

Electoral Research in Hungary

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This chapter distinguishes between four main periods in the history of electoral research in Hungary. Until 1990 Hungary only had brief encounters with competitive mass democracy, and consequently scholarly examinations of elections were sporadic. An impressive amount of survey data were collected in the run-up to first parliamentary elections of the postcommunist era in March-April 1990. Although the scholarly publications of the period had very little direct relationship with the main themes and approaches in Western studies of electoral behaviour, they touched upon - or rediscovered - several exciting theoretical issues. An arguably less interesting period followed after the 1990 election. Commercial political polling became strongly institutionalized and routinized, but the numerous academic research projects developed in isolation from each other and rarely generated more than descriptive, atheoretical analyses, with little cumulative content. A more promising era has started around the second parliamentary election in 1994, with an increasing scholarly exchange between practitioners, and - since 1996, at least - an obvious awareness of the need to put all findings in the perspective of permanent changes on the party scene, instead of automatically treating them as constants of the post-1990 period. However, apart from a shared understanding of the main socio-demographic correlates of party choice, a commonly agreed upon set of findings is yet to appear in the domestic literature. Summarizing the idiosyncratic findings of a large number of studies talking past each other would certainly go beyond the limits of this chapter. Instead, an overview is offered about how, in my view, some of the common failings in this field could be overcome.

Electoral research before 1990

Before the recent transition to democracy in 1988-1990, electoral research in Hungary seems to have been limited to pre-election polls in 1945 and 1947 by the Hungarian Public Opinion Research Institute, one study in electoral geography by a leading historian that was also published in English (see Ránki 1980), and a few scholarly attempts to analyse the emergence of some extremely limited, but officially encouraged competition in the last parliamentary election under the communist regime (cf. Kukorelli 1988; "Hogyan választottunk ..." 1990).

The Hungarian Public Opinion Research Institute (Hungarian abbreviation: MKI), which was successful in predicting the surprising scale of the centre right's victory in the 1945 democratic election (see Levendel 1990), was closed down immediately after the communist takeover in 1948. It seems that only a few tables were preserved from their work. From these

we can infer, for instance, that both class voting (see table 1) and support for public ownership were much stronger in 1945 than in the 1990s.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of party preferences by occupational strata at the time of the November 1945 parliamentary election¹

Occupation:	intelli- gentsia	artisan	worker	farmer	agric. worker	weighted average
Party preference:						
Social Democrat	14.0	11.8	30.1	7.1	24.4	17.6
Communist	8.4	45.8	42.2	1.2	2.5	19.9
Small Holder	66.9	35.6	26.5	88.1	48.7	53.2
Peasant Party	4.1	2.3	0.9	3.6	24.4	7.2
Civic Democrat	6.1	4.5	0.3	-	-	2.0
Radical	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.1
total:	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Levendel (1990), based on a poll of the Hungarian Public Opinion Research Institute.

After having been eradicated in the late 1940s, sociology and survey research slowly emerged again from the 1960s onwards. By the 1980s survey studies of value systems, national identity, political socialization and social stratification were not far from world-class standards in terms of their theoretical and methodological sophistication. But political opinion research was much less advanced. From the early 1970s the Mass Communication Research Centre (TK) became its nearly exclusive home. While the TK was engaged in serious scholarly research in communication theory, media consumption and the content analysis of media messages, very few of their works in political opinion polling were published. Instead, their reports had to be submitted to the communist party apparatus.

This situation changed in 1989, when the institute was renamed Hungarian Public Opinion Research Institute (MKI). From then on many short reports on their frequent polls on public knowledge of, and reaction to salient political events appeared in *Hang-Súly* and *Jel-Kép*, the two low-circulation periodicals of the institute. From June 1989 some newspapers (first the cautiously pro-opposition *Magyar Nemzet*) started to publish highlights from the MKI's monthly polls of the Hungarian public's evolving party preferences. This June 1989-April

¹ The exact date of the survey, the number of cases, the operational definition of the "weighted average" and the occupational groups, and the treatment of respondents without an occupation are not discussed by the source. Two polls with a total N of about 6.000 were carried out in the second half of October 1945, but it is not clear whether the table is based on a pooling of the data sets, or just one of them, or a third poll otherwise not mentioned in the text. "Do not know" answers and refusals are excluded from the calculus.

1990 time series on voting intentions was published in English by Bokor (1990) and reprinted in Tóka (1995b). While all of MKI's SPSS data files are now publicly available with Hungarian language documentation and labels (see below), with a few exceptions their value for an understanding of party choice in 1989-90 is limited the idiosyncratic instruments of these surveys that are often difficult to relate to scholarly concerns in electoral research and seem to have taken an excessively sceptical view of the political sophistication of the public.

The first survey of electoral preferences on a national sample since 1947 was conducted by László Bruszt (then at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy) and János Simon in March 1989 (then at the Institute for Social Science of the Ministry of Culture), and funded by the Institute for Social Science (the predecessor of today's Institute for Social Conflict Research and Institute of Political Science). The politically most salient data, i.e. the frequency distribution of party preferences in the electorate, was published by the independent weekly magazine *HVG* on 25 May and the *Magyar Nemzet* daily on 23 June (cf. Simon 1989). In April 1989 they also conducted political opinion surveys on samples of the top officials of the communist party, the emerging business elite of the private sector, top managers of state industry, and the leaders of the newly emerging opposition parties, two local citizen surveys before the Summer 1989 by-elections to Parliament (cf. Bruszt and Simon 1989a), plus another nationwide mass survey in November. These surveys had a good coverage of attitudes towards the market and political democracy, using several items taken from Barnes, McDonough, and Pina's surveys in Spain and previous cross-national research (such as the ISSP and the Almond-Verba *Civic Culture* surveys). Their analyses of 1989 data invariably concentrated on attitudes towards institutions and political efficacy, and much less on party preferences (see Bruszt and Simon 1989b, 1990). Some of these data sets are now available from László Bruszt and János Simon.

The first nationwide voting since 1985 took place in November 1989, when a referendum decided the issues on which some of the opposition rejected the compromise hammered out at the National Roundtable Talks between the incumbent Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party and the opposition parties. This referendum also marked the debute of private opinion polling. A last minute poll by the newly established Medián was released on tv before the vote count and correctly predicted that the turnout was to be a few percent above the legal requirement of 50 percent, and the outcome on the crucial first question was too close to call (eventually, the margin of victory was 0.01 percent).

Survey research at the 1990 elections

It seems that four institutions were conducting surveys of electoral preferences at the time of the 25 March (2nd round: 8 April) 1990 parliamentary elections. Apart from the MKI and Medián, two short-lived players interviewed nationwide samples. One of these was called Gallup-Budapest, a temporary alliance between László Bruszt, Elemér Hankiss, Róbert Manchin (then all at the Institute of Sociology), Iván Völgyes (University of Nebraska), János Simon, and the Gallup organization. This company carried out a pre-election panel with a good number of attitude items asked on 27 February-2 March, and a second wave in

the last week before 25 March. Unfortunately, only the questions on party preference and a few demographic variables were replicated in the second wave. Apart from press releases, only the data on the over-time stability of party preferences during the campaign, the timing of the voting decisions and the most frequent self-reported motives of party choice were published and analysed (see Bruszt and Simon 1991, 1992; Simon and Bruszt 1991; Tóka 1995). Soon after the 1990 election Gallup-Budapest was transformed into the Hungarian Gallup Institute headed by Róbert Manchin. The SPSS-file from the pre-election panel is available - subject to some restrictions - from the Hungarian social science data archive called TÁRKI.

Wiener (1994) reports that a company called DOXA conducted six private polls for the MSZP (i.e. the postcommunist Hungarian Socialist Party) before the 1990 election, but there is no sign of either publications based upon these or that the data may still exist somewhere. All pre-1991 Medián data seem to have been lost. The data from one pre-election poll of MKI and from the May 1990 post-election survey of TÁRKI (on this survey, administered by the MKI, see below) are available from the Zentralarchiv in Cologne, and all other MKI-files either from the TÁRKI or from the Research Group for Communication Studies. No exit polls were conducted in 1990.

The two main scholarly studies of electoral behaviour in 1990 were carried out by sociologists. Since 1987 Róbert Angelusz and Róbert Tardos (then at MKI) had a research project on cultural stratification, social networks and life-styles, funded by the Hungarian National Science Foundation. Capitalizing on the unexpected opportunity of studying the first free election, they devoted most of their February 1990 survey to the study of party preferences and the political attitudes, ideological and group identities that they suspected to shape party choice. Extensive multivariate analyses of these data, focusing on the influence of politically relevant attitudes on party choice, were presented by Angelusz and Tardos (1990-91) and Tóka (1993a). The SPSS data-file is available similarly to any other data sets collected by the MKI (see above), and is also archived in the Hungarian social science data archive called TÁRKI.

The second major academic survey was, to a large extent, based on the "Role of Government II" module of the International Social Survey Programme. With funding from the outgoing Council of Ministers, the TÁRKI fielded the survey in May 1990, and added a few more items on economic policy attitudes, electoral behaviour, and working conditions to the ISSP questionnaire. While the main research report prepared for the sponsor concentrated exclusively on mass attitudes towards economic policy issues and civil liberties, later analyses also explored bivariate relationships between policy attitudes, socio-demographic variables and party preferences (see Kolosi, Kovács and Tóka 1990), offered a multivariate analysis of turnout (Kolosi, Szelényi, Szelényi and Western 1991), and compared the statistical strength of these relationships in Hungary to those obtained with identical questions in the 1985-86 ISSP surveys in Australia, Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States (Tóka 1990, 1995).

Commercial polls since the 1990 elections

Despite a considerable volatility of organizational affiliations, the chief practitioners of political opinion polling and electoral research remained almost unchanged for the first four years following the 1990 election. The government-owned MKI was downscaled and eventually shut down in 1991. However, the leading political opinion pollsters working for the emerging private firms came, with very few exceptions, from the former MKI. The market leaders in political polling became Szonda-Ipsos, Medián, and to a lesser extent the Hungarian Gallup Institute. After the 1994 election they were joined by the Marketing Centrum.

Regular (with the exception of the 1991-94 Medián series this means monthly) data on the popularity of leading politicians, how many people would "surely" go out to vote, and how much of the vote each of the main parties would receive "if there were an election next Sunday" were published since early 1991 in *HVG* by Medián, in *Népszabadság* (and occasionally elsewhere) by Szonda-Ipsos, and since mid-1994 by the Marketing Centrum in *Népszava*. Gallup data appear irregularly, mostly in *Magyar Nemzet*. Other market research companies - e.g. Modus, which administers the Eastern Eurobarometer - very rarely report polls of party preferences. The public service media did not report any such data between the 1990 and 1994 elections and only extremely rarely since then, therefore their knowledge is relatively limited in the population. The four market leaders nearly always report the respective sample size, fieldwork dates and the margin of error, and no parliamentary party contests the credibility of their findings.

The individual level data from these commercial surveys are not normally available for secondary analyses. However, the most important time-series data are readily available through the annual reports of Medián, MODUS and Szonda-Ipsos - more recently also of the Marketing Centrum - published in the *Political Yearbook of Hungary* series, together with annual polling data from János Simon (see Kurtán, Sándor and Vass 1988-). The Szonda-Ipsos monthly series on party preferences is also available through the company's web-site. The 1994 Medián exit-poll data, which contain information on vote (both for party list and in single-member district) and the socio-demographic traits of the voters seem to be available from the company, probably on a commercial basis. A secondary analysis of these data are reported by Tóka (1994). A sufficient reliability and validity of these data are suggested by the congruence between the monthly data of the three market leaders, and the reasonable accuracy of their (or, in 1990, their predecessors) election forecasts. While there seems to have been a chance element in this too, in 1990 and 1994 the Medián election forecasts and exit poll findings were marginally more accurate than those of Gallup, MKI, and Szonda Ipsos².

The craft of election forecasting has been further refined in 1997, when Kenneth Benoit on the one hand, and József Mészáros and István Szakadát on the other developed two different algorithms to translate polling data into predictions about the distribution of mandates - a non-trivial problem given the complex and disproportional nature of Hungary's

² The 1990 forecasts were released through the election night program of the Hungarian Television, the last 1994 pre-election forecasts (before the one-week moratorium on the publication of such inflammatory materials) in *Magyar Hírlap* and *Népszabadság* on 30 April 1994, and the exit poll figures in the 9 May special issues of the same papers.

mixed member electoral system that provides for some compensation of the parties' of the losing candidates in the single-member districts. Since then, forecasts based on current polling data and these models were published by Benoit (1997) and in the press.

While no serious econometric or other formal analyses of these time-series data have appeared to date, they certainly facilitated a better intuitive understanding of the relatively complicated way macroeconomic conditions and political scandals influence party fortunes. Furthermore, the same polling institutes are often engaged in more in-depth analysis of political attitudes and electoral preferences, and even their brief research reports often present more novel and compelling evidence on issues like the relationship between ethnocentrism and party choice (see Hann 1992) or economic policy attitudes and 1994 vote (see Fischer 1994a) than the many lengthy speculations by senior scholars on the same issues. Also some of the reports originally prepared for private use by the liberal parties were published and they went a long way to clarify the socio-demographic correlates of the vote, the possible role of local party organisation and local politics in mobilizing voter support, the attitude profile and structure of liberal party members, and that voters rely at least as much on their party sympathies as on the actual ideological positions of the parties in judging the latter's relative issue competences (cf. Gyekiczki 1991). In fact, some of the most interesting scholarly articles in the field (see Fischer 1994b; Kovács 1994, 1996) seem to have been mere by-products of such private polls, and Kovács (1995) and Tóka (1993a) also rely partly on private poll data. In an interesting attempt to bridge the gap between scholarly and commercial polling, Szonda-Ipsos also asked some pundits and scholars to write articles that could accompany their tables in the *Magyar Hírlap* daily in the months before the 1994 election. The articles were later on collected in a volume too (Gábor, Levendel and Stumpf 1994). Though in terms of empirical discoveries the project yielded no original result³, on the long run it may still increase the probability that academics will start experimenting with secondary analyses of commercial polls.

Considerably less institutionalization and professionalism characterize the voting behaviour studies that had more scholarly aspirations. By 1990 no Budapest library had more than three or four books on electoral behaviour and those in the collections were selected apparently at random. It seems that the only works on voting translated from foreign languages are Lipset's *Political Man*, two theoretical articles by Downs and a social psychologist each, plus three short contemporary pieces on electoral geography from Czech, Greek, and Polish authors.

³ Apart from Angelusz and Tardos (1994b, 1994c) and Kovács (1994) that appeared in this volume but were based on the authors' own data collections, the only exception was one of the post-election analyses that were added to the volume. Restricting itself to a presentation of the regional distribution of party list votes in 1990 and 1994, this article devoted its longest comment to the amazing "fact" that the Socialist Party increased its vote in Borsod country from 4 percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 1994 - while in fact in 1990 the party already had better results there (14 percent) than in any save one other county. Another article with some original content presented percentage figures up to the first digit on the frequency of various motives of party choice and "modes of party attachments" among the voters of the major parties - without making any hint on how and with what kind of questionnaire instrument these figures were obtained.

Worse still, with the exceptions of Róbert Angelusz and Róbert Tardos, the scholars who did serious survey-based research on values and attitudes in the 1980s, though mostly remaining in academia after 1989, did not get involved in electoral research. Thus, the considerable demand for scholarly analyses of Hungarian electoral behaviour was catered for by novices to the profession - the present author being a case in point.

The mismatch between solvent demand and supply certainly had a detrimental effect on the standards and aspirations of the producers. Poorly worded survey questions, methodological naivety, brave generalizations based on differences that were nowhere near to statistical significance are very common. In the most spectacular example a scholarly study made headlines in a Saturday paper with a dramatic discovery based on erroneously comparing two frequencies without noticing that one was obtained after filtering out a large part of the sample while the other without, and that the "finding" was flatly contradicted by three simultaneous commercial polls.

The long list of studies in the field (see below) witnesses that the main problem has hardly been the absence of funds for academically oriented electoral research. A comparison with the much more professional studies of the Hungarian electoral system - that are not very much in demand on the domestic market and are certainly less lucrative than polling - could also support the conclusion that the relative dearth of sufficiently trained and motivated personnel was the main handicap that studies of Hungarian electoral behaviour suffered from.

Elite and non-survey data, interpretations, and commentary

The official results of the elections are announced by the National Election Committee (see OVB 1990, 1994). The Central Registrar and Election Bureau of the Ministry of Interior maintains a multilingual web-site⁴, where an increasing number of legal documents on the conduct of elections and referenda are available, together with some useful commentary and election results. The text of the 1989 election and party laws are also available in English from Tóka (1995a). Several studies addressed the impact of the electoral system (see e.g. Benoit 1996 and forthcoming; Fábíán and Kovács 1995; Gabel 1995; Szoboszlai 1990b, 1994a, 1994b, 1997, 1998; Tóka 1995c). A thorough analysis of the 1989 bargain over the electoral system is offered by Schiemann and Benoit (1997)⁵.

Basic factual information on the political context and results of the 1990 and 1994 elections are available in English from many sources (e.g. Bozóki, Körösenyi and Schöpflin 1992; Cox and Furlong 1995; Király and Bozóki 1995; Tóka 1995a; Tóka and Enyedi forthcoming).

A team led by György Szoboszlai at the Institute of Political Sciences published volumes on the 1990 and 1994 election campaigns featuring commentary on the general political context of the elections and the functioning of the electoral system, observers' reports on the campaign in each of the twenty regional electoral districts, and on the campaign strategies of the major parties (see Szoboszlai 1990a; Böhm and Szoboszlai 1995). Similar volumes on the

⁴ See the address in the Appendix.

⁵ Ishiyama's (1997) better known account makes some fundamental errors on facts.

1990 and 1994 local elections were also published by the same team (see Böhmer and Szoboszlai 1992, 1996). Various interpretations and commentary on the 1994 elections are also available from Gábor, Levendel and Stumpf (1994) and Körösenyi (1995). A comprehensive and thorough review of the available evidence on campaign and party finances is offered by Juhász (1996) and several studies analysed the hidden and implicit messages of campaign advertisements (Becskeházi 1994; Kapitány and Kapitány 1991, 1995; Terestényi 1994; Tóth 1994).

The Central Statistical Office conducted mail surveys of the several thousand candidates for parliament both in 1990 and 1994, achieving respectable response rates at both times. The raw data do not seem to be available for secondary analyses, but a large number of tables on the socio-demographic attributes of the respondents were published (see Farkas and Vajda 1995; Sebestyén 1994; Vajda and Farkas 1990). Similar tables on the parliamentary deputies of the various parties were prepared from autobiographical and other materials by Körösenyi (1996), Róna-Tas (1991), Tőkés (1991) and Zádori (1994). Biographies of the parliamentary deputies are available from several almanacs (Kecskés and Németh 1994; Kiss and Horváth 1992; Moldován 1990).

The Department of Political Science at the Budapest University of Economics conducted two surveys of the deputies. The analyses concentrated on the understanding of, and normative ideals regarding the deputies' work as representatives of the people, a party, a constituency, various groups etc. (see Ilonszki 1993, 1996; Ilonszki and Judge 1994; Judge and Ilonszki 1995). However, some data on the ideological self-identification of the deputies were also collected and published (see Tóth 1992).

A cross-national project titled "Building Parliamentary Democracy in Eastern Europe" and directed by Rudy B. Andeweg, Peter Mair, Jan Zielonka and Mei Lan-Zielonka-Goei (all at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands) commissioned a survey of Hungarian (as well as Polish and Czechoslovak) parliamentarians in 1993 on the organisation and work of Parliament (cf. van der Meer and van den Muyzenberg 1996). The data are due to be made publicly available through the Steinmetz Archive (Amsterdam). In Hungary the fieldwork was directed by János Simon. He and his associates had already conducted structured interviews with all members of the new Hungarian Parliament back in 1990 on their political socialization. Over the years several people had access to the data and made occasional references to them in miscellaneous publications, but the two most comprehensive analyses of the interviews - one paper each by Elemér Hankiss and János Simon - remained unpublished. In 1996 János Simon carried out another wave of standardized interviews with one half of the parliamentary deputies (see Simon 1997).

The quantitative data sets on the ideological positions of parties include content analyses of the 1990 and 1994 party manifestos by Hans-Dieter Klingemann and his associates (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin), Tóka's (1993a) correspondence analysis of the qualitative data extracted from the 1990 party manifestos by Tóth and Kovács (1992), Herbert Kitschelt's (Department of Political Science, Duke University) January 1993 and April 1994 survey data on how party elites perceived the position of the major parties on various issue scales (for analyses see Kitschelt 1995a, 1995b; Kitschelt *et al.* forthcoming; Tóka forthcoming), and a mail survey of party headquarters during the 1994 campaign on their

economic policy issue positions by Szonda-Ipsos (see Karajanisz 1994). Several mass surveys covered the popular perception of the party's issue competences (Fischer 1994c; Hann and Lázár 1991; Marián 1993).

Vote returns on the level of precincts (with $N > 10.000$ geographic aggregates) are available from the Central Registrar and Election Bureau of the Ministry of Interior for every nationwide vote since 1990 in machine readable format. Early releases of these data contained some insignificant errors that were later corrected with the help of József Mészáros and István Szakadát. The distribution of party list votes by locality and the official results in the 176 single-member constituencies are also available from Szoboszlai (1990a), Böhme and Szoboszlai (1995) and Gábor, Levendel and Stumpf (1994), while extensive locality level data on the 1990 and 1994 local elections are published by Böhme and Szoboszlai (1992, 1996). Hundreds of coloured tables on the 1990 distribution of vote on widely different levels of aggregation and some commentary were published by Mészáros and Szakadát (1995), and even more are available through a website on the Budapest University of Technology home-page⁶. It is cumbersome but not at all impossible to match these electoral data with census data on the level of localities ($N > 3.000$). A locality level data set matching list votes and 1980 census data was prepared in 1990 and is available from the Zentralarchiv in Cologne, together with the constituency ($N=176$, two rounds) level results in the 1990 parliamentary elections.

Analyses of ecological data were presented in several articles. Körösi (1991) compared the 1945-47 election returns across five regions to the 1990 results and found some weak evidence of historical continuity in the regional distribution of the vote. A group of Hungarian historians in the Institute of Political History led by László Hubay made an attempt to transform the pre-1948 locality level election returns (that are partially available from the historical archives in Budapest), but the electronic data are not in the public domain. However, Wittenberg (forthcoming) obtained their permission to publish some statistical analyses suggesting considerable regional variations in the extent to which cross-locality variance in left and right vote show a continuity between the 1945 and the 1990 and 1994 elections. Most interestingly, the ecological correlations between the 1945 and the 1994 vote are significantly stronger than those between the 1945 and 1990 locality level results, suggesting that in this long historical perspective the 1990 election should probably be seen as a deviating, and 1994 as a reinstating election. An unrelated analysis of election results in 1922, 1926, 1939, 1945, 1990 and 1994 across 13 districts of Budapest seems to confirm this, as it reveals a stronger correlation between the 1922 and 1994 ecological data on left and right wing vote than between the 1990 and 1994 results (Wiener 1997). All these analyses find, however, the regional distribution of the 1990 and 1994 liberal vote only weakly reflecting such historical patterns.

Ecological analyses also addressed a number of other issues than historical continuity. Kovács and Tóka (1990) demonstrated that the significant regional variations in both turnout and the proportion of invalid votes in the 1985 non-competitive election may have reflected enduring regional differences in protest against communist rule, as they had a robust

⁶ The URL is <http://szocio.tgi.bme.hu/research/atlas.html>.

correlation with support for the anti-communist options in the 1989 referendum, but none with the 1989 regional variations in turnout and the percentage of invalid votes. Tóka (1991) briefly reports an analysis assessing the electoral relevance of local party organizations that matched locality level data from the 1990 local and national elections, and from the membership register of one of the major parties. Angelusz and Tardos (1997) offer an extensive ecological analysis of the political and demographic correlates of locality level turnout in 1990 and 1994, strongly suggesting that the changing level and regional variation of turnout reflected the much stronger participation in 1994 than in 1990 in the crisis-ridden industrial etc. areas supporting the ex-communists.

Non-commercial surveys of electoral preferences since 1990

Angelusz and Tardos were also active in collecting and analysing micro-level data. Their surveys were supported by the National Science Foundation (OTKA) and the data are freely available from the Research Group for Communication Studies. Their post-1990 analyses dealt with attitude divisions between the supporters of the main parties (Angelusz and Tardos 1990-91, 1992b, 1994a), bandwagon effects (see Angelusz and Tardos 1995a), the instability of electoral preferences (Angelusz and Tardos 1992a), the impact of subjective social class and former communist party membership on party choice (Angelusz and Tardos 1995b, 1995c), and the socio-demographic and political correlates of electoral participation (see Angelusz and Tardos 1990, 1994b, 1994c, 1996, 1997). The socio-demographic correlates and self-reported motives of party choice in the two waves of their November-December 1993-April 1994 pre-election panel were discussed by Bartók (1994, 1995). However, the data sets themselves also cover policy preferences and the perceived issue positions of the main parties.

Other OTKA supported nationwide mass surveys covering party preferences were legion. A study of ethnic and racial prejudices, authoritarian traits and political attitudes was conducted in April 1994 by Ferenc Erős (Institute of Psychology) and his associates, with one of the resulting publications discussing the attitudinal correlates of party choice (Enyedi 1996). This data set is publicly available from TÁRKI. The same applies for the Hungarian Household Panel carried out annually by the TÁRKI and the Sociology Department of the University of Economics between 1992 and 1997. An unusually large sample was interviewed in each wave, and a grant for my own 1992-94 project on cleavage formation paid for the inclusion of questions on past vote and current voting intention in the 1992 and 1993 interviews. From 1995 the questionnaire (dealing mostly with incomes, jobs, housing, and the like) included these questions by default. These unparalleled panel data have not yet been exploited for analyses of economic voting or the political homogeneity of households, but the baseline data on the individual level instability of party preferences was presented by Fábíán (1996) and Fábíán and Tóth (1996).

The National Election Bureau (at the Ministry of Interior) provided funding for the January 1994 survey by Antal Böhöm, Ferenc Gzásó, János Simon and György Szoboszlai (all at the Institute of Political Sciences). This study focused primarily on how political efficacy,

strength of partisanship and social status correlate with turnout and the past frequency, future probability, and motives of electoral participation (see Böhmer, Gázsó and Szoboszlai 1995). Mihály Bihari, Ferenc Gázsó and István Stumpf (all at the Institute of Political Sciences) conducted surveys on partisan divisions in the electorate in May 1993 and June 1994, yielding a couple of articles on the relationship between subjective religiosity and party choice (Stumpf 1994b), and the socio-demographic and political correlates of the strength and persistence of partisanship (Gázsó and Stumpf 1995a, 1995b). While there may be some restriction on availability, access to these data may be obtained by contacting the principal investigators with individual requests.

The same is the case with the June 1994, November 1996, January, April, June and November 1997 Századvég-TÁRKI surveys (for analyses see Ferenc Gázsó 1997a, 1997b; Tibor Gázsó 1997; Gázsó and Stumpf 1997; Róbert 1997; Stumpf 1997a, 1997b), and the annual 1989-93 surveys by László Bruszt and János Simon, and a large number of later surveys by János Simon that replicated many political culture items and covered party preferences (see Gázsó and Gázsó 1993; Bruszt and Simon 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1994a, 1994b; Simon 1991, 1992, 1993, 1998, forthcoming; Simon and Bruszt 1991; and Wessels and Klingemann 1994). The papers on the former concentrate on breakdowns of the stability and affective strength of party preference by party choice and other variables, with some brief comments on the relationship between economic policy attitudes and party preference. Further academic projects included the work of Forgas *et al.* (1995), that of Varga (1997a, 1997b) with Gallup omnibuses, and the 1992 political socialisation survey of 4000 teenagers by Zoltán Békés, György Csepeli, László Kéri, István Stumpf (all except Csepeli at the Institute of Political Science), from which Stumpf (1994b) reports the frequency distribution of the subjective religiosity and party preference variables. Károly Varga's papers discuss 1993-96 longitudinal data using some indicators known from Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's studies on "the spiral of silence" and their relationship to party preference.

It is likely that some other OTKA-supported projects also generated survey data on electoral preferences, but they are less easy to trace. For instance, Péter Róbert's OTKA-project on social stratification paid for the inclusion of item-blocks on subjective social class, party preference, and feelings towards other social groups and the major parties in the December 1991 survey by László Bruszt and János Simon and a 1992 panel survey (cf. Róbert 1994).

A 1991 East-West political opinion survey by the Times-Mirror organization covered Hungary too, and the data are available from the Zentralarchiv. The 1991 and 1995 International Social Surveys also had a few questions on political attitudes and party preference, and the data are available from the ICPSR archive (Ann Arbor). The New Democracies Barometer (NDB) were carried out by the Vienna based Lazarsfeld Gesellschaft since 1992 and in 1997 Christian Harpfer (Lazarsfeld Society, Vienna) started to give access to NDBI to NDBIV on individual request.

Tóka (1992a, 1992b, 1996) analysed the data on electoral behaviour from an October 1991 political attitude and opinion survey covering Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and commissioned by the New York based Institute for East-West Studies. The data are publicly available from TÁRKI. The mass surveys from Donald Treiman and Iván Szelényi's (both at

the Department of Sociology, UCLA) 1993-95 social stratification study are available from TÁRKI too. Using these data, Andorka and Lehmann (1996) presented and discussed some comparable tables from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Slovakia about the relationship between party choice and the probability of voting in national elections on the one hand, and social class on the other. Similar issues were analysed by Szelényi, Fodor and Hanley (1997).

Two other Eastern and Central European comparative surveys covering Hungary will soon become available through the ESRC data archive in Colchester (University of Essex). One is from December 1993 and was fielded by William Miller, Stephen White and Paul Heywood (then all at the University of Glasgow), and the other from early 1994 survey and conducted by Geof Evans and Stephen Whitefield (both at the University of Oxford). Both of these surveys featured a large number of attitude items and questions on party preferences. Their data on party choice in Hungary have already been analysed in some detail (see Miller, White, and Heywood 1997; Evans and Whitefield 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Whitefield and Evans 1995). The 1991, 1995, and 1996 waves of the Eastern and Central Eurobarometer also included a party preference question, and are readily available from all major data archives.

Other relevant and publicly available data sets include the mass surveys of the Central European University (henceforth CEU) directed by the present author (see below), and cross-nationally comparable surveys of local politicians by the Democracy and Local Governance project (see Jacob, Ostrowski and Teune 1993), and of mayors, local councilors, chief administrative officials and citizen population by Harald Baldersheim, Lawrence Rose (both at the University of Oslo), Tamás Horváth, Péter Gábori and György Gajdushek. While the last two studies did not deal with electoral behaviour as such, they nevertheless contain data relevant to electoral analyses: Baldersheim *et al.* (1996), for instance, also present an analysis of opinion representation linkages between citizens and their local representatives in Hungary. All these data sets are available from the principal investigators of these studies, and the 1992-94 CEU surveys will soon become available from the Zentralarchiv too. The CEU surveys seem to frequently used in secondary analyses, primarily in the United States, even though I rarely receive notice on the subsequent products (cf. Anderson *et al.* 1997; Kincses 1997; Markowski 1995, 1997; Tworzecki 1997a, 1997b). They have been conducted between September 1992 and early 1997 with funding from the Central European University Foundation and covered party images and electoral preferences in four East Central European countries, strongly relying on open-ended questions and measures of the parties' perceived issue competence. Within the framework of this project seven mass surveys were conducted in Hungary with a largely constant questionnaire module between September 1992 and January 1997 (but none in 1996, when the last Czech and Slovak surveys of the series were administered).

Apparently, a large number of elite and mass surveys were conducted in Hungary by the United States Information Agency, the BBC, and the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute and its various successor organisations. Various other political opinion surveys were carried out by a multitude of Western non-governmental organisations (cf. e.g. Gerlich 1993; Miguel and Berlund 1991), but are difficult to trace. Many of these data sets cover electoral preferences, but none has reached the public domain.

With the exception of Varga's (1997a, 1997b) study of alleged media effects, Kolosi *et al.*'s (1992) discussion of the impact of cleavage mobilization on turnout, Angelusz and Tardos' (1996) argument that a short-term change in the political context rather than an underlying trend driven by more long-term factors produced the slight increase in turnout from 1990 to 1994, and Róbert's (1997) attempt to demonstrate that the relationship between former communist party membership and socialist vote is mediated by economic self-interest, all above-cited publications on Hungarian electoral behaviour are highly inductive discussions of various socio-demographic, opinion and attitudinal correlates of voting behaviour, and they usually remain elusive about causal relationships - which is understandable given the difficulties with making such inferences in the context of a multiparty system with multiple ideological divisions. However, vagueness about causes and effects breeds speculation instead of sobriety. Worse yet, most data sets cover only socio-demographic variables and attitudes towards some general principles - neither of which can be conceived as a direct cause of party preferences.

Salient findings and possible remedies of methodological weaknesses

Apart from a stronger theoretical focus and greater care in precisely formulating their propositions, five methodological devices could help to overcome the above noted shortcomings in surveys of Hungarian electoral behaviour. One is to rely on instruments that are closer to the direct antecedents of party choice than the usual attitude and demographic variables are. This way one could develop a better understanding of why various social groups vote the way they do. For instance, in the 1990 post-election study of TÁRKI there were some opinion items on what seem to have been the major divisive partisan issues in the campaign, plus a battery of items asking the respondents to rate some possible reasons of party choice that featured prominently in the campaign. The findings suggest that the perceived party competences on valence issues, rather than the distribution of voters on some divisive policy issues decided the 1990 election (Tóka 1990, 1995b).

This sheds an interesting light on another finding, namely that party choice in Hungary in 1990 was more strongly correlated with some socio-demographic variables (like age, church attendance, urban vs. rural residence), but less strongly with economic policy attitudes than in Australia, Austria, Germany, the UK and the US around 1985. Although it has not been demonstrated that the perceived competence of the parties on the decisive valence issues was a function of the socio-cultural distance between the voter and the various parties, this may account of the 1990 election would be coherent both with the above findings and the high volatility of party choice in the 1990 Hungarian election campaign (cf. Bruszt and Simon 1991, Tóka 1994 and Tóka 1995b).

The CEU-surveys also relied on measures of issue salience and the popularly perceived positions of the parties on issues. Some results obtained with these items appeared to go some way in explaining cross-national variations in the electoral fortunes of different party families across East Central Europe, even after controls for partisan bias in perceptions (see Tóka 1993b; cf. also Tóka 1997b).

Such controls would be especially important in studies that probe reasons of non-voting and/or party choice with direct open ended questions (see Bartók 1995; Bokor 1996; Böhmer, Gázsó and Szoboszlai 1994; Simon 1991). Unfortunately, responses to open-ended questions about past actions may merely reflect *post hoc* rationalizations of actions. Yet, the frequency of policy, personality, etc. related reasons in response to open-ended questions about what citizens (currently) like and dislike about the major parties may well correspond to the weight of such considerations for party choice. Previous experiments with such items suggested that policy-, personality- and ideology-related consideration are probably less frequently on the mind of Hungarian, than American, Czech, German and Slovak voters, but did not really identify factors that would be particularly important for the former (see Tóka 1993b, 1996).

Secondly, there is a pressing need to introduce a temporal dimension into the analyses to clarify causal processes. With the exception of the few longitudinal analyses (e.g. many short reports by commercial pollsters and Angelusz and Tardos 1992b; Gázsó 1997b; Kovács 1996; Tóka 1994, 1997a), all studies have had major difficulties in demonstrating the direction of possible causal relationships between party choice and its affective and cognitive correlates (such as satisfaction with the current government or left-right self-placement). As the design of the CEU-surveys show, I believe that the number of times when the same questions are replicated is worth to be increased even on the expense of the development of new instruments and the length of the questionnaires. Longitudinal analyses revealed that policy-relevant attitudes, as well as their correlation with the vote, do change considerably over time: that is, dynamic phenomena like the sudden jumps in the popularity of the ex-communist's parties in Poland and Hungary can be located in specific sections of the electorate, and thus their causes cannot be properly understood from simple cross-sectional data (Markowski and Tóka 1995; Tóka 1994). Furthermore, some issues - e.g. what kind of linkages between parties and voters make party allegiances more stable over time - can fruitfully be studied by employing a panel study design (cf. Tóka 1997c).

Third, cross-national comparisons are essential. Without this perspective one could hardly argue with the many 1990 commentaries that depicted the Hungarian party system "hovering" above the society, and attributed voters' choices to superficial motives instead of social group membership, which the same commentators liked to present as the overwhelmingly important and superbly "rational" determinant of party choice in Western democracies. However, international comparisons immediately reveal that the socio-demographic correlates of the vote are not weaker, but are somewhat different in Hungary than in well established democracies (Tóka 1991, 1993b, 1995b, 1996). Moreover, the strength of class voting and the correlations between economic policy attitudes and party preferences vary considerably across postcommunist democracies (cf. Tóka 1997a). Thus, their weakness in Hungary cannot be explained by reference to the legacies of communism, the novelty of democracy, the depth of economic reforms and recession, or any other factor common to the East European countries. Another possible explanation is refuted by the fact that economic policy attitudes were no less ideologically constrained or rooted in socio-economic status in Hungary in 1990 than in the Western countries covered by ISSP 1985 (Tóka 1992).

Thus, novel explanations are required for some of the most persistent characteristics of Hungarian electoral behaviour, and it is unlikely that analyses of single-country data sets can

identify them. One can argue that the absence of serious organizational carriers for socio-economic conflicts in 1990-92, and the high trade openness of the country were the main cause of Hungarian electoral behaviour being weakly, if at all, influenced by economic policy attitudes, social class and the like. Advancing this hypothesis one can point to variations in the relevant correlations across more and less open economies in Eastern Europe (Tóka 1997a), the different correlations between attitudes towards unions and business and economic policy attitudes in Hungary than in Poland or the ISSP 1985 countries (Tóka 1992), some strategic choices of the Hungarian party elites that obscured their initial dissensus on economic policy issues (Tóka 1993a, 1993b), and the combined evidence from Herbert Kitschelt's survey of middle-level party elites and the CEU mass surveys that shows the existence of a significant, though clearly not deterministic relationship between the clarity of party positions and the extent to which such differences are widely recognized by voters on a given issue dimension (Tóka forthcoming).

Fourthly, in a search for theoretically relevant questions, one can turn to aggregate, rather than individual level phenomena, and the consequences, rather than the causes of what survey data reveal, in descriptive terms, about Hungarian electoral behaviour. This strategy was adopted, for instance, in analyses of the determinants of national and individual levels of party loyalty and their impact on democratic consolidation (Tóka 1997b, 1997c), whether the nature of party-voter linkages influence political efficacy and satisfaction with democracy (Tóka 1995d), and political representation relating mass and elite data to each other (Kitschelt *et al.* forthcoming).

The prospects

Hungarian electoral research has emerged and developed through the unrelated and uncoordinated undertakings of a number of people and institutions. Neither competition, nor cooperation, nor scholarly debate were observable among the researchers until 1994 - that the situation was totally different regarding the private polling companies is just one more proof how much better institutionalised commercial polling was in this period.

From 1994 on István Stumpf made some initiatives to facilitate cooperation and scholarly exchange within the profession. With the help of the Friedrich Nauman Stiftung he organised three conferences with the participation of nearly all major contributors to the study of elections in Hungary, ranging from constitutional lawyers to commercial pollsters and pundits. Most of the lectures presented at the 1996 conference were published in a volume with a few more articles on the Századvég-TÁRKI surveys (see Stumpf 1997c).

In the learned journals there were two scholarly debates that involved (although did not concentrate on) discussions of data on electoral behaviour. The first was prompted by Körösenyi's (1993) argument that the ideological differences between the Hungarian parties can be meaningfully represented by just one dimension that is similar to the left-right cleavage familiar from West European polities (on the debate see Arató *et al.* 1994). The next debate pitted Körösenyi (1996, 1997) against Gázsó (1996, 1997a), and focused on the

characteristics of the former communist party members and the present day socialist party, and how their relationship should be interpreted.

Since late 1996 István Stumpf have secured funding to conduct the quarterly Századvég-TÁRKI surveys of party preferences (on the related publications see above). These questionnaires are written and the data are analysed by the Századvég Policy Research Centre, staffed by Kenneth Benoit, Ferenc Gázsó, Tibor Gázsó, and István Stumpf. Generous access has reportedly been provided to all but the latest quarterly data by István Stumpf on individual requests, and clearly this longitudinal series will constitute the most important source of our future knowledge about electoral behaviour in the forthcoming May 1998 parliamentary elections.

The CEU questionnaire module and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems module will be administered to a national sample after the first round of the 1998 parliamentary elections, and Angelusz and Tardos will have a survey run by the Research Group for Communication Studies. These data will become publicly available after a year or so. János Simon will be directing surveys of electoral preferences in February and April, and a comparative post-election survey for Richard Gunther (Ohio State University). Apart from this, one can presume that a few private polls and the usual omnibuses of the market research firms will cover the election too, and much the same non-survey data will be produced by the same organisations as it happened with regards to the 1990 and 1994 election.

At the time of writing (January 1998), several Hungarian language volumes on the 1998 elections and Hungarian electoral behaviour are in the pipelines simultaneously, including a collections of articles by Róbert Angelusz and Róbert Tardos, the next volume of the Böhm-Szoboszlai book series on Hungarian elections, a textbook by Ferenc Gázsó and István Stumpf, and János Simon's monograph on political culture. If we take this as an indicator, the number of relevant publications and the intensity of scholarly exchange in the field will grow exponentially in the near future.

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⁷ The translation of the original Hungarian titles are provided in parentheses. Names of journals and publishers are only shown in the original language. For reasons of space, reprints and shortened versions of already listed items, articles in non-academic media, papers on electoral behaviour without some quantitative evidence, and publications by commercial pollsters and the Hungarian Public Opinion research institute are generally not listed. Otherwise the list includes every publication on Hungarian electoral behaviour (but not on the electoral system and election campaigns) that I am aware of, plus all other references from the main text.

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Appendix 1: Names and addresses of institutions conducting electoral research in Hungary

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tel: (36-1) 266 5222

Prof. László Bruszt
Department of Political Science, Central European University
1051 Budapest, Nádor utca 9
fax: (36-1) 327 3087
tel: (36-1) 327 3025
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Democracy and Local Governance project
<http://www.ssc.upenn.edu/dlg/>
co-director: Prof. Henry Teune
Dept. of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania
217 Stiteler Hall, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6215 USA
fax: (1-215) 573 2073
tel: (1-215) 898 7641
email: hteune@mail.sas.upenn.edu

Hungarian Gallup Institute (Magyar Gallup Intézet)
director: Róbert Manchin; senior political pollster: György Fischer
1033 Budapest, Fő tér 1
fax: (36-1) 2500 650
tel: (36-1) 2500 999, 180 3999 or 168 2047

Prof. Ferenc Gázsó
see Institute of Political Science

Gabriella Ilonszki
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1068 Budapest Benczúr u. 33
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tel: (36-1) 266 5222

András Körösényi
Dept. of Political Science, Faculty of Law, Eötvös University
1053 Budapest Egyetem tér 1-3
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tel: (36-1) 266 9503

Marketing Centrum (Hungarian Marketing Research Ltd.)
director: László Kulcsár; senior political pollster: Béla Marián
1065 Budapest Nagymező utca 21
Postal Address: Pf. 617, 1373 Budapest 5
fax: (36-1) 131 6343
tel: (36-1) 153 1545
e-mail: mcopkk@mail.datanet.hu

Medián Public Opinion and Market Research Institute
director and senior political pollster: Endre Hann
1034 Budapest Seregély u. 21
Postal Address: P.O. Box 551, 1538 Budapest
fax: (36-1) 250 4346
tel: (36-1) 250 4322 or 250 4334
e-mail: hann@median.hu or median@indeunet.hu
<http://www.eunet.hu/median/>

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Sofres Modus Ltd. Business and Social Marketing Consulting
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György Szoboszlai
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director: Ádám Levendel; senior political pollster: Tibor Závecz
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Gábor Tóka
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Károly Varga
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tel: (36-1) 138 4640

Appendix 2: Names and addresses of data archives providing the academic public with data sets

Election Information Service, Central Registrar and Election Bureau of the Ministry of
Interior (Választási Információs Szolgálat, Belügyminisztérium Központi Nyilvántartó és
Választási Hivatala)

head: Dr Zoltán Tóth
Budapest II, Páfrány u. 9
Postal Address: 1450 Budapest Pf.81
e-mail : visz@mail.valasztas.hu
fax: (36-1) 117 2870
tel: (36-1) 391 3600
[HTTP://171.19.9.228/](http://171.19.9.228/)

TÁRKI (Social Research Informatics Centre)
director: István György Tóth
1132 Budapest
Victor Hugo u. 18-22
fax: (36-1) 1290 470
tel: (36-1) 1497 531
e-mail: toth@tarki.hu
<http://www.tarki.hu>