	(.26)	.62	(.19)	.67	(.25)
ANTICOMM	-1.60	(.63)	.89	(.57)	-.44	(.64)	.34	(.49)	.64	(.67)

Dependent variable: *MDF*

YBIRTH	-.02	(.01)	-.01	(.01)	-.02	(.01)	-.01	(.01)	.02	(.02)
EDUC	.04	(.18)	-.07	(.24)	.27	(.22)	.06	(.23)	-.23	(.39)
RURAL	.12	(.24)	.21	(.31)	.20	(.28)	-.47	(.28)	-.83	(.53)
PROFMANA	.51	(.46)	1.00	(.58)	-.73	(.55)	.43	(.58)	1.14	(1.4)
WHITECOL	-.27	(.50)	-.53	(.70)	-.10	(.48)	.31	(.57)	2.17	(1.2)
FARM	.07	(.49)	1.09	(.60)	-.18	(.56)	.44	(.68)	1.83	(1.5)
BLUECOL	-.01	(.39)	.52	(.48)	-.07	(.39)	.46	(.49)	1.61	(1.1)
NOTCPMEMBER	.79	(.40)	-.15	(.41)	.11	(.39)	.36	(.41)	.01	(.82)
DEVOUT	.03	(.36)	-.44	(.41)	-.04	(.42)	.24	(.41)	.13	(.63)
NOCHURCH	-.17	(.28)	-.62	(.32)	.09	(.35)	.15	(.34)	-1.29	(.54)
PROMARKET	.20	(.11)	.43	(.12)	.24	(.12)	.29	(.11)	-.13	(.21)
NATIONAL	.36	(.20)	.49	(.25)	.50	(.22)	.24	(.24)	-.06	(.42)
PROCHURCH	.24	(.15)	.44	(.17)	.58	(.18)	.28	(.17)	.27	(.29)
ANTICOMM	.68	(.36)	1.27	(.46)	.85	(.41)	2.35	(.47)	1.17	(.80)

Table 8.5: (continued)

Date	September 1992		December 1993		April 1994		June 1995		January 1997	
N of cases=	740		740		711		785		568	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
Dependent variable: <i>MSZP</i>										
YBIRTH	-.03	(.01)	-.02	(.01)	-.00	(.01)	-.04	(.01)	-.02	(.01)
EDUC	.43	(.20)	-.02	(.16)	-.29	(.17)	-.11	(.18)	-.04	(.19)
RURAL	-.37	(.28)	.05	(.20)	.01	(.20)	.34	(.21)	.46	(.25)
PROFMANA	-.30	(.47)	.55	(.41)	.91	(.40)	.55	(.45)	-.37	(.47)
WHITECOL	-.43	(.51)	.78	(.39)	1.11	(.36)	.65	(.42)	-.83	(.43)
FARM	.77	(.58)	.34	(.46)	.56	(.43)	.43	(.49)	-.80	(.76)
BLUECOL	.33	(.44)	.45	(.34)	.29	(.31)	.36	(.36)	-.67	(.34)
NOTCPMEMBER	-.95	(.27)	-.91	(.23)	-.71	(.25)	-.99	(.24)	-.81	(.30)
DEVOUT	-1.42	(.59)	.09	(.35)	-.87	(.44)	-.55	(.40)	.50	(.46)
NOCHURCH	-.40	(.29)	.49	(.25)	.46	(.26)	.38	(.27)	.60	(.33)
PROMARKET	-.13	(.11)	-.36	(.08)	-.44	(.09)	-.07	(.08)	.00	(.11)
NATIONAL	-.28	(.21)	-.45	(.16)	-.02	(.16)	-.44	(.18)	-.03	(.20)
PROCHURCH	-.30	(.19)	-.41	(.13)	-.52	(.14)	-.30	(.14)	-.69	(.17)
ANTICOMM	-.94	(.37)	-.94	(.29)	-1.45	(.28)	-2.00	(.30)	-2.74	(.38)
Dependent variable: <i>SZDSZ</i>										
YBIRTH	.01	(.01)	.01	(.01)	.01	(.01)	.03	(.01)	.02	(.01)
EDUC	-.23	(.22)	.22	(.20)	.19	(.19)	.26	(.19)	.21	(.25)
RURAL	-.85	(.32)	-.34	(.27)	-.46	(.26)	.18	(.21)	-.23	(.35)
PROFMANA	.49	(.56)	.30	(.51)	.53	(.43)	-.05	(.40)	.44	(.59)
WHITECOL	.50	(.55)	.41	(.49)	.07	(.42)	.24	(.36)	.53	(.52)
FARM	.25	(.67)	.38	(.63)	-.17	(.63)	-.07	(.54)	-.56	(1.1)
BLUECOL	.17	(.47)	.25	(.42)	.21	(.36)	-.07	(.31)	.10	(.47)
NOTCPMEMBER	.87	(.46)	1.21	(.40)	.80	(.34)	.41	(.31)	2.74	(1.1)
DEVOUT	-.62	(.57)	-1.10	(.54)	-.33	(.47)	-.21	(.40)	-.46	(.59)
NOCHURCH	.20	(.34)	.05	(.29)	.10	(.30)	-.00	(.26)	-.23	(.39)
PROMARKET	-.05	(.13)	.10	(.10)	.30	(.10)	.05	(.09)	.41	(.14)
NATIONAL	.14	(.22)	-.42	(.21)	-.69	(.19)	-.33	(.18)	-.45	(.27)
PROCHURCH	-.01	(.19)	.04	(.16)	-.19	(.17)	-.28	(.14)	-.23	(.22)
ANTICOMM	.44	(.41)	.02	(.37)	.65	(.34)	-.07	(.31)	-.68	(.51)

There is evidence of overwhelming voting stability throughout the entire period of 1992–97. The electoral base has changed significantly only in a few cases. In the case of FKGP preference, rural residence and possibly also low education decreased in importance over time, while the impact of anti-communism increased. On top of this, the moderately (but not the very) religious were apparently more, and former communist party members less likely to be FKGP supporters than others in 1992–94;²¹ in 1995–97, however, these relationships have lost momentum. None of the remaining predictor variables have ever been significantly related to a preference for the FKGP.

In the case of the FIDESZ, there only two of our independent variables seem to have had a persistent effect on the basis of support. FIDESZ voters

have always been younger, and - even after controlling for their age - less likely than others to have been communist party members before 1989. There are some indications in the data to the effect that the role of age has been declining since 1994. It may also be noted that the FIDESZ scrapped the 35 year age limit for party members in the spring of 1993. The changing sign of three variables – NATIONAL, PROCHURCH and ANTICOMM – is striking and too consistent to be random, even though they are all statistically insignificant. In 1992, the FIDESZ apparently had a constituency of mildly anti-communist, mildly non-nationalist, and less pro-church voters, while the opposite held true after 1993–94. This is consistent with the political reorientation of the party since early 1993.

The determinants of KDNP support have been strikingly stable. The most consistent determinants are: clerical attitudes, as captured by the PROCHURCH variable, and church attendance, as captured by the DEVOUT and NOCHURCH variables.

SZDSZ support has usually been stronger than average among those whose attitudes are less nationalist, who were not former communist party members, and the young. The evaporation in 1994 of the party's urban and anti-communist constituency, as captured by the RURAL and ANTICOMM variables, constitutes the only noteworthy change over time. Pro-market attitudes have also been directly related to support for the SZDSZ since 1994, but also in 1990 (Tóka 1995a).

With the exception of the 1997 data set (which may well prove exceptional), MDF support is invariably linked to pro-market, nationalist, pro-church and anti-communist attitudes. The socio-demographic characteristics of the voters seem to make little or no difference. The determinants of MSZP support are an almost exact mirror-image: the typical MSZP supporter was usually less pro-market, less nationalist, less pro-church, and less anti-communist than the national average. In addition, the typical MSZP voter is recruited from among the upper age brackets, the former communist party rank and file, and those who never attend church services. The data would seem to suggest that a change occurred either in or shortly before 1995: until then pro-market attitudes were negatively related, but subsequently absolutely unrelated to MSZP support.

Conclusions

All in all, the determinants of party preferences vary by party a lot more than very nearly one-dimensional structure of party positions would seem to suggest. This is probably why the six-party system has been viable for so long. It has been possible for the political parties to carve out socio-cultural niches for themselves, more or less independently of the day-to-day political agenda. The FIDESZ, KNDP, and FKGP, with their special appeal among the young, the religious, and the rural population, respectively, are cases in point. Nevertheless, economic policy issues and social class play

but a minor role in party competition on the elite level as well as on the mass level. Party positions, inter-party distances and electoral behaviour are rather defined by non-economic issues. Economic conditions do have an impact on the popularity of government parties, but as long as performance evaluations remain unrelated to preferences with respect to divisive policy issues and social group identities, they cannot translate into a stable socioeconomically defined left–right cleavage.

After 1994, this effect was reinforced in one critical respect. As Table 8.5 and previous studies (cf. Markowski and Tóka 1995; Tóka 1995) suggest, MSZP support in 1993–94 was to some extent dependent on economic policy attitudes. The more bitter a voter was about market reforms, the more likely he or she was to support the Socialist Party. Yet after winning the 1994 elections, the MSZP decided to form a coalition government with the Free Democrats, the most pro-market formation of all Hungarian parties at the time, but admittedly the MSZP on non-economic issues. Along with the introduction of a harsh austerity programme, this move served to reinforce the dominance of cultural issues in the determination of partisan attitudes in Hungary. This development restored the largely one-dimensional nature of programmatic party competition, but the content of the dimension was fluid and redefined between-party distances from one election to another. In early 1990, inter-party relations were determined by attitudes towards the change of regime; in 1991–92 cultural and particularly religious issues became dominant. By 1996, nationalism and anti-communism were the primary determinants of coalition preferences.

The logic of the electoral system contributed towards a simplification of the party scene. Having seen and experienced the electoral system at work in 1990 and 1994, many party leaders drew the conclusion that declared coalition preferences were at least as important as the policy platforms. In 1994–97, this was to cause dramatic factional fights over the alternative 1998 electoral alliances within the MDF and KDNP. The SZDSZ found itself in a similar dilemma concerning the prospective electoral pact with the MSZP. The incentives stemming from the majoritarian features of the institutional framework – e.g. the electoral system, the strong position of the Prime Minister *vis-à-vis* the cabinet, the constructive vote of no-confidence, and the relative absence of checks and balances – make parties strongly dependent on their coalition preferences and force them to declare them well in advance of an election. The majoritarian features also make it difficult to reconcile six unique ideological niches with a variety of coalition set-ups. It seems likely that a relatively simple cleavage structure, with little rooting in the class structure or other non-cultural variables, will continue to characterize Hungary for yet some time to come.

Acronyms used in the text and the tables

ASZ	Agrarian Alliance
EKA	Opposition Roundtable
FIDESZ	Federation of Young Democrats
FKGP	Independent Smallholders Party
KDNP	Christian Democratic People's Party
KP	Republic Party
MDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum
MDNP	Hungarian Democratic People's Party
MIÉP	Party of Hungarian Justice and Life
MNP	Hungarian People's Party
MSZDP	Social Democratic Party of Hungary
MSZMP	Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party
MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party
SZDSZ	Alliance of Free Democrats

NOTES

1. More precisely, aggregate level or net volatility means half the sum of the absolute percentage differences between the votes received by each party in two consecutive elections. Suppose that there are three parties contesting the first of two elections, each receiving 33.3 per cent of the vote. If one of them goes out of business by the time of the next election, and the remaining two receive 60 and 40 per cent of the vote, respectively, then the total volatility between the two elections was $(33.3+|33.3-60|+|33.3-40|)/2=(33.3+26.7+6.7)/2= 33.3$ per cent.

2. Only a few – though certainly not all – elections in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania might be exceptions, but the lack of sufficiently detailed data on the small parties in these countries precludes a firm conclusion.

3. On the West European figures for 1885-1985, cf. Bartolini and Mair (1990).

4. For parliamentary elections, only the legal threshold for party lists winning mandates was raised from 4 to 5 per cent of the list votes. Otherwise, even the constituency boundaries have remained unchanged since 1990. The local election law, however, was altered in October 1994 despite a walkout of the entire parliamentary opposition from the final vote. Yet the controversy over the substance of this reform must not be exaggerated. The preferred strategy of the opposition - i.e. implicit electoral alliances in run-off elections between parties that were not ready to enter a formal electoral pact - had to be abandoned because of the shift to a single-round electoral system. The main features of the reform enjoyed all-party consensus.

5. Source: Eastern and Central Eurobarometer 6. Machine readable data file. Köln, Zentralarchiv.

6. Searching for the roots and motivation of this consensus is well beyond the scope of this paper.

7. The orthodox communist MSZMP and the radical nationalist MIÉP, which had a small parliamentary representation in 1993-94, were exceptions to this.

8. The wording of the questions and the coding of the responses for this analysis were as follows: *Market*: 'Do you personally feel that the creation of a free market economy, that is one largely free from state control, is right or wrong for [OUR COUNTRY'S] future?' (1=right, 2=wrong, 3=do not know, no answer). *EU*: 'If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of [OUR COUNTRY'S] membership in the European Union, would you personally vote for or against membership?' (1=for, 2=against, 3=do not know, no answer) *NATO*: 'If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of [OUR COUNTRY'S] membership in NATO, would you personally vote for or against membership?' (1=for, 2=against, 3=do not know, no answer) All coefficients are significant at least on the .01 level. Respondents who were not entitled to vote in their country of residence are excluded from the computation of the percentages. *Source*: Eastern and Central Eurobarometer 6. Machine readable data file. Cologne, Zentralarchiv.

9. On Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Slovak volatility estimates, cf. Tóka (1997). Note that the Czech and Polish volatility figures were corrected for mere changes of party labels. On volatility in Estonia see Taagepera (1995). The Lithuanian figure was calculated from partial election returns and is a lower bound estimate due to the lack of data on some very small parties.

10. The Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Society (BZSBT) did not even contest any election on its own, and two other member organizations, the Hungarian People's Party (MNP) and the Social Democratic Party (MSZDP) dismally failed to win parliamentary representation.

11. A similar, but much more detailed analysis is given by Körösényi (forthcoming).

12. For 1990 roll-call data, cf. Hanyecz and Perger (1991).

13. For pre-election analyses of election programmes, cf. Urbán (1990) and Kovács and Tóth (1990).

14. The treaty was opposed by the far right because of a clause confirming that Hungary had no claims on Ukrainian territory. The treaty was nevertheless ratified with unanimous support from the opposition, but in order to avoid further defections the government had to pledge itself not to sign any such treaty with other neighbours for the duration of its term.

15. The dominant faction in the FIDESZ leadership anticipated that the more SZDSZ-leaning elements might leave the party as a result of the new strategy (indeed, former vice-president Fodor ended up as the number two candidate on the SZDSZ national list in 1994 and as one of the three SZDSZ ministers of Gyula Horn's first government). This, however, was a welcome rather than an unwanted by-product of the new strategy: e.g., Fodor was the only potentially serious challenger of party leader Viktor Orbán in the leadership races and could well have unseated the latter after the 1994 election fiasco if he had not already left the party.

16. See the Gallup reports in *Magyar Nemzet* (30 May 1994) and *Pesti Hírlap* (1 June 1994); also Tóka (1995a).

17. The responses were recoded as explained in the text. N=129. *Source*: Four country survey of middle level party elites by Herbert Kitschelt and associates, Spring 1994, Durham, NC, Duke University.

18. The responses were recoded as explained in the text. N=129. *Source*: Four country survey of middle level party elites by Herbert Kitschelt and associates, Spring 1994, Durham, NC, Duke University.

19. For a different and much more detailed assessment, cf. Körösényi (1995).

20. Parameters significant on the .10 level are printed in bold. The regression constants are not reproduced. The Bs are logistic regression coefficients, showing the net impact of each independent variable on party choice when all other variables in the equation are controlled for. Since they are non-standardized parameters, the effect of the various independent variables can only be compared in terms of their positive or negative sign and statistical significance level, but they do not, strictly speaking, tell whether FIDESZ support in 1992 was better explained by YBIRTH or by EDUC. However, the magnitude of the net impact of the given independent variable can be compared across equations, i.e. the table tells us whether support for FIDESZ in 1992 was more strongly influenced by YBIRTH than, e.g., MDF support in 1997. The column headed 'S.E.' shows the standard error of each B coefficient. Dependent variables are coded one if the respondent named the party in question as his or her preferred choice 'if there were an election next Sunday', and zero if she or he named another party. Respondents without party preference are excluded from the analysis.

Independent variables:

YBIRTH: year of birth (last two digits)

EDUC: education (1=less than primary; 2=primary completed; 3=secondary completed; 4=university or college completed)

RURAL: place of residence (2=city; 3=village)

PROFMANA: current or last occupation (1=manager or professional; 0=all others)

WHITECOL: current or last occupation (1=white collar employee; 0=all others)

FARM: current or last occupation (1=farmer or agricultural worker; 0=all others)

BLUECOL: current or last occupation (1=blue collar employee; 0=all others)

NOTCPMEMBER: communist party membership before 1990 (2=never was a communist party member; 1=was a communist party member some time before 1990)

DEVOUT: how frequently the respondent attends religious services (1=at least once a week; 0=less frequently)

NOCHURCH: how frequently the respondent attends religious services (1=never; 0=more frequently)

PROMARKET, NATIONAL, PROCHURCH, and ANTICOMM are attitude indices constructed from responses to the following questions in the way described below:

'Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Responses to all items were coded as 0=definitely agree; 0.33=rather agree; 0.67=rather disagree; 1=definitely disagree]

(Q16C:) It should be the government's responsibility to provide a job for everyone who wants one.

(Q16D:) It is harmful for the economy if the government tries to reduce income differences between rich and poor.

(Q16F:) Giving the former state-owned companies in private property is going to help very much in solving the economic problems of our country.

(Q16G:) Unprofitable factories and mines should be closed down immediately even if this leads to unemployment.

(Q16H:) Politicians who do not believe in God should not perform public functions.

(Q16I:) Nationalism is (always) harmful for the development of our country.

(Q16N:) A woman should be allowed to have an abortion in the early weeks of pregnancy, if she decides so.

(Q16O:) In case of a politician I prefer a strong (good) patriot to an expert.

(Q16P:) The Church has (the Churches have) too much influence in our country.

Political parties may pursue very different goals. Now I am going to read you some and I would like to ask your opinion about them. Please answer using this card: [The response card showed a nine point scale running from 'very strongly in favour of' – coded as 1 – through 'neither in favour, nor against' – coded as 0.5 – to 'very strongly against it' – coded as zero.]

(Q18B:) Help the development of private enterprises and a free market economy in Hungary.

(Q18K:) Strengthen national feelings.

(Q18L:) Increase pensions and social benefits.

(Q18E:) Guarantee that less economic burden is put on the shoulder of people during the transformation of our economy.

(Q18M:) Increase the influence of religion and the Churches.

(Q18N:) Speed up the privatization of state-owned companies.

(Q18Q:) Removing former communist party members from positions of influence.

Missing values were replaced with the sample mean on all attitude variables used in constructing the PROMARKET, NATIONAL, PROCHURCH, and ANTICOMM indices.

PROMARKET: index of economic policy attitudes. High values indicate pro-, low values indicate anti-market attitudes. The index was computed as: $PROMARKET = Q16C - Q16D - Q16F - Q16G + Q18B - Q18L - Q18E + Q18N$.

NATIONAL: index of nationalist attitudes. High values indicate more, low values indicate less nationalist attitudes. The index was computed as: $NATIONAL = Q16I - Q16O + Q18K$.

PROCHURCH: index of pro- vs. anti-religious attitudes. High values indicate pro-, low values indicate anti-clerical attitudes. The index was computed as: $PROCHURCH = Q16N - Q16H + Q16P + Q18M$.

ANTICOMM: attitudes towards communists. High values indicate pro-, low values indicate anti-communist attitudes. The index was computed as: $ANTICOMM = Q18Q$.

Source: CEU (1992-).

21. Note that in Table 8.5 the negative effects of DEVOUT (frequent church attendance) and NOCHURCH (no church attendance), and the positive effect of NOTCPMEMBER on FKGP support show up very consistently in the 1992-94 surveys, even though they are not always statistically significant.

REFERENCES

- Alwin, Duane F. (1992), *The International Social Justice Survey, Codebook*, Ann Arbor, MI, Institute of Social Research.
- Bartolini, Stefano and Peter Mair (1990), *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability, The Stabilisation of the European Electorates 1885–1985*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Benoit, Kenneth (1996), 'Hungary's Two-Ballot Electoral System', *Representation* 33 (4), 162–70.
- Bozóki, András (1996), 'Intellectuals in a New Democracy, The Democratic Charter in Hungary', *East European Politics and Societies* 10 (Spring 1996), 173–213.
- , András Körösnéyi and George Schöpflin, eds. (1992), *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary*, London, Frances Pinter.
- Bruszt, László (1990), 'The Negotiated Revolution in Hungary', *Social Forces* 57, 365–87.
- CEU (Central European University) 1992-, *The Development of Party Systems and Electoral Alignments in East Central Europe*, Machine readable data files, Budapest, Department of Political Science, Central European University.
- Commission of the European Communities 1991-, *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer*, Brussels, European Commission.
- Dohnalik, Jacek, Jan Hartl, Krzysztof Jasiewicz, Radoslaw Markowski, Petr Mateju, Lubos Rezler, Gábor Tóka and Milan Tucek, (1991), *Dismantling of the Social Safety Net and Its Political Consequences in East Central Europe, An International Comparative Study Initiated and Sponsored by the Institute of East-West Studies, N.Y. and Prague*, Machine readable data file, Distributors: IEWS, New York and TÁRKI, Budapest.
- Enyedi, Zsolt (1996), 'Organizing a Subcultural Party in Eastern Europe', *Party Politics* 2, 377–397.
- Evans, Geoffrey and Stephen Whitefield (1996), 'The Social Bases of Electoral Competition in Eastern Europe', Paper prepared for presentation at the European Science Foundation conference on *Transition and Political Power Structures* in Cambridge, UK, 19–21 April.
- Ferge, Zsuzsa (1991), 'Social Security Systems in the New Democracies of Central and Eastern Europe: Past Legacies and Possible Futures', in Giovanni Andrea Cornia and Sándor Sipos, eds., *Children and the Transition to the Market Economy: Safety Nets and Social Policies in Central and Eastern Europe*, Aldershot, Avebury, 69–90.
- Glenny, Misha (1990), *The Rebirth of History: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy*, London, Penguin Books, 72–95.
- Greskovits, Béla (1993), 'Dominant Economy, Subordinated Politics: The Absence of Economic Populism in the Transition of East-Central Europe', *Political Science Department Working Paper Series No.1*, Budapest, Central European University.
- (1995), 'Demagogic Populism in Eastern Europe?' *Telos*, 102 (1995), 91–106.
- Hanyecz, Imre and János Perger 1992, 'A Parlament munkája számokban', in Sándor Kurtán, Péter Sándor and László Vass, eds., *Political Yearbook of Hungary 1992*, Budapest, DKMKA – Economix, 92–122.
- ISSP 1990, *The Role of Government*, Machine readable data file, Distributor, Zentralarchiv, Cologne.
- Karatnycky, Adrian, Alexander Motyl and Boris Shor, eds. (1997), *Nations in Transit*, Washington, DC, Freedom House.
- Katzenstein, Peter (1985), *Small States in World Markets*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press.
- Kitschelt, Herbert (1995), 'Patterns of Competition in East Central European Party Systems', Paper prepared for presentation at the 1995 Annual Meeting of the *American Political Science Association*, Chicago, 31 August–3 September.

- , Zdenka Mansfeldová, Radoslaw Markowski and Gábor Tóka (forthcoming), *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation*.
- Kovács, Éva and István J. Tóth (1990), 'Pártok és pártprogramok 1990', Manuscript, Budapest University of Economics.
- Körösényi, András (1991), 'Revival of the Past or a New Beginning? The Nature of Post-Communist Politics', *Political Quarterly*, 62 (1), 1–23.
- (1995), 'Forced Coalition or Natural Alliance? The Socialist-Liberal Democrat Coalition 1994', in Csaba Gombár, Elemér Hankiss, László Lengyel and Györgyi Várnai, eds., *Question Marks: The Hungarian Government 1994-1995*, Budapest: Korridor, 256–77.
- (forthcoming), 'Cleavages and Party System in Hungary', Draft chapter prepared for Gábor Tóka and Zsolt Enyedi, eds., *The 1994 Elections to the Hungarian National Assembly*, Berlin, Sigma.
- Mair, Peter (1996), 'What is Different About Post-Communist Party Systems?', *Studies in Public Policy* 259, Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy.
- Markowski, Radoslaw (1995), 'Political Competition and Ideological Dimensions in Central Eastern Europe', *Studies in Public Policy* 257, Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy.
- Munck, Gerardo L. and Carol Skalnik Leff (1997), 'Models of Transition and Democratization, South America and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective', *Comparative Politics*, 30 (April 1997), 343–61.
- Okolicsányi, Károly (1994), 'Hungary's Budget Deficit Worsens', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 14 January, 36–8.
- Oltay, Edith (1993a), 'Hungarian Radio and Television under Fire', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 24 September, 40–4.
- (1993b), 'Hungary: Csurka Launches 'National Movement'' *RFE/RL Research Report*, 26 March, 25–31.
- (1993c), 'Hungarian Democratic Forum Expels Radical Leader', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 30 July, 24–9.
- (1994a), 'Hungary', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 22 April, 55–61.
- (1994b), 'Hungarian Socialists Prepare for Comeback', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 4 March, 21–6.
- Pataki, Judith (1992), 'István Csurka's Tract: Summary and Reactions', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 9 October, 15–22.
- (1994a), 'Hungarian Radio Staff Cuts Cause Uproar', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 13 May, 38–40.
- (1994b), 'Hungary's Smallholders Fail to Unite before National Elections', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 11 March, 15–9.
- Rose, Richard and Christian Haerpfer (1996), 'Change and Stability in the New Democracies Barometer: A Trend Analysis', *Studies in Public Policy* 270, Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy.
- Szoboszlai, György (1996), 'Parliamentarism in the Making: Crisis and Political Transformation in Hungary', in Arend Lijphart and Carlos H. Waisman, eds., *Institutional Design in New Democracies*, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 117–136.
- Taagepera, Rein (1995), 'Estonian Parliamentary Elections, March 1995', *Electoral Studies* 14, 328–31.
- Tóth, István János (1992), 'Képviselők és pártok a Parlamentben', in Sándor Kurtán, Péter Sándor, and László Vass, eds., *Political Yearbook of Hungary 1992*, Budapest, DKMKA–Economix, 81–91.
- Tóka, Gábor (1992), 'A kakukk fészke: Pártrendszer és törésvonalak Magyarországon' *Politikatudományi Szemle*, 1 (2), 123–59

- (1993), 'Changing Dimensions of Party Competition, Hungary 1990-1991', in Gerd Meyer, ed., *The Political Cultures of Eastern Central Europe in Transition*, Tübingen and Basel, Francke Verlag, 165–228.
- (1995a), 'Parties and Elections in Hungary in 1990 and 1994', in Béla K. Király and András Bozóki, eds., *Lawful Revolution in Hungary, 1989-94*, Highland Lakes, NJ, Atlantic Research and Publications, Inc., 131–58.
- (1995b), 'The Working and Political Background of the Hungarian Election Law', in Gábor Tóka, ed., *The 1990 Hungarian Elections to the National Assembly*, Berlin, Sigma, 41–66.
- (1996), 'Parties and Electoral Choices in East Central Europe,' in Paul Lewis and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Stabilising Fragile Democracies*, London, Routledge, 100–25.
- (1997), 'Political Parties in East Central Europe', in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yunhan Chu and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies, Themes and Perspectives*, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 93–134.
- Tóka, Gábor (forthcoming). 'The Effect of Various Modes of Party Appeals, Evidence from New Democracies', in Richard I. Hofferbert, ed., *Political Studies* special issue of *Party Performance*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Urbán, László (1990), 'Gazdasági programjavaslatok, koalíciós esélyek,' *Magyar Narancs* 2 (4), 1–5.
- US State Department 1997. *1996 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, Washington, DC, US State Department, also at: http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/index.html.

APPENDIX 1: ELECTORAL RESULTS

Distribution of list votes in the 1990 and 1994 parliamentary elections

	1990, %	1994, %
Workers' Party (MP, ex-MSZMP)	3.7	3.2
Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)	10.9	33.0
Social Democratic P. of Hungary (MSZDP)	3.6	0.9
Green Party of Hungary (MZP)	0.4	0.2
Agrarian Alliance (ASZ)	3.1	2.1
Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)	21.4	19.7
Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ)	9.0	7.0
Party of Entrepreneurs (VP)	1.9	0.6
Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)	24.7	11.7
Christian Democratic People's P. (KDNP)	6.5	7.0
Independent Smallholders Party (FKGP)	11.7	8.8
Others	3.2	5.6

Note: Parties in the 'other' category only contested one of the two elections and none won any seats. Sources: 'Az Országos Választási Bizottság jelentése (Report of the National Election Committee)', *Magyar Közlöny*, 13 May 1990, and 'Az Országos Választási Bizottság jelentése (Report of the National Election Committee)', *Magyar Közlöny*, 24 June 1994.

Distribution of seats in the 1990 and 1994 parliamentary elections

	1990				1994			
	SMD	list	list	Total	SMD	list	list	Total
ASZ	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
FIDESZ	1	8	12	21	0	7	13	20
FKGP	11	16	17	44	1	14	11	26
KDNP	3	8	10	21	3	5	14	22
MDF	114	40	10	164	5	18	15	38
MSZP	1	14	18	33	149	53	7	209
SZDSZ	35	34	23	92	16	28	25	69
Joint candidates	4	0	0	4	1	0	0	1
Independents	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	176	120	90	386	176	125	85	386

Sources: 'Az Országos Választási Bizottság jelentése (Report of the National Election Committee)', *Magyar Közlöny*, 13 May 1990; 'Az Országos Választási Bizottság jelentése (Report of the National Election Committee)', *Magyar Közlöny*, 24 June 1994.

Turnout in the 1990 and 1994 parliamentary elections (including invalid and blank votes)

Party lists	1990		Party lists	1994		
	Single-member districts			Single-member districts		
	1st round	2nd round		1st round	2nd round	
	65.1	65.0	45.5	68.9	68.9	55.1

Note: Turnout in the voting for party lists is higher than in the single-member districts, because voters casting their ballot outside of their home constituency can only vote for regional party lists, but not for the candidates standing in the single-member districts.

Sources: On the turnout in the list voting see 'Az Országos Választási Bizottság jelentése (Report of the National Election Committee)', *Magyar Közlöny*, 13 May 1990, and 'Az Országos Választási Bizottság jelentése (Report of the National Election Committee)', *Magyar Közlöny*, 24 June 1994. On turnout in the single-member districts see Tóka (1995b); Róbert Angelusz and Róbert Tardos (1996), 'Választási részvétel Magyarországon 1990-1994', *Politikatudományi Szemle* 5 (4). An edited English version is forthcoming as 'Electoral participation in Hungary, 1990-1994', in Gábor Tóka and Zsolt Enyedi, eds., *The 1994 Elections to the Hungarian National Assembly*, Berlin, Sigma. Note that slightly different figures regarding 1990 and 1994, respectively, are reported by the widely used *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments*, Geneva, Interparliamentary Union, International Centre for Parliamentary Documentation, annual edition, and *Voter Turnout from 1945 to 1997: A Global Report on Political Participation*, Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1997.

Distribution of seats in the 1990-94 parliament at its first session on 2 May 1990 and right before its dissolution on 7 April 1994

	May 1990		April 1994	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<i>Formally recognized party caucuses:</i>				
FIDESZ	22	(6)	26	(7)
FKGP	44	(11)		
'Smallholder 35s'	-		36	(9)
KDNP	21	(5)	23	6
MDF	165	(43)	136	(35)
MIÉP	-		12	(3)
MSZP	33	(9)	33	(9)
SZDSZ	94	(24)	83	(22)
<i>Party affiliation of deputies not belonging to party caucus:</i>				
ASZ	1	(0)	2	(1)
FKGP	-		9	(2)
Any one of 8 other parties	-		15	(4)
None	6	(2)	11	(3)
<i>Grand Total</i>	386		386	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding errors. The distribution of seats at the first session of the parliament is not identical to the election results as some deputies elected as independents or joint candidates joined various party caucuses. *Source:* *Magyar Hírlap*, 8 April 1994, 11.

Distribution of seats in the 1994-98 parliament at its first session on 28 June 1994 and on 31 December 1996

	<i>June 1994</i>		<i>December 1996</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<i>Formally recognized party caucuses:</i>				
FIDESZ	20	(5)	21	(5)
FKGP	26	(7)	24	(6)
KDNP *	22	(6)	23	(6)
MDF	38	(10)	19	(5)
MDNP	-		15	(4)
MSZP	209	(54)	209	(54)
SZDSZ	70	(18)	68	(18)
<i>Party affiliation of deputies not belonging to party caucuses</i>				
LPSZ-VP	1	(0)	1	(0)
MDF	-		1	(0)
None	-		4	(1)
<i>Grand Total</i>	386		385	

Notes: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding errors. The distribution of the seats at the first session of the parliament is not identical to the election results as an ASZ deputy joined the SZDSZ caucus and an elected joint candidate of the LPSZ-VP-ASZ-FIDESZ-SZDSZ electoral alliance decided to sit as an independent. * During the summer recess of 1997 most of the KDNP deputies were expelled from the party or left it voluntarily. The remaining KDNP members of the parliament were not numerous enough to have a parliamentary caucus of their own. Most of the expelled MPs formed the Christian Democratic Alliance and joined the parliamentary caucus of the FIDESZ.

Source: Kurtán, Sándor (1997), 'Tények és adatok az Országgyűlés tevékenységéről', in Sándor Kurtán, László Sándor and László Vass, eds., *Magyarország politikai évkönyve – Political Yearbook of Hungary 1997*, Budapest, DKMKA, 413–4.

APPENDIX 2: GOVERNMENT COMPOSITION

Partisan composition of governments and the cause of their termination, 1989-1998

December 1988 - 23 May 1990

Premier: Miklós Németh

Government parties: MSZMP until October 1989, thereafter MSZP

Overwhelming but not entirely quantifiable legislative support from virtually all deputies elected in the 1985 non-competitive elections.

Cause of termination: March–April 1990 general election.

23 May 1990 - 21 February 1992

Premier: József Antall

Government parties: MDF, KDNP, FKGP

Cause of termination: the FKGP left the coalition, though 35 FKGP deputies (eventually expelled from the party) continued to support the government. Since the Premier did not resign and no no-confidence motion was passed by the Parliament, from the point of view Hungarian constitutional law no change of government occurred.

21 February 1992 - 21 December 1993

Premier: József Antall

Government parties: MDF, KDNP, and various splinter groups from FKGP; in June 1993 the Hungarian Justice National Politics Group and from July 1993 the MIÉP also supported the government in the legislature

Cause of termination: József Antall died on 12 December 1993, and a new Prime Minister had to be elected

21 December 1993 - 15 July 1994

Premier: Péter Boross

Government parties: MDF, KDNP, EKGP; legislative support from the MIÉP caucus

Cause of termination: May 1994 general elections

15 July 1994 -

Premier: Gyula Horn

Government parties: MSZP, SZDSZ

Cause of termination: May 1998 general elections

APPENDIX 3: THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The rules of pertaining to parliamentary elections are laid down in Act. No. XXXIV of 1989, slightly amended in 1994 and 1997 as indicated below. All Hungarian citizens over 18 years of age are eligible to stand as candidate and vote in parliamentary elections, with the exception of citizens who have no domicile in Hungary, are abroad on the day of the given election, are under guardianship, have been banned from public affairs, or are serving a sentence of imprisonment or under forced medical treatment ordered in the course of a criminal procedure. Further rules regarding the campaign etc. are formulated by the National Election Committee, which also supervises the elections and announces the election results. The composition of the National Election Committee is based on a parity among the parties. The secretary and two members of the local returning boards are elected by the local council, and one member can be delegated by each party and each independent candidate running in the district.

Every voter may cast two votes: for a candidate in a single-member district (henceforth SMD) and for a regional party list in a multi.-member constituency. If the turnout remains below 50 per cent either in a regional district (henceforth RD) or in an SMD, the result is invalid and the election has to be repeated on the day set by the National Election Committee for the second round of the general elections.

Candidates running in the SMDs are considered elected if they receive an absolute majority of the valid votes in the first round. Barring this, a run-off round takes place between those candidates who received more than 15 percent of the valid votes or were among the top three vote-winners. If the turnout in the first round is below 50 per cent, all candidates can contest the runoff. In either case, the candidate with the largest number of votes in the run-off round is elected, provided that the turnout was over 25 percent.

The average RD has 7 seats which are filled from party lists according to a quota system. The quota equals the number of valid votes divided by one plus the number of seats. If unallocated seats remain after one seat has been awarded to each full quota, the party lists win these remaining seats in the order of their number of remainder votes, provided that their remainder votes are equal to at least two-thirds of the quota. The difference between the full quota and the remainder votes that earned a mandate is subtracted from the party's cumulated remainder votes on the national level. Due to the above mentioned two-thirds rule, about one fifth or more of RD seats remain unallocated on the regional level and are added to the national pool of compensatory mandates. The relatively small multi-member constituencies and the allocation rules significantly favour those parties that obtain at least 10–15 per cent of the vote locally. Apart from this, no party can gain any list mandates if it obtains less than 4 per cent (since January 1994, 5 per cent) of the list votes nationally (henceforth legal threshold). Voters cannot express preferences regarding the ranking of the candidates on the party lists.

Candidates can also win seats on the national lists of the parties. The voters do not vote directly for these lists. Rather, the remainder votes – i.e. votes which, after the completion of the above steps, did not yet go towards obtaining a mandate either in the multi-member or in the single-member constituencies are cumulated on the national level by party. Fifty-eight compensatory mandates plus the unallocated RD seats are distributed according to their cumulated number of remainder votes among the national lists of those parties which surpassed the legal threshold according to the d'Hondt highest average method.

The country is divided into 176 SMDs and 20 RDs. Candidates standing for parliament in a single-member district must collect at least 750 supporting signatures in the district to appear on the ballot. Every party which has nominated candidates in one fourth, but at least in two of all SMDs within an RD have the right to set up a regional list. Parties which have lists in more than six RDs are allowed to have a national list.

Source: Tóka (1995b) or Benoit (1996).

APPENDIX 4: CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The constitutional framework of post-communist Hungary was laid down in the amendments passed in October 1989 and in the summer of 1990 following the agreements in the National Roundtable Talks in 1989, and the 30 April 1990 MDF–SZDSZ agreement, respectively.

Hungary is a parliamentary republic without any trace of federalism. There are nineteen regional assemblies, and since 1994 they are directly elected, but their prerogatives and political significance are such that they practically never appear in the news. The parliament is unicameral and is elected for four years, and nearly all executive power is held by a government responsible to this assembly. The parliament has a specialized committee system and access to generous public funds for party caucuses. Individual members have the right to initiate legislation and propose amendments; they enjoy legal immunity that can only be waived by the assembly; they are entitled to submit interpellations to the Prime Minister and other minister. The parliament can dissolve itself at any time, but failing that it is likely to serve its full term as the President of the Republic can dissolve it only under highly unlikely circumstances.

The major checks on the power of the parliament are provided by referenda and especially by the Constitutional Court. Members of the Court are elected by a super-majority in parliament from among a relatively broadly defined pool of legal professionals. Anyone can ask the Court to declare a law, decree or rule unconstitutional, even before it comes into effect. The Court has considerable leverage in extending its investigation to related rules not mentioned by the appeal on the table, and it routinely interprets the supposed spirit or implications rather than the letter of the constitution. Referenda can only be called by the legislature, which, however, is bound to call a referendum if a referendum has been proposed by at least 100,000 (from 1997: 200,000) citizens. However, no referendum may be called on constitutional and budgetary issues and questions that might lead to the revocal of international agreements.

The President can single-handedly dissolve parliament if, following an election, the death or resignation of the Prime Minister, no candidate for Prime Minister candidate wins a vote of investiture within 40 days of the first nomination was made, or four different governments are brought down by parliament within a year. The deputies can bring down a Prime Minister either through a constructive vote of no-confidence (which can be initiated by one fifth of the deputies), or by defeating a simple vote of confidence initiated by the Prime Minister. The constructive vote of no confidence, if passed, automatically installs as new prime Minister the alternative candidate named in the motion. Otherwise, it is the President's exclusive right to nominate a Prime Minister – who can be any Hungarian citizen. In practice, President Göncz always consulted the parliamentary parties and followed their unanimous advice, i.e. that the candidate named by the strongest parliamentary caucus must be given the first try. A nominee for Prime Minister has to present a programme to the assembly, which then votes on the candidate and the programme. An investiture or constructive no-confidence vote needs the support of an absolute majority of all members of the Parliament. Cabinet ministers are nominated by the Prime Minister and appointed by the President. The constitution refers to the responsibility of individual ministers to the assembly, but gives the latter no power to remove the former. Obviously, in actual practice the prospective coalition partners agree on the composition of the cabinet prior to the election of a Prime Minister.

The head of state is elected by the parliament for a five year term. One reelection is allowed. If no candidate receives a two-thirds majority in the first two rounds, a candidate can be elected by a simple majority in a third round within three days. The current President, Árpád Göncz, was a little known opposition (SZDSZ) backbencher when he was unanimously elected in May 1990 as part of a comprehensive MDF–SZDSZ deal. In June 1995, he was re-elected for a second term by the two government parties against a candidate of the opposition when his party of origin was a junior coalition partner of the MSZP which had an overall majority on its own right. These facts probably explain why it is relatively little known that the Hungarian president is – formally – among the most powerful presidents in East Central Europe. Before signing a law, the President can send it back to Parliament once, with comments urging reconsideration, or refer it for judicial

review to the Constitutional Court. The President's right to refuse making appointments or dismissals proposed by the Prime Minister is severely limited, but there is no legal remedy against his or her decision. The President has the right to address the Parliament, to initiate legislation and referenda. According to Art. 29 of the constitution the President 'shall express the unity of the nation and safeguard the democratic functioning of the state' and acts as the (nominal) commander-in-chief of the army.

The Prime Minister dominates the executive as he is the sole focus of parliamentary accountability. The Prime Minister's office has a staff of several hundred. On top of the 13 (since July 1994: only 12) ordinary cabinet ministers, there is an ever-changing number of ministers without portfolios who are responsible for specific jurisdictions and work out of the Prime Minister's Office.