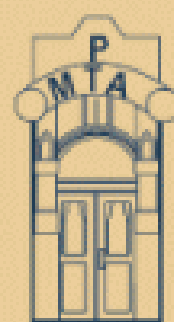


Zsuzsanna Mihályffy

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New elements of
Hungarian political
campaign strategies



Institute for Political Science
Hungarian Academy of Sciences



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**New elements of Hungarian
political campaign strategies**

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‘From the Media to the Neighborhood’

The Post-Modernization of Fidesz Campaigns 1998-2004

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Campaign and Turnout in Hungary (2002)¹

ABSTRACT

Low turnout in a democracy can have several effects on everyday politics, mainly on party policies and campaign strategies. What are the possible consequences of low turnout? How do parties relate to low turnout? Can they develop and/or do they employ campaign strategies, which are aimed at increasing turnout?

In this paper I investigate these problems from a Hungarian point of view, by looking at the campaign preceding the 2002 parliamentary elections. The 2002 campaign was rather intensive, and turnout was the highest ever since the system change (70.53%), with a slight increase in the second round. Elections in 1998, however, faced a great extent - by approximately 15% - lower turnout in both rounds, though second round participation was slightly higher at that time as well.

The paper investigates the techniques, which the two leading parties used in order to increase turnout in the 2002 elections. The structure of the paper is the following: after discussing participation figures in Hungary since 1990, parties' perception and interpretation of turnout is investigated. It is shown why both leading parties were interested in increasing participation and how they tried to persuade certain groups of society to participate in voting. The analysis is based on party manifestos, politicians' speeches, and newspaper articles.

¹ A dolgozat eredeti verziója elhangzott az ECPR 2004-es Workshopján, Uppsalában. Köszönet Kiss Balázsnak a konzultációkért.

1. Introduction

The campaign preceding the 2002 parliamentary elections in Hungary has been the most exciting of its kind since the system change. It has often been called the most intensive, the most passionate and the most violent electoral campaign in the new history of Hungary. It was followed by relatively high turnout in the elections (70.53 pct in the first round), which exceeds the 1998 rate of participation by approximately 15 pct. The remarkable increase in participation, of course, might be attributed to several reasons. One of these might be the campaign itself. This paper is trying to investigate the 2002 electoral campaign from the point of view of mobilisation.

The key questions which the paper addresses, are the following.

Q1. How did parties relate to low turnout?

Q2. Did parties employ techniques aimed at mobilisation in their campaigns?

Q2 can be divided into two sub-questions.

i. Did parties employ techniques aimed at increasing turnout *in general*?

ii. Did they employ techniques with the aim to turn out *specific segments of the society*?

The paper tries to answer questions i. and ii. by analysing

- verbal methods for conveying messages that is, *party manifestos*,
- and face-to-face methods for conveying messages that is, *politicians' speeches* during whistle-stop campaigning.

Although the average citizen probably does not read party manifestos, the analysis of these might help tracing attempts of the parties to segment the electorate. The sources that will be used in the paper are the following:

- the manifestos of the two leading parties, the MSZP and the Fidesz (altogether 5, available on the web)
- scripts of Viktor Orbán's speeches (He was in office as Prime Minister between 1998-2002, the prime ministerial candidate of the Fidesz in 2002.)
- various articles and reports. For some reason Péter Medgyessy's speeches (prime ministerial candidate of the opposition in 2002) are not available, which is why newspaper articles and reports will be used, taken from Hungarian dailies and the daily Newsletter of the Hungarian Socialist Party.

2. The Hungarian democracy 1990-2002: Elections and Perceptions of Turnout

Based on the 12 years of Hungarian democracy, some tendencies concerning elections, parties and turnout can be observed.

1. The electoral competition is becoming stronger, which is strengthening the tendency towards bipolarism. The proportion of parliamentary seats received by the winner and the second-comer is growing. In 1990, the first two parties, MDF and SZDSZ received 66.32 pct

of the mandates, in 1994 the MSZP and the SZDSZ got 72.02 pct of the seats, in 1998 the Fidesz and the MSZP obtained 73.06 pct of parliamentary seats and finally, in 2002 the MSZP and the Fidesz received 94.81 pct of the mandates².

2. After each election, a coalition government was formed, although in 1994 the MSZP reached an absolute majority (54.14 pct), thus would have been able to govern the country on its own.

3. Each government remained in office during the whole term.

4. Each government was defeated in the elections.

5. Turnout at the elections has been rather changeable. Many were dissatisfied, even disappointed about the 1990 turnout. In the first round, participation was 65.10 pct, which decreased to 45.54 pct for the second round. In 1994, a slight increase could be observed, with 68.93 and 55.12 pct of those entitled casting their vote in the first and second round. Based on the 1990 and 1994 results, it could have been expected that electoral participation would exceed 70 pct in 1998. Contrary to expectations, however, participation decreased significantly, to 56.26 pct in the first round. In 31 out of the 176 single-member constituencies, the first round was invalid, which means the election had to be repeated³. In addition to this, another phenomenon was also against the previous tendency, which was that second-round participation increased. The rate of participation, 57.01 pct, was the highest, if second rounds up to then are compared. Compared to previous results, turnout in 2002 was surprisingly high, it amounted to 70.53 pct in the first round, and with a slight increase, reached 73.51 pct in the second round.

3. How did the parties relate to turnout?

1. As it was mentioned earlier, rate of participation in 1990 disappointed many. After all, citizens of Hungary could not participate in free, democratic elections for decades, thus bigger enthusiasm could have been expected. A few political scientists argued that of course, low turnout can also be the indicator of citizens' satisfaction, the idea that things are going just as well without their personal participation. This explanation, however, is probably more valid for democracies with a longer past⁴.

Rate of participation in the 1994 elections was promising in the sense that it suggested a positive tendency towards increasing turnout, that is why, the decline in 1998 somewhat shocked the public. Most scientists considered low participation bad, even harmful as they worried that lack of interest could diminish the validity of the elections.

Bigger parties probably shared this view. For smaller parties, however, it is easier to get into the Parliament, if turnout is low, thus high abstention is probably more favoured by parties close to the mandate threshold. Clear evidence of bigger parties' negative interpretation of low turnout can be found in Prime Minister Victor Orbán's election addresses preceding the

² Data used in this part are taken from the Yearbook of Hungarian Politics (1999) and the Statement of the National Election Committee About the Results of the 2002 Parliamentary Election.

³ The first round of the election is invalid in a constituency, if less than 50 pct of those entitled, participate. For details about the Hungarian electoral system, see Appendix.

⁴ A more detailed account on how parties and the public interpreted the problem of voting abstention can be found in Angelusz&Tardos, 1996.

2002 elections. He claims that although the party (Fidesz) was satisfied with the victory in 1998, but high rate of abstention cast shadow on their happiness, because it faced them with the fact that their victory was born out of the will of 57 pct of those having suffrage.

2. Both leading parties, the MSZP and the Fidesz were probably interested in increasing turnout in 2002, in order to make smaller parties fall out of the Parliament. They both wanted the party of the extreme right (MIÉP, Party of Hungarian Justice and Life) to fall out, for different reasons. First of all, the MSZP worried about the reputation of Hungary, if an extreme party would get into the Parliament, even more so, because of the imminent accession to the European Union. Secondly, the Fidesz has been functioning as a catch-all party, aiming to integrate the right wing since before the last elections. As part of this, to prevent the MIÉP from getting into the Parliament was also his interest. Their effort was strongly supported by the liberal party⁵ (the SZDSZ) as well. In addition to this, the Independent Smallholders' Party (FKGP) suffered from a large drop in popularity and serious inner conflicts while they were on power, and the Fidesz could hope to obtain some votes from there as well.

3. The rise in turnout in the second round of the 1998 elections greatly contributed to the victory of the Fidesz. The first round brought rather close results. Although the MSZP proved stronger in the lists, (it got 32.25 pct as opposed to the 28.18 pct of the Fidesz), and out of the 176 single-member constituencies an MSZP candidate came first in 113, (as opposed to the 43 Fidesz first-comers), only one candidate (of the Fidesz) managed to win in the first round, and the MSZP had only a minor advantage in the majority of the single member constituencies. The great number of districts where first round was invalid also increased the uncertainty concerning the final outcome of the elections. The slight increase in participation is one proof of how intensively the two leading parties tried to mobilise their supporters. In single-member constituencies the MSZP managed to increase the number of its supporters by 609 000 while the Fidesz (partly due to the successful integration of the right wing) managed to increase the number of its supporters to even greater extent, by 729 000.

Out of the 113 MSZP first-comers, only 54 managed to win a seat in the second round. The candidates of the Fidesz, however, managed to win in 89 single-member constituencies. The final outcome, surprisingly, was different from what could be expected from the first round results. The Fidesz got the most mandates, 148 (out of which 90 mandates were from single member constituencies, 48 from district constituencies and 10 from the national (compensatory) list). The second-comer MSZP got 134 seats (54 from single-member constituencies, 50 from district constituencies and 30 from the compensatory list)⁶. The parties could draw the moral that a). first-round victory does not necessarily mean winning the elections, and b). it is worth mobilising voters.

⁵ This is interesting, as the SZDSZ was also close to the threshold, thus increasing turnout could easily have led to its falling out as well, and it almost did. The SZDSZ got 5.57 pct of votes cast for the lists, while the MIÉP got 4.37 pct.

⁶ For a detailed description of election results in 1998, see for example Wiener, 1999.

4. Campaigns

4.1. Verbal Methods: Manifestos

4.1.1. Party Manifestos: 'The Future Has Started' and 'Change For the Welfare!'

In this chapter the manifestos of the two leading parties will be analysed and compared. Although it is a widely accepted view that only a minority of citizens bother reading party manifestos, the reason why they are dealt with in this paper is that if parties in fact wanted to segment society and convey different messages to different segments, we are likely to find some references to this in their manifestos as well. First, the manifestos will be compared and some general conclusions will be drawn. After that parties' attempts at segmentation will be investigated.

Both the MSZP and the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party (together with its partner the Hungarian Democratic Forum⁷ or MDF) published their election manifestos in early 2002 (on 26th January and 16th February, respectively). The main difference between the two derives from the fact that while the Fidesz and its coalition partners were on power and their basic message was their aim at *continuation*, the MSZP after four years of opposition tried to communicate the *necessity of a change* towards its voters. This is clearly indicated already in the titles of the manifestos.

The manifesto of the centre-right coalition bears the title 'The Future Has Started' referring to their achievements in the past four years. The introduction is intended to address every citizen of Hungary, though the term 'civic' and 'bourgeois' (as in 'the bourgeois Hungary', 'civic co-operation' and 'the rise of the bourgeois') are often used in it⁸. The actual manifesto consists of 48 points, which are grouped in four chapters (Bourgeois Economic Policy - Bourgeois Welfare, Families Are the Most Important Communities Of a Civic Society, Respectable Civic Lifestyle and The State which Serves Its Citizens). Only half of the manifesto deals with aims and promises, the other half is about their achievements in government over the past few years. The achievements of the Fidesz government are the *credit*, which assure us that the promises can be fulfilled.

The concluding part of the manifesto contains a general technique aimed at increasing turnout. It calls on *everybody, irrespective of party affiliation, to take part in the elections*: "In order to shape a common future of which everyone should be a part of, please exercise your right and participate in the elections. Come and cast your vote and bring your family, friends and acquaintances with you".

The MSZP's manifesto is entitled 'Change For The Welfare!'⁹ The introduction lists segments of the society that the manifesto intends to address, and also their problems owing

⁷ The Fidesz Hungarian Civic Party and the Hungarian Democratic Forum took part in the elections as a coalition, with joint candidates and a joint list. They enjoyed the support of some other associations as well.

⁸ This 'civic' and 'bourgeois' were slogans in the 1998 campaign of the Fidesz; concepts with which the party tried to address the whole nation (used synonymously with the term 'citizens'). The party adopted the name Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party in 1995.

⁹ The translation has to be explained. The original title was something like '(Let us) Extend the System Change to Welfare Actions!' or '(We want) a System Change - Promising Welfare!' Why is this important? Well, the concept of system change has symbolic importance in Hungarian politics, just like - probably - in other East-Central European countries, and it has been used by several political

to the work of the Fidesz-government. The list starts with the *unemployed* people waiting for a job, goes on with *parents* waiting for a fair system of child care allowance, *pensioners* waiting for pensions enough for a living, and closes with the *people in employment*, who want to feel secure and in their workplaces. The *competitive sector*, the *civil servants*, especially *those working in health care and education*, the *entrepreneurs*, the *people making a living from agriculture*, *those living in the country*, and finally, the *intellectuals* are also mentioned. The listing at the beginning is a good idea, because citizens who read the manifesto can immediately realise if ‘it was meant for them’ or not. The Hungarian Socialist Party intends to bring about three shifts, which are the following: a Social Shift, a Democratic Shift and a Modernisation Shift. A 7-point-chapter is devoted to each of these in the manifesto. “The manifesto” - we read - “is the program of the rise of Hungary”, and is “based on the country’s achievements in economy, and the nation’s labour”. The concluding sentence expresses a general mobilisation technique, as it calls on citizens to *vote for the welfare programme, the candidates of the Hungarian Socialist Party and Péter Medgyessy*, the party’s Prime Ministerial candidate.

The basic difference between the two campaigns, the campaign of the Hungarian Socialist Party and the campaign of the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party and its coalition partners is clearly shown by the manifestos. Not only the titles and the introductions show this difference, but also the promises, in the way they are formulated and the context. The Fidesz campaign was originally intended to be an entirely positive¹⁰ campaign (cf. Fricz, 2003, Navrasics 2003), focusing on the achievements of the government, and ignoring the opposition. The campaign of the MSZP, on the other hand, was aimed at overthrowing the government, thus obviously relied on the elements of a negative campaign.

This becomes visible when the phrasing of the promises is compared. The typical promise drawn in ‘The Future Has Started’ sounds something like: “The Fidesz Government has achieved X. It is good, so we will continue the programme / broaden its scope / increase the amount of investment in the field...etc”. Promises in the MSZP’s manifesto on the other hand, have two kinds of wording: (a) “The problem of Y (a segment of society or a field of action) is not solved / solved badly or partially, but the Socialist government will do everything to set it right”, or (b) “The Socialist government is interested in the situation/welfare of Z (a segment or a field of action) and will take actions to improve it”¹¹.

The promises parties spelled out in their manifestos are shown in Table A, grouped according to segments and fields of action (see Appendix). The promises drafted in the manifestos focus

powers for different reasons. One of the central elements of the 2002 campaign was to decide which political power would complete the system change. Both leading parties tried to monopolise the concept. The HSP claimed that the system change is not complete until the welfare of the people is reached, while the Fidesz claimed that the change would be complete, when citizens, satisfied with the course of events, vote the government confidence for a second term.

¹⁰ When classifying messages, I will rely on the terms used in Denton & Woodward, 1998: “*Positive messages* are those designed to promote the positive attributes of the candidate and to link the candidate to voters in a positive way. [...] *Negative messages* are specifically designed to attack the opponent. [...] *Comparative messages* are still designed to attack the opponent, but tend to focus on issue positions. [...] Finally, there are *response messages* designed to directly answer challenger charges, allegations, and attacks.” pp. 109-110.

¹¹ It is interesting that the phrasing used in the Fidesz manifesto could have been more humble, e.g. by saying that they have inherited *k* problems from the previous government, they have solved *n* problems during the term, and they will solve the remaining *k-n* problems in the next term. But it fails to mention a single problem.

on more or less the same segments of society, thus the difference is rather in the way they are drafted. Also, when distinguishing segments, the parties seemingly relied on the same principles, the most important ones being age groups and/or family status, occupation categories and residence. Of course the segmentation does not cover the whole of the society, and the categories are not exclusive, either. One can be a young person *and* living in the country, or one can be employed in health care and the mother of three at the same time.

Both manifestos have promises / declarations, which target the same 9 segments which are the following:

*employees, (within that, teachers, and health care employees),
entrepreneurs,
those earning a living from agriculture,
the unemployed,
pensioners,
families (with children),
students (and schoolchildren),
those living in the country,
and religious people.*

It seems that both the MSZP and the Fidesz-MDF considered it equally important to formulate messages to these segments. Not only the target groups are the same, the intended actions are also similar, although the very items sometimes differ in number, scope, or the sum devoted to the project.

Also there are declarations present in both manifestos, which are not addressed to a specific segment of the society, but, much rather, to *any segment*, because they are in the centre of public interest, such as the establishment of a professional army, the housing programme, the development of the police, the actions against corruption.

Certain groups of the society, which are mentioned in the manifesto of the centre right, however, are left out from the MSZP's programme. First of all, *people with a disability*, and *the Gypsy minority*, although equal opportunities seem to be one of the underlying principles of the MSZP manifesto as well. Interestingly, though both manifestos deal with regional developments and investments in infrastructure, only 'Future Has Started' lists such plans concerning the capital of Hungary, Budapest. *People living in Budapest* are only addressed in the Fidesz-MDF manifesto. Although there are some hints about actions in agriculture in 'Change For The Welfare!', actual promises towards people making a living from agriculture are more concrete in the Fidesz-MDF manifesto. 'The Future Has Started' also seems to be a bit more detailed inasmuch as the financial background of all these actions is concerned.

4.1.2. Popular Manifestos

It has to be noted that both programmes had a shorter, more "user-friendly" form, because parties decided to simplify their manifesto to the most important promises, hoping to reach more citizens this way. 'A Change For The Welfare!' was simplified into 13 plus 1 points entitled 'Programme of the Medgyessy government for the first 100 days', announced by Medgyessy on 28th March, and 'The Future Has Started' was converted into a 'Contract with the Citizens' with the most important 12 promises. In the following, these shorter manifestos will be investigated in more detail, as they certainly reached more citizens than the longer versions.

Both short versions had its strengths. The ‘Contract With the Citizens’ was prepared for PM Viktor Orbán’s whistle-stop campaign. At his rallies, his speech was followed by the symbolic act of signing the Contract, indicating that he guarantees that the government will keep the promises laid out in the manifesto. Medgyessy announced his government’s ‘Programme for the first 100 days’ only 10 (!) days before the first round of the elections, and in the next days it was published in some of the quality broadsheets (Népszabadság, 29th March; Magyar Hírlap, 30th March; and even in a weekly, 168 óra). The timing had another aspect: 29th March was the day when public opinion polls could be published for the last time before the elections. But the main strength of the ‘Programme’ that its points captured clear, short-term promises, and “citizens could easily calculate what profit would a Socialist victory yield”¹².

The unofficial translation of the short manifestos is printed below.

Contract With The Citizens

1. By 2006 we will increase the social policy allowance available for housing construction to HUF 1 million after 1 child, HUF 2 million after 2 children, HUF 3 million after 3 children.
2. By 2006 we will double the average wage of citizens.
3. We will provide a job for everyone who is able and willing to work.
4. By 2006 we will increase the family tax allowance to HUF 1 million after 1 child, HUF 2 million after 2 children, HUF 3 million after 3 children.
5. By 2006 we will have introduced the individual account-based pension scheme.
6. We will continue to increase the purchasing power of pensions.
7. By 2006 four new bridges will be built over River Danube.
8. All of our motorways will reach the country borders.
9. A further 554 km of dams will be built or strengthened.
10. By 2006 we guarantee the influx of HUF 606 billion into health care.
11. By 2006 we will invest HUF 800 billion into agriculture.
12. We will introduce an entirely new agrarian credit system with particularly favourable conditions.

(www.fidesz.hu/index.php?CikkID=243)

The Programme of the Medgyessy Government During the First 100 Days.

1. We will repay pensioners the HUF 19 000, which the Fidesz government has taken away from them, as a one-time benefit.
2. On 1st September we will increase teachers’ wages by 50 per cent.
3. We will increase the wage of those employed in health care and civil service by 50 per cent on 1st October.
4. On 1st October, we will make the minimal wage tax-free.
5. We will modify the code of labour legislation, restore the 2 days of rest per week, one of which must be Sunday.
6. On 1st August, through modifying the land act, we will restore the rights of landowners and put the National Land Fund under state control.
7. For the interest of winemakers, we will modify the Revenue Act before the vintage.

¹² Kiss, 2002.

8. To promote the interest of Hungarian farmers, we will immediately start negotiations with the EU to improve the financial conditions of the accession.

9. We will dissolve the Country Image Centre with immediate effect, and the savings will be rearranged for children's free catering at school.

10. From August 2002 onwards, we will give 2 monthly family allowance to families before the start of the school year.

11. From 1st September we will increase college and university grants by 30 per cent.

12. From 1st July, we will abolish the subscription fee of television.

13. We will initiate the reopening of talks concerning the Orban-Nastase pact.

+1. We restore the democratic public life:

~ we will start immediate talks with employers, civilian organisations and trade unions.

~ we will reintroduce the weekly sessions in Parliament

~ restore the independence of public television and radio channels, the independence of information

~ start the "glass-pocket" programme, with which we will make the economic system of the state more transparent.

(*Hogy volt? Országgyűlési választások 2002*, pp.122-123.)

The segments of the society, which are addressed in each short version, are the following (ranked according to the number of items /promises)

- In The 'Contract'

Those living in the country - 3 items (7, 8 & 9) (NB. 2 of the 4 bridges will be in Bp.)

Families (with children): 2 items (1 & 4)

Those earning a living from agriculture: 2 items (11 & 12)

Pensioners: 2 items (5 & 6)

Employees: 2 items (2 & 10) (Item 2 is general. NB. Item 10 indirectly refers to the pay-rise of those employed in health care.)

Unemployed people: 1 item (3)

- In The '100 Day Programme':

Employees: 4 items altogether (*Teachers*: Item 2; *Those employed in health care and civil service*: Item 3; *Those with lower income*: Item 4; *All employees*: Item 5)

Those earning a living from agriculture: 3 items (6, 7 & 8)

Families: 2 items (9 & 10)

Pensioners: 1 item (1)

Students: 1 item (11)

Other: Items 12, 13 & +1

1. As the listing of segments shows, there are 4 segments which both parties tried to address: *families, pensioners, employees, and those earning a living from agriculture*. (In the original manifestos there were 9 such segments).

2. The segment with the most promises in the '100 Day Programme' is people employed in agriculture (3 promises). The top priority segment in the 'Contract' is those living in the country (3 promises as well). Given the overlap between these segments, and the fact that the 'Contract' contains 2 promises addressed to those working in agriculture, it can be said that the group of country people / agricultural workers seem to be the most important in the 'Contract'.

3. The '100 Day Programme' contains 4 promises which are addressed to *employees*, which is why this seems to be the most important segment.

4. Families are addressed with 2 promises in each short manifesto, and pensioners are targeted with 2 declarations in the 'Contract' and 1 in the '100 Day Programme'. Students are only mentioned in the '100 Day Programme' while the unemployed only in the 'Contract'. The 'Programme' also includes promises, which are not addressed specifically to any segment of the society.

If the short versions are compared from the point of attitudes, the difference is similar to that of the original manifestos. While the messages (the wording of the promises) are entirely positive in the 'Contract', several items in the 'Programme' are negative-comparative.

4.1. 3. Péter Medgyessy's Manifesto

The MSZP also had a third manifesto, which in fact was the first one in chronological order. It was the prime ministerial candidate's own manifesto, entitled 'In Accordance With The Nation', which he announced on 8th January, at the Pilvax Café. It is worthy of attention, as during his whistle-stop campaign, Medgyessy distributed it in every settlement, so it reached a number of citizens. 'In Accordance...' lists ten fields where action needs to be taken: the functioning of the state, public administration, the rights of people in employment, social security, health care system, education, agriculture and regional development, communication and environment protection, appreciation for the intellectuals, and finally, better relations with the neighbouring countries in favour of the Hungarian minorities. Though the main areas are the same, there are some differences when 'In Accordance With The Nation' and 'Change For The Welfare!' are compared.

First of all, *people with disability*, and *intellectuals* are two segments, which are mentioned in Medgyessy's manifesto, but not in the party manifesto. Secondly, some fields of action are much more detailed in 'In Accordance' than in 'Change For The Welfare!'. *Agriculture*, for example is devoted a whole chapter, with 11 concrete actions listed, and the same applies for regional development (communication and environment protection) with 10 actions. By contrast, the party manifesto contained 2 and 5 promises concerning these fields, respectively. The attitude of the Medgyessy manifesto is often negative-comparative. Some of the promises embody sharp criticism of the previous government, e.g.

"My government will end tyranny and despotism" (title of Chapter 1).

"My government will settle the delays in the development of communication, water management and environment protection caused by its predecessor"(Chapter 8).

The differences between the campaigns of the party and the candidate later faded away. Leading politicians of the MSZP and the prime ministerial candidate mentioned the more or less the same points in their speeches, including actions concerning agriculture and regional development.

The manifestos clearly show that parties intended to convey messages addressed to segments of the society. The short versions indicate which segments were considered the most important by parties. Interestingly, both of the original versions of the manifestos contained an attempt to increase turnout in general. The Fidesz-MDF asked “*everybody, irrespective of party affiliation*” to participate and the MSZP asked voters to vote for the party and its candidates.

4.2. Face-to-face Methods

4.2.1. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s whistle-stop campaign.

The Prime Minister’s visits were rallies, at which Orbán delivered a speech in front of a crowd. As the aim was to convey the campaign message to as many citizens as possible, the Prime Minister visited the whole country between 20th March - 4th April, within 11 days he visited more than 30 towns and numerous smaller settlements. Orbán also participated in certain events in Budapest, such as the foundation ceremony of the Millennium City Centre, the international conference on the 2012 Budapest Olympics and the opening ceremony of the renovated Urania National Movie Theatre.

The Prime Minister himself was in the centre of attention during the whistle-stop campaign, he embodied the central message of the campaign, the achievements of the government. Though the MPs of the region and mayors were usually also present at his speeches, he was not escorted by other prominent members of his party or his cabinet. To prove the success of the past four years, his visits were usually combined with opening or foundation ceremonies of various establishments such as schools, hospitals, hotels, sports halls and factories. These were also aimed at conveying the main slogan of the campaign, “The Future Has Started”. The slogan itself seems to be a good choice as it is able to capture two, equally important messages, namely that the government lead by the Fidesz had several remarkable achievements, and that (2) this is just the beginning, as the government is future-oriented, and will continue what it has started. Interestingly, when the Prime Minister talks about achievements, and he mentions several, a distinction can be made between *symbolic achievements*¹³ and *concrete or material achievements*.

The Prime Minister delivered more or less the same messages at his rallies, as the speeches followed a similar pattern. Out of the 30-40 speeches I chose 11 (one per day), to see which were the most important messages, presuming that he delivered more or less the same speech everywhere on the same day. Of course, this might cause some distortion in the results. When choosing the speeches I used short ones as well as long ones and each speech was held in a different county.

¹³ I will call *symbolic achievements* the ones, which are not primarily related to the distribution of goods, and *concrete or material achievements*, which are related to the distribution of goods. Cf. Tóth-Török, 2002

As Table 1 shows, the most frequent message, which was part of every speech investigated, is it the one aimed at direct, general mobilisation. PM Orbán's concluding thought after each speech is that everyone should exercise their right and participate in voting, but not only that, citizens should try to persuade their families, friends and neighbours to take part in the elections as well. Clearly, general mobilisation seems to be the most important message. Orbán tries to preserve the positive attitude of his speeches throughout the whistle-stop campaign. He says he wishes not to talk about the opposition, but whenever he does, he does it without saying the names of the opposition parties or politicians; he simply says "those who think differently". The appropriate behaviour towards the opposition and their attacks, Orbán says, is to bear it with dignity, and never react in an aggressive way. Interestingly, the symbolic achievements (the National Theatre, the Benefit Law¹⁴, the Hungarian University in Transylvania, and the Esztergom-Párkány bridge) are more frequently mentioned than concrete, material achievements (e.g. purchasing power of pensions, allowances for building constructions, student loan, family allowances, etc.). The Széchenyi Plan¹⁵, as the symbol of the period, captures the main messages, as it relates the past with the future (an economic programme motivating investments, named symbolically after a great Hungarian, resulting in numerous, down-to-earth achievements, e.g. such as new sports halls). As far as messages related to concrete achievements and promises are concerned, the most frequent ones targeted families (family allowances, 55%) and students (student loan, the abolition of tuition fee, 45% and 55%). The Prime Minister points out that the goals could only be achieved because there was *will* to achieve them, and also *faith* in the success of achieving them.

The messages are positive. The main message of the speeches is *optimism* towards the future, *based on what has been achieved* so far. The positive, friendly attitude is also obvious from the fact that humour is always present in the speeches, in the form of jokes, puns and proverbs. It is interesting, however, that *promises* are not central elements of the speeches; segmentation is realised more through achievements than through promises.

Out of concrete promises the most frequent ones were those addressed to *families* (mentioned 6 times), followed by those for *employees* and *those working in agriculture* (with 4 occurrence each). The *unemployed* were mentioned once.

Table 1: The most frequent messages in the Prime Minister's pre-election speeches (out of 11 speeches)

| Message | Occurrence N (%) |
|---|-----------------------|
| Irrespective of party affiliation, everybody should vote | 11 (100%) |
| Symbolic achievements of the government (one at least) | 10 (90%) |
| It takes citizens willpower and faith in success to achieve their goals | 10 (90%) |
| The Prime Minister does not speak about the opposition during the campaign | 10 (90%) |
| The values which are very important for the citizens (e.g. family, church, the benefit law), have been attacked | 10 (90%) |
| The citizens should bear the attacks with dignity | 10 (90%) |

¹⁴ The Benefit Law (also called the Status law) assures certain rights of Hungarians who live as minorities in the neighbouring countries. It came to power on 1st January 2002.

¹⁵ The Széchenyi Plan was started by the Orbán government as a programme to motivate economic investments

| | |
|--|---------|
| The importance of the coming elections: the system change will be complete if a government is voted confidence for a second term | 9 (81%) |
| Concrete achievements (1 at least) | 8 (72%) |
| Promises (1 at least) | 6 (55%) |
| The symbol of the period is the Széchenyi Plan | 6 (55%) |
| Three important dates in the future (2004-Accession the EU, 2007-Hungary will introduce the EURO, and 2012-Hungary will organise the Olympics) | 6 (55%) |
| The importance of Hungary's entering the European Union | 6 (55%) |
| Different generations can have the same goals | 5 (45%) |
| The citizens are optimistic about the future | 5 (45%) |
| The future can only be based on 'yes' - votes for the government | 4 (36%) |

The rallies finished with the symbolic act of signing the “Contract with the Citizens”. The Contract was postered on the wall, Orbán signed it first, followed by the mayor of the town, the representative or the candidate of the area, and then the audience was also called on to sign it.

4.2.2. Prime ministerial candidate Péter Medgyessy's whistle-stop campaign

Péter Medgyessy's whistle-stop campaign was probably motivated by two reasons (Népszabadság, 8th March 2002). First of all, it was important to strengthen his positions *within* the party - as he was chosen to be the candidate for Prime Minister only about a year ahead of the elections, and not only that there were others aspiring for the position, but he was not even a member of the party. Secondly, Medgyessy led campaign in the country in order to enhance the support of the MSZP in certain regions, trying to influence the undecided in favour of the MSZP. The PM candidate was well aware of the fact that he was to enter a field completely new to him, if he wanted to address those, whom the MSZP has not been able to address so far. (Varró, 2001). As Medgyessy said about his visits to the countryside during the summer, his reason for meeting citizens was to get to know them and to learn about their problems. (cf. Varró, 2001). The most important message Medgyessy had to convey was that he is aware of people's problems, and this was a real challenge for him (Kiss, 2003).

It was Medgyessy's idea to have a separate campaign team, which would organise his campaign, independently of the campaign team of the Socialist Party and the party-campaign (cf. Szajda, 2002). The campaign of the MSZP thus became 'double-headed'; the 'two heads' of course co-operated in organising and co-ordinating the two campaigns (ibid). It was a widely held hypothesis among journalists and political scientists, that this initiated the idea in the campaign teams that Medgyessy's campaign should be positive, while party leaders will be criticising and attacking the government (cf. Bruck, 2003, p. 129; Kiss, 2003, p. 27).

Péter Medgyessy, started his whistle-stop campaign well before the elections, on 19th February. Within four weeks, he visited all of the counties. Medgyessy and his team spent one day in each county, visiting approximately 5 towns and villages. The candidate met the citizens on more than 120 such occasions, and he is estimated to have met about 250 000 citizens altogether (Szajda, 2002). The events of the whistle-stop campaign followed a strict choreography, which was almost the same each time.

A convoy of three vans arrives, decorated with the Hungarian national colours and MSZP slogans “The country is with us”. The staff consists of about 15 persons, mainly press

correspondents, advisors and spin doctors, all dressed in quite extraordinary red raincoats. (Magyar Narancs, 21st March 2002). The Prime Minister candidate delivers a short speech, mentioning some points and promises from his election manifesto (see e.g. MSZP Newsletter, 22nd February). Medgyessy is not alone on the stage, the representative of the district, or the candidate to run for the MSZP in April, is also invited, along with mayors and other prominent members of the regional organisations of the party. To some of the scenes, even ministerial candidates were invited, whose task was to talk about the policy of the future Medgyessy-government concerning their field.

After his brief speech, the PM candidate quickly gives the word to the other politicians, who are to compensate for Medgyessy's limited talents in eloquence (Népszabadság, 8th March 2002). The events of the whistle-stop campaign took the form of *citizens' forums*, where citizens could ask Medgyessy questions (rather than rallies, as in Orbán's whistle-stop campaign, cf. Kiss, 2002). The time, though, which was devoted to questions, was probably quite short due to the number of scenes the team visited each day. This is followed by the key element of the program - to establish personal contact with them - Medgyessy shakes hands with his voters. These few moments of personal contact are very important: they are to show Medgyessy's humanitarian side (Népszabadság, 8th March 2002). To prevent voters from leaving-empty-handed, the members of the staff distribute thousands of balloons, leaflets and videotapes with a short film about Medgyessy every week. Numerous copies of 'In Accordance with the Nation', Medgyessy's own manifesto is also handed out at each occasion, which the candidate signs (Magyar Narancs, 21st March 2002). Then the staff gets back to the vans and rushes to the next scene. The daily programme is rounded off with an evening show, which usually consists of a press conference, a concert or some other performance with the help of actors, comedians, singers, a Medgyessy's address to the audience and a sometimes a short biographical film about Medgyessy (cf. MSZP Newsletter 21st Febr.; Népszava, 8th March).

Although Medgyessy delivered a - usually short - speech at each settlement he visited, these speeches are not available¹⁶. Detailed reports, newspaper articles with quotes, the newsletters of the Hungarian Socialist Party, however, are available, and these are appropriate if one would like to gain an overall impression of PM candidate Medgyessy's speeches during his whistle-stop campaign. But to draw conclusions on the character of messages in Medgyessy's speeches, or to compare the speeches and the actual messages is impossible, based on these sources only.

At each scene of his tour, PM candidate Medgyessy familiarised the citizens with his and his party's position in the issues considered the hottest, where the new government will immediately take actions (cf. Népszava, 5th March). The most frequent messages, thus, were the promises related to welfare actions, actions aimed at eliminating poverty, e.g. *family allowances* (child care, house building constructions, schooling aid, free catering for children in kindergarten and crèche), *tax cuts* (especially for entrepreneurs, tax-free minimal wage), *pay-rise* (especially for teachers and those working in health care), actions related to the improvement of the circumstances of *pensioners* (a one time benefit of HUF 19 000, 13th monthly pension, 50 per cent increase in widow's pensions, child care allowance available for grandparents), *students* (increase in higher education grants) and the *unemployed* (he

¹⁶ Several speeches he delivered at party congresses, certain professional forums, however, are available on the web in an edited form of course, but these cannot serve as the basis of the research carried out in this paper, for two reasons. First, because the messages he tried to convey towards the *citizens*, would be interesting, and second, because these are all edited versions, interpretations of the original thoughts. Maybe the whistle-stop campaign speeches were not recorded at all, or the ones that were, were not made public, for one reason or another.

promised the creation of 300-400 000 new jobs). Also, as *reform in agriculture* was an important element, especially of 'In Accordance with the Nation', promises related to the field (protection of landowners' rights, competitiveness of Hungarian agriculture) were also frequent elements of Medgyessy's speeches. To address country people more effectively, PM Candidate Medgyessy often mentioned *regional investments and infrastructural development* (construction of sewage network, new motorways) among the first actions of the new government. The reports do not mention clear attempts to mobilise voters, e.g. calling out to the audience to participate in the elections.

Whether the messages were positive, negative or comparative, cannot be decided based on the reports. Journalists quoted positive and negative statements as well.

Examples for positive, optimistic statements:

"The system change only makes sense if people's life conditions improve. We are working exactly on this". (Országjárás... Népszava, 5th March);

"The government, entering office in May, will introduce 13th monthly pension" (MSZP Newsletter, 4th March);

"...during my whistle-stop campaign" he says "I feel that the dFKGPosition to change the cabinet is becoming stronger" (MSZP Newsletter 28th February)

comparative messages:

"... Medgyessy added that "the MSZP formulates its promises rather in the form of 'undertakings' because the promises made by the government during the past four years have brought discreditation upon the term 'promise', and promises made in the last few weeks before the elections, are never trustworthy". He also said that the Socialists' undertakings are carefully considered proposals for solving problems, for which his own obligation and honesty is the guarantee " (MSZP Newsletter, 1st March)

"if a nation joins forces, it will build motorways to regions where unemployment is high, instead of dreaming" (MSZP Newsletter, 15th March)

negative messages:

"There are some, who are afraid of real democracy..." (Népszava, 5th March)

"It took the present government four years to realise that there are a vast number of problems in the society for which they have not even tried to find a solution". (MSZP Newsletter, 1st March)

"The biggest sin of the present government that it forgot about the poor." (Medgyessy a pesti körúton, Népszava, 21st March)

After his whistle-stop campaign in the country, Medgyessy also started his campaign in the capital with the aim to visit every district before 5th April (Medgyessy pesti körúton, Népszava, 21st March). The candidate talked about the same problems as in his country speeches, but the messages seem to be more consciously directed towards segments of the society, for example according to age groups (pensioners, middle-aged, young people) and groups of the labour market (entrepreneurs, unemployed) (ibid.).

5. Participation and results in the Hungarian Parliamentary elections in 2002

5.1. Participation in the first round

Participation in the 2002 election was the highest since the system change. Average participation in the 1st round was 70.53 per cent, which is 14.27 per cent higher than the same figure of the 1998 elections. This means that about one sixth of the electorate, which abstained from voting in 1998, participated in 2002. And not only that, about 5 pct of those having the right to vote exercised this right for the first time. The 2002 1st round was not only valid in all 176 electoral districts, but in 45 districts was also successful, which means that one of the candidates managed to obtain the absolute majority of the votes and thus win the mandate of the districts. That is why a 2nd round was held only in 131 electoral districts.

The highest rate of participation (84.92 per cent) was registered in the 2nd district of Budapest, which had the highest participation figures throughout the previous elections. 8 other districts of the capital city had participation figures higher than 80 per cent. Out of the 176 districts there were 29, where participation ranged between 75-80 per cent - a few districts of course in Budapest, and some districts in the counties of Pest, Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, Veszprém, Zala, Baranya, Fejér and Heves. With the exception of the last one, all of these are situated in the Western part of Hungary, the Transdanubia.

Still another 59 districts had participation higher than the national average that is, between 70-75 percent. The majority of these are also in the western counties. There were 49 districts where participation was between 65-70 per cent and 31 districts where it ranged between 60-65 percent. Interestingly, even the two participation figures at the end of the list, which are lower than 65 per cent, exceed the 1998 first round average. The lowest figure, 56.99 per cent was registered in Hajdúhadház (Hajdú-Bihar county, in the eastern part of Hungary), which had the lowest figures in the previous elections.

5.2. Results in the first round

Table 2: Results in successful districts

| County | Left-wing candidate victory (MSZP) | Right-wing candidate victory (Fidesz-MDF) | Left-wing candidate in 2 nd place (MSZP) | Right-wing candidate in 2 nd place (Fidesz-MDF) | Number of successful districts | Total number of districts in the county |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Budapest | 11 | - | - | 11 | 11 | 32 |
| Baranya | 2 | - | - | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Bács-Kiskun | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 10 |
| Békés | - | - | - | - | - | 7 |
| Borsod-Abaúj-Z. | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 13 |
| Csongrád | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 7 |
| Fejér | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| Győr-Moson-S. | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| Hajdú-Bihar | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 9 |
| Heves | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Jász-Nagykun-Sz | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 8 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Komárom-E. | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Nógrád | - | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| Pest | - | - | - | - | - | 16 |
| Somogy | - | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| Szabolcs-Sz.-B. | 1 | 1 | 1* | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Tolna | - | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| Vas | 1** | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Veszprém | - | 4 | 4 | - | 4 | 7 |
| Zala | - | 2 | 2 | - | 5 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 25 | 20 | 20 | 25 | 45 | 176 |

* MSZP-MSZDP joint candidate,

** MSZP-SZDSZ joint candidate

As more than 50 percent of those entitled, cast their vote in each district, the first round was valid. The two major political poles received more than 83 per cent of the vote submitted for the lists: the MSZP obtained 42.05 per cent, while the Fidesz-MDF got 41.07 per cent. As it can be seen from the table, there were 15 counties where 1st round victories were born. In 45 districts, the first round was not only valid, but also successful, because one of the candidates managed to obtain the absolute majority and thus won the 1st round. The MSZP did not only win in the lists, it also won in the one-member districts. Out of the 1st round winners 25 (one of them is a joint MSZP-SZDSZ candidate) were the candidates of the MSZP and 20 the candidates of the Fidesz-MDF. One quarter of the 1st round victories were born in Budapest, moreover, they were all victories of the MSZP. The candidates of the MSZP were also successful in the traditionally social-democratic or the newly industrialised regions (Borsod, Baranya, Fejér), while the Fidesz-MDF won most of its victories in the countryside, mainly in the West-Transdanubia (Veszprém, Győr, Zala) (Szoboszlai, 2003). The table also shows that in the districts where an MSZP candidate won, a Fidesz-MDF candidate came second, and whenever a Fidesz-MDF candidate won, an MSZP candidate came second. This tendency towards bipolarism and two-party systems has never been so clearly observable in any previous elections.

Out of the 131 districts, where the 1st round was unsuccessful, left-wing candidates came first in 75 (73 MSZP and 2 joint MSZP-MSZDP) and Fidesz-MDF candidates came first in 56. Another proof of the intensity of the competition is that the first two places were occupied by an MSZP and a Fidesz-MDF candidate everywhere. MSZP first-comers were always paired with Fidesz-MDF second-comers and vice versa.

Table 3 Results in unsuccessful districts

| County | Left-wing candidate in 1 st place (MSZP) | Right-wing candidate in 1 st place (Fidesz-MDF) | Left-wing candidate in 2 nd place (MSZP) | Right-wing candidate in 2 nd place (Fidesz-MDF) | Number of Unsuccessful Districts | Total number of districts in the county |
|-----------------|---|--|---|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Budapest | 16 | 5 | 5 | 16 | 21 | 32 |
| Baranya | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| Bács-Kiskun | 2 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| Békés | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 7 |
| Borsod-Abaúj-Z. | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 13 |
| Csongrád | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 7 |
| Fejér | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 7 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Győr-Moson-S. | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| Hajdú-Bihar | 2 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| Heves | 5 | - | - | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Jász-Nagykun-Sz | 6 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Komárom-E. | 4 | - | - | 3* | 4 | 5 |
| Nógrád | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Pest | 9 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 16 | 16 |
| Somogy | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 6 |
| Szabolcs-Sz.-B. | 4** | 4 | 4** | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| Tolna | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Vas | - | 2 | 2*** | - | 2 | 5 |
| Veszprém | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| Zala | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 75 | 56 | 75 | 56 | 131 | 176 |

* In one of the districts of Komárom-Esztergom, an independent candidate came second

** In Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, there were 4 joint MSZP-MSZDP candidates, two came 1st and two came 2nd

*** One of them is a joint MSZP-SZDSZ candidate

The three candidates with the most 1st round-votes in each district can participate in the 2nd round. In addition to them, every candidate who, received more than 15 per cent of the vote can run again. The majority of the third-comers were candidates of the SZDSZ (78 out of 132), followed by the candidates of Centrum (18) and MIÉP (17). Third-comers, of course, can withdraw from their candidature if they want to, and most of them did. In the 2nd round of the 2002 elections, only 7 third-comers (4 Centrum, 1 FKGP, 1 SZDSZ, and 1 MIÉP) decided to participate.

6. Campaign after the first round

6.2. Campaign of the Fidesz

6.1.1. The Budapest Rallies of Viktor Orbán

The defeat in the first round somewhat shocked the governing coalition. That is why the Fidesz started a large-scale mobilisation. The first step of this was Orbán's speech at the University of Physical Education, Budapest, on 9th April. There is a huge difference between the former speeches and this one.

The tone is the same, determined and calm, but the positive attitude, together with the humour, disappears. The campaign messages become negative/responsive. Instead of the previously permanent attempts to unify the nation, to emphasise the common goals, the common achievements, now there is a clear division between "us" and "them", there is an unbridgeable gap between "our values/aims/world" and "their values/aims/world". Sharp criticism of the opposition becomes the central element of the messages.

Orbán points out that on 7th April the election was not decided, it was only made simpler. He claims that the leeway can be made up, as the fate of 131 mandates, in one-member constituencies, mainly in the country, are still undecided. The main cause of the results, the

PM says is that “on 7th April, there were many of us, but there were not enough of us”, and reminds the audience that the Fidesz was able to win in 1998, after a similar first round. The task is manageable, he says, but it requires *effort*, *discipline* and, of course, *faith* in victory.

Then the tone turns negative, the PM explains the differences between the government lead by the Fidesz and the MSZP-SZDSZ. Even the messages (fully positive in the previous speeches) are used here to make critical comparisons of the present government and its opposition. Orbán says that the achievements of the past four years are now endangered, because the Socialists will withdraw the welfare actions, the public security measures, everything, because when there was a vote over these issues in the Parliament, the opposition always voted against them. Slamming the opposition, he says if the socialists win the elections, the plutocracy and the money capital will form government and they will abolish all these measures.

After the frightful warnings Orbán calls out to the audience to help protect the endangered values: families, children, human dignity, liberty, faith and fatherland, and also cautions against the attacks of the opposition, which will probably follow the speech. The citizens, Orbán says, must hold on and strive, and prepare for the second round, by passing on these messages to others, by voting again for the Fidesz-MDF Alliance, and by *bringing another person for the next round of the elections*. This is a clear attempt to mobilise voters. The concluding part of the speech invites citizens to another rally in Budapest, for Saturday 13th April, in front of the Parliament.

The rally in front of the Parliament was a real, well-organised, spectacular campaign event. Famous people (actors, sportsmen, rock stars) were also on the stage. The exact number of the audience is not known, estimates vary between a couple of hundreds of thousands to over one million. Orbán’s speech was only one, although the most important, element of the event. The speech is similar to the one he delivered at the University of Physical Education, but the tone is soothing.

The Prime Minister draws up a plan which is aimed at addressing new *segments of the society*, which could be *mobilised*. The new feature is that it contains *political segmentation*. The first segment is that of the *supporters of the Independent Smallholders’ Party*, who were disappointed by the unpopularity of their party and decided to abstain from voting. Another one is the group of those, who *does not see the difference* between the two sides clearly, those who have forgotten about, and should be reminded of what had happened during the previous term, under the Socialist government and now, under the Orbán government. Finally, the third group consists of people who are *frightened*. Orbán accuses the opposition that it deliberately tried to frighten the electorate through false accusation and persuade it to vote against the government. This last group, according to the Prime Minister, voted against these visions and not against the Fidesz-MDF. These groups should be mobilised for the next round.

Another new message (compared to the speech at the University) is the idea of integrating the country, rather than splitting it for political reasons¹⁷. Integration of the country, Orbán says, lies in *deeds*, which serve everyone’s welfare, and not in *slogans*. To join forces is not enough, the unity of the whole nation is needed, he says. Unity, according to the Prime Minister is that citizens say ‘yes’, for the future, ‘and for the continuation. The concluding sentences are the following: “There are always people full of hatred. But they can only win, if we hate them, too. That is why we believe in the power of love and joining forces.”

¹⁷ The debate over the *division* vs. the *unification* of the nation has been a central element of the campaign. As part of their (negative) campaign, the opposition accused the Fidesz of dividing the country, while they wanted to unify it.

6.1.2. Whistle-stop campaigns between the two rounds

After the first round of the elections, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's rallies targeted electoral districts, where there was a slight chance for the victory of the right-wing candidate, either because the candidate had a slight advantage, or because the first round results seemed reversible. Within six days, he visited towns and villages of 22 single-member constituencies. The messages of his speeches were a combination of the two previous speeches, held in Budapest. The messages related to concrete achievements are again used to convey critical-comparative messages. To see which were the most frequent ones, messages, I chose 12 speeches (2 per day) in which I counted the messages.

Table 4 Messages in Orbán's speeches between the two rounds

| Message | Occurrence N (%) |
|--|---------------------|
| Deeds should be compared; a nation can be unified with deeds, not with words/slogans | 12 (100 %) |
| The supporters of the Independent Smallholders' Party should be mobilised | 12 (100 %) |
| Pensioners should be mobilised and persuaded in favour of the Fidesz -MDF | 11 (91 %) |
| The decision is in the hands of people living in the country | 11 (91 %) |
| One mandate can decide the final outcome of the elections, and one single vote can decide that mandate | 10 (83 %) |
| The citizens are standing at the border of two worlds | 10 (83 %) |
| Concrete achievements (at least 1) | 9 (75 %) |
| Széchenyi Plan | 9 (75 %) |
| The election has not yet been decided, only the choice has been made simpler | 9 (75 %) |
| Citizens should say 'yes' for the continuation | 8 (66 %) |
| The former government always found excuses for not solving problems. The Orbán government always found ways to solve problems. | 8 (66 %) |
| Hungarians are not nationalists, anti-semites or racists | 7 (58 %) |
| Symbolic achievements | 7 (58 %) |
| "When there was a vote over these issues (student loan, Land Act, etc.) in the Parliament, they always voted against it" | 7 (58 %) |
| Young people should persuade their parents and grandparents to vote for the Fidesz-MDF | 7 (58 %) |
| Humour | 6 (50 %) |
| Where citizens get together, there is love and cooperation | 6 (50 %) |
| The MSZP-SZDSZ government will be the government of the plutocracy and the money capital | 4 (30 %) |
| Concrete local achievements | 3 (25 %) |

As the table shows, the most frequent messages (100%) are aimed at the mobilisation of supporters of the Independent Smallholders' Party, followed by the mobilisation of pensioners. Still with high frequency, there are reactive-comparative messages, directed against the opposition.

Interestingly, symbolic achievements are less frequent than concrete ones, probably in accordance with the message "Deeds should be compared; not words", although the Széchenyi Plan, which embodies a combination of symbolic and material achievements was mentioned as frequently as concrete achievements. Among the concrete/material achievements the most frequent ones are the protection of the Hungarian arable land through the Land Act (75%), which indicates that the strongest mobilisation is directed towards those making a living from agriculture and /or those living in the country.

Among achievements, we also find the abolition of tuition fees in higher education and the introduction of student loans, (66% and 50%, respectively) and the increase of pensions and allowances for housing constructions (58% both). *Promises*, interestingly, seem to be missing from the speeches. Attempts at mobilisation take the form of rather direct calls for segments (supporters of FKGP, pensioners, parents and young people) to take part in the next round. In addition to this, messages aimed at mobilisation in general are also present, as e.g. “Every single vote counts”, “Everyone should come and cast their vote again for the Fidesz-MDF Alliance” and “Everyone should bring another person”, “On 7th April, there were a lot of us, but there were not enough of us”.

Out of the messages, only one (“Where citizens gather together, there is love and cooperation”) can be classified as positive, although it is a response to Socialist worries about citizens’ gatherings. Although the attitude is negative, rather critical, about half of the speeches contain jokes, humour is present again, which suggests the dominance of a friendly atmosphere.

6.2. Campaign of the MSZP

After the first round of the elections, the MSZP decided on the peaceful campaign (cf. Kiss, 2003). Péter Medgyessy participated mainly in press conferences or professional forums, together with László Kovács, leader of MSZP. He did not engage himself in whistle-stop campaign events unlike Viktor Orbán, though he met the supporters of the Socialist Party on a few occasions.

In a Debrecen rally, for example, he claimed that “there are enough of us, and we have had enough”, referring to Orbán’s famous call for mobilisation (MSZP Newsletter, 16th April). He warned the audience that the elections will be decided in the second round, and asked the citizens of Debrecen to support the candidate of the MSZP on 21st April. Seemingly, his messages have become rather negative, claiming that “those who have nothing to say about the future will now start abusing the opponent” and that “this government has to go” (ibid).

7. Participation and results in the second round of the elections

7.1. Participation

In the 131 districts, where a second round was held, average participation increased; it amounted to 73.51 per cent, which equals a 2.98 per cent growth on the average. Compared to the 1998 election, when, after a 0.75 per cent increase, participation was 57.01 per cent in the 2nd round, the growth (16.5 per cent) is even more remarkable than when the 1st rounds are compared.

The participation figures show a similar territorial pattern to that of the 1st round. There were 11 districts (10 of them in Budapest) with participation exceeding 80 per cent. In 31 districts, mainly in Budapest and the western parts of the country, 75-80 per cent of the people voted. In 62 districts participation was registered between 70-75 per cent. In 25 districts, however, less than 70 per cent of the population decided to vote and in 2 districts less than 65 per cent. With few exceptions, these districts are situated in the eastern parts of Hungary.

There were only 3 districts, where participation in the second round decreased more than 1 per cent. There were 25 districts, where 2nd round participation was about the same as in the 1st round, with less than 1 per cent difference in either direction. Out of the 106 districts, where growth was bigger than 1 per cent, there were 25 with growth ranging between 1-3 per

cent, 35 with a growth of 3-5 per cent, 29 where growth was bigger than 5 per cent and 14 where it exceeded 7 per cent.

There is a correlation between Orbán's visits and increase in turnout in the second round. He visited 22 constituencies after the first round. Turnout increased in all of them to an extent, which exceeds the national average. In 5 constituencies there was a 4-5 pct increase, in 11 constituencies between 5-7 pct, and in 6 constituencies the increase exceeded 7 percent.

7.2. Results

Competition in the 2nd round was even stronger than in the first round. There were 21 districts, where the difference between the winning candidate and the second-comer was smaller than 1000 votes. In one of the districts (Szerencs, in the county of Borsod) the winning MSZP candidate received only 2 votes more than his opponent. The 2nd round was clearly won by the right wing. The Fidesz-MDF joint candidates managed to win in 75 districts, which means that obtained 19 mandates more than it could have been expected from the first round. 19 left-wing candidates (MSZP, SZDSZ, MSZP-SZDSZ and MSZP-MSZDP joint candidates) lost the election in the 2nd round, though they had high chances of winning. These results are shown in Table 5 together with the change in turnout.

Table 5: 1st round first-comers and 2nd victories according to counties

| | Left-wing candidate in the 1 st place in 1 st round | Right-wing candidate in the 1 st place in 1 st round | 2 nd round left-wing victories | 2 nd round right-wing victories | Growth of participation in 2 nd round (in %) | 'Surprising' victories |
|-----------------|---|--|---|--|---|------------------------|
| Budapest | 16 | 5 | 17* | 4 | -0.13 | 1 |
| Baranya | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4.48 | 2 |
| Bács-Kiskun | 2 | 6 | - | 8 | <u>6.43</u> | 2 |
| Békés | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4.04 | 1 |
| Borsod-Abaúj-Z. | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1.93 | - |
| Csongrád | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3.67 | 1 |
| Fejér | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4.28 | - |
| Győr-Moson-S. | 1 | 2 | - | 3 | 2.85 | 1 |
| Hajdú-Bihar | 2 | 5 | - | 7 | 4.35 | 2 |
| Heves | 5 | - | 5 | - | 3.59 | - |
| Jász-Nagykun-Sz | 6 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4.09 | 1 |
| Komárom-Esz. | 4 | - | 4 | - | 2.92 | - |
| Nógrád | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4.45 | - |
| Pest | 9 | 7 | 5* | 11 | 3.27 | 4 |
| Somogy | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | <u>5.79</u> | 3** |
| Szabolcs-Sz.-B. | 4 | 4 | 1 | 7 | <u>6.01</u> | 3 |
| Tolna | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | <u>6.81</u> | 2 |
| Vas | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2.21 | - |
| Veszprém | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2.05 | - |
| Zala | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2.89 | - |
| | 75 | 56 | 56 | 75 | | 23 |

* One of the winning candidates is the candidate of the SZDSZ

** In Somogy, 3 first-comers lost their position in the second round, 1 right and 2 left-wing candidates.

It can be seen from the table that, in contrast to the counties, average participation has decreased in Budapest. Moreover, it was also the only major administrative unit, where the final result was one more left-wing mandate than it could have been expected from the first round. (Another left-wing second-comer managed to win in the second round in Somogy, but this was compensated by the victory of a right-wing second-comer.) The table also shows that in nine counties the final outcome was practically the same as that expected on the basis of first round results (counties of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Fejér, Győr-Moson-Sopron, Heves, Komárom-Esztergom, Nógrád, Vas, Veszprém and Zala).

In the remaining ten counties, however, 21 right-wing candidates managed to win in their districts, although they did not come first in the 1st round. In 13 of the 22 districts, where Orbán paid a visit between the two rounds, the candidates of the Fidesz-MDF managed to win, although they were second in the previous round. In another 5 districts, which Orbán visited, the candidate of the Fidesz-MDF won, despite the fact that the candidates of the MSZP and the SZDSZ got more votes in the first round. 18 out of 22 visits brought victories for the right.

8. Conclusions

Parties' attempts to mobilise the electorate seemed to be successful, as turnout increased. The first round of the election was won by the MSZP (it got 42.05 pct of votes cast for the lists) while the disadvantage of the Fidesz-MDF was smaller than 1 pct. Although the right wing managed to mobilise even more citizens in the second round, and the majority of the mandates to be distributed in the second round, was won by the Fidesz-MDF, it did not change the final outcome, the victory of the MSZP (unlike in 1998).

The comparison of manifestos and politicians' speeches showed that while the MSZP relied on the elements of a negative campaign, and its messages frequently attacked the coalition of the right wing, the majority of the messages of the Fidesz-MDF were positive, at least, before the first round. As first round participation significantly increased compared to 1998, it is difficult to decide whether positive or negative campaigns are more successful in mobilising the electorate. When the campaign between the two rounds is considered, however, we find that both the MSZP and the Fidesz-MDF targeted the electorate with negative (sometimes comparative and reactive) messages, although the campaign of the left was not as intensive as the campaign of the right. Given the fact that turnout further increased in the second round (in one of the districts Orbán visited, growth almost reached 10 pct!) it might not be a mistake to think that Hungarian citizens understood or accepted negative messages more than positive ones. Also, it can be assumed that techniques aimed at mobilisation are more effective if they are combined into a fundamentally negative campaign.

That mobilisation was successful, and citizens became more actively involved in politics, had other signs as well. The 'man of the street' took part in creating, multiplying and distributing billboards and pamphlets, and spared no effort to destroy the opponent's billboards. Citizens informed each other about certain events, e.g. rallies, demonstrations, sent each other rhymes making fun of the opponent, political jokes, unofficial party manifestos and slogans. According to mobile telecommunication companies' estimates, the number of sms-s sent between the two rounds, which are related to the campaign or to politics exceed several millions¹⁸.

¹⁸ See e.g. Dányi & Sükösd, 2002.

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Appendix A - The Hungarian Electoral System

The Act on the election of Members of Parliament, enacted in 1989, (the ‘Suffrage Act’) established a two-round, mixed election system in Hungary, combining elements of the single-member-constituency and the list election systems.

The Hungarian Parliament is made up of 386 members, of which 176, 152 and 58 are elected, respectively, in single-member constituencies and on the basis of the district and national lists.

Accordingly, the Hungarian electoral system is structured as follows:

- 176 single-member constituencies: the country is divided into 176 single-member constituencies, a single candidate to be elected Member of Parliament in each constituency.
- 20 district constituencies: the law has institutionalised 20 district constituencies, which cover the territory of the 19 counties and the capital. In these district constituencies, list election is held. A maximum of 152 mandates are allocated from the lists.
- National (compensatory) list: From this list, a minimum of 58 mandates are allocated in the proportion of the votes cast for those single-member party candidates who have not gained a seat and for district party lists not resulting in a seat (the two collectively referred to as ‘surplus votes’).

Hungarian **citizens have two votes** at the parliamentary elections. One of these votes is cast for a single-member constituency candidate, while the other is cast for the district list. No vote is cast for the national list.

Important elements of the electoral system include the **mandate threshold**, which essentially means that only those parties are allocated seats from the district and national lists, which have obtained more than 5 percent, on a national basis, of the valid district list votes, an **the nomination system** has an important additional filtering role.

The system of the allocation of seats

Single-member constituencies are based on the absolute majority principle, i.e. the candidate having obtained more than half of the votes cast in the constituency shall become Member of Parliament. In the absence of such candidate, a second election round is held in that constituency. For the second election round, the law does not specify absolute majority, thus the seat is obtained by the candidate obtaining the highest number of votes.

In **district constituencies**, party list candidates obtain seats in the proportion of the votes cast, according to the order of the ballot-paper (fixed list). The seats are allocated by the Hagenbach-Bischoff method, provided that the lists failing to accumulate more than 5 percent of the votes cast for all party lists, totalled on a national basis, shall not be eligible.

On the **national list (compensatory list)**, the parties are allocated seats in the proportion of their surplus votes. Surplus votes include the votes cast in single-member constituencies and not gaining a seat in either election round, and the votes cast in district constituencies - in a valid election round - which proved insufficient for a seat or which exceeded the number of votes utilised for obtaining the seat. Seats are allocated by the d’Hondt method, provided that the parties failing to reach the 5-percent parliamentary threshold shall not obtain a seat on the national list. (http://www.valasztas.hu/04/en/13/13_0.html)

Appendix B

TABLE A: Promises in the manifestos of the two leading parties, grouped according to segments of the society and fields of action.

| Segments / Fields of Action | A Change For the Welfare! (Hungarian Socialist Party) | The Future Has Started (Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party and the Hungarian Democratic Forum) |
|--|---|--|
| Employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 pct increase in purchasing power of wages • 300-400 new jobs • 38-hour working week • aid in re-employment close to pension-age • new code of labour legislation • 25 pct tax bracket for majority of employees • tax-free minimal wages • new wage scale • a system of social benefits in public service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the doubling of average wages through pay-rises and tax cuts • full employment • aid in re-employment close to pension-age • community service programs for mothers with children, middle-aged, those living in small settlements or with a reduced ability to work • life career programmes |
| Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay-rise for kindergarten, primary and secondary school teachers • improved conditions for those employed in higher education and cultural institutions • restoring of the rank of teachers' profession | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay-rise for teachers • life-career programmes |
| Health Care Employees/ Health Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 pct pay-rise for health care system employees • loyalty bonus for nursing staff every 4 years • government-financed health care system • termination of the relationship between illness and poverty • renovation of hospital buildings and wards • hundreds of new district doctors' offices • stop the increase in the price of medication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUF 606 billion to be invested in the national health care system • pay-rise for doctors • pay-rise health for care employees • lengthen life expectancy of men by 4 years, of women by 3 years |
| Entrepreneurs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • optional presumptive taxation • exemption from social contribution • overt tenders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extension of optional presumptive taxation • strengthening of small and medium-size entrepreneurial sector to become important suppliers of international companies • Széchenyi credit card for small and micro credits |
| People Earning a Living From Agriculture / Agriculture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overt and more easily accessible supporting schemes • predictable policy in agriculture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the protection of Hungarian arable land • support for family estates • HUF 800 billion investment into agriculture • agrarian loans with favourable conditions • forest programme |
| Pensioners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUF 52 billion back to pensioners • 50 pct increase in widow's pensions • flexible retirement system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 pct increase of widow's pensions • child benefit available for grandparents • individual account-based pension system • further increase of the purchasing value of pensions |
| Families (with children) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social policy allowance available for housing construction to be increased to HUF 800 000 per child • 20 pct increase in family allowance and schooling aid • tax allowances available with lower income • increased family allowance for those not receiving any • child benefit and maternity leave payment flexibly available until child is 6 • free catering in crèche and kindergarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social policy allowances available for housing construction: HUF 1 million per child • new family tax allowance scheme • HUF 1 million after 1 child, 2 million after 2 children • additional family allowances to be doubled • free catering in crèche, kindergarten, primary and secondary school for families in need |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Students (and School-children) / Education, Schooling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • free course-books in primary school, book benefit in higher forms • free transport between school and home • free language exam, driving license and certificate of computer studies (GCSE +3) • free vocational training • renovation of schools and dormitories, 10 000 new or renovated dormitory places • free computer signature for school-leavers. • adult education, learning for life • knowledge-based society, priority of education • peaceful and predictable environment in educational institutions for acquisition of marketable knowledge • development of public education institutions • computer studies, investment in computer hardware and Internet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuation of student loan programme • free course-books in primary and secondary education • increase rate of students in higher education to 50 pct • new credit system of university subjects which is acknowledged in Europe • 2 level maturation exams including language exams • 10 000 new dormitory places • support for computer hardware and Internet-related investments • more modern gymnasiums for schools • equal chances and care scheme for the talented |
| People Living in Budapest | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new regulations and development in public transport Csepel Port • new suburban railways • reconstruction works (Buda Castle, Matthias Church) • establishment of new Millennium City Centre • speedways • new suburban railway lines • 2 new Danube Bridges in Budapest |
| People Living in the Country / Regional development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • state-financed primary education • basic social & cultural services available everywhere • settlements to be connected in country communication • state support for freshwater and sewage network, for collection & treatment of waste • better protection against floods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infrastructural development of less developed areas • 150 new swimming pools for training • 6 new ice-skating rinks • 38 new stadiums, new, multi-functional sports halls • Introduction of the sticker system on M5 motorway • 2 new Danube Bridges • 600 km of new motorways • safer railway crossings • 554 km dams, 13 new cisterns against floods |
| The Gypsies | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rise of the Gypsy population • gypsy Integration Office • more Gypsies in education |
| People With Disability | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new forms of education and jobs • new sport halls, swimming pools and public institutions accessible with wheelchairs |
| Religious People | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freedom of religion • support for churches in their charitable activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freedom of religion |
| | | |
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 to 180 thousand new flats • 25 thousand new rented flats for the satisfaction of all claims • summer and winter bills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7500 new rented flats to be built yearly |
| Defence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of professional army instead of standing army | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of professional army instead of standing army |
| Culture, Art & Science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for arts and sciences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase of the number of researchers by 30 pct • contribution of the private sector in research development to reach 60 pct |
| The Functioning of the State | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equality before the law • independence of courts • freedom of press, independence of information • reconciliation of interests, new role for trade unions. • the restoration of financial and economic autonomy of local governments • full accountability of using public moneys • free legal advice, aid network for the victims of crime • more modern and effective police, action within 15 minutes after emergency calls. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cheaper state, smaller parliament • new civil law, asserting human dignity and personal rights • more effective, modern and faster police • faster and more effective judiciary • new lobby regulations against corruption • sober drug policy, prevention and therapy • public records - shorten time of office work from 30 to 20 min • computerised office work in public administration • equal standards in tax collection tax-collecting authority. |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Economy | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a decrease of inflation and budget deficit to 3 pct • economic growth to reach EU level by 2015 • Hungary to enter the monetary union • HUF 1500 billion investment through tax cuts • 2-2.5 billion Euro of foreign investment into Hungary in 2003 • Széchenyi Plan: a further investment of HUF 600 billion into Hungarian economy |
| Industry & Environment | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doubling of the incomes from tourism • HUF 600 billion for tourism-related developments, (HUF 150 billion from the Széchenyi Plan) • establishment of 250 industrial parks state-supported loan construction • development of new branches of tourism • new regional airports • new national parks • new sewage drains |
| Other | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsibility for Hungarians living outside country borders • civic Houses to support civic co-operation • mobile centres of education |

‘From the Media to the Neighborhood’ The Post-Modernization of Fidesz Campaigns 1998-2004¹⁹

ABSTRACT

Recent changes in political communications in Hungarian election campaigns suggest that parties seek ways to reach voters other than the national media. The growing interest in grass-root campaigning and taking politics closer to citizens are manifested in the large variety of local campaign events on the one hand, and in the (re)discovery of campaign tools, which facilitate party-voter interaction, on the other. This paper examines the development of campaigning in Hungary, by comparing the campaigns of one of today’s prominent parties, the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union, between 1998 and 2004. The analysis follows the frameworks established by Norris (2001) and Maarek (1995).

¹⁹ A dolgozat első verziója elhangzott a Harvard Egyetemen, 2005. február 4-n. Köszönettel tartozom a Kokkalis programnak, amiért támogatásukkal biztosították részvételemet a workshop-on és Kiss Balázsnak a konzultációkért.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to examine the campaigns of one of the leading parties of today's Hungarian politics: the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union. The party, once among the smallest²⁰, is now one of the two between whom political competition is decided. The tendency, which this paper describes, refers to the whole 15 years since the system change, however, the starting point of the analysis is the 1998 general elections, because data concerning the previous ones is not enough to carry out analyses yet.

Since 1998, development has become faster - one reason might be the growing number of campaigns²¹ - and points towards a more obvious direction. The general elections held in 2002 marked the first steps on a road, which consecutive campaigns followed, namely a divergence from national campaigning.

The analysis carried out in this paper will rest on two pillars: the 1998 general elections campaign and the EP elections campaign in 2004. Analyses of the 2002 general elections campaign and of the 2004 referendum campaign will only focus on the aspects, which help in answering the main question of this paper. The analysis will rely on Pippa Norris's stages in the evolution of campaign communications (2002) and Philippe Maarek's categories of campaign tools (1995).

2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

The question, which this paper intends to answer, is the following:

What stages of campaign communications can be distinguished in the history of the Fidesz between 1998 and 2004?

The evolution of campaigning can be traced through changes in various characteristics of campaigns as suggested by Norris (2002). The starting point of the present analysis will be Norris's set of criteria, as described in the following section. The key area of inquiry in this paper will concern campaign tools and events, which are a clear manifestation of the party's concept of campaigning.

To answer the research question, first of all general characteristics of campaigns will be considered, which will be followed by the investigation of campaign tools and events applied in the Fidesz-campaigns between 1998-2004. Our starting hypothesis is the following:

There is a move from national towards local and more direct forms of campaigning.

²⁰ The party got 5.44 and 5.18 per cent of the parliamentary mandates in the 1990 and 1994 general elections, respectively. <http://www.vokscentrum.hu/vtort94.htm>

²¹ In the past 6 years citizens voted seven times: in general and municipal elections in 1998 and 2002, referenda in 2003 and 2004 and the European parliamentary (EP) elections in 2004.

3. METHOD

The more recent are the campaigns, the easier it is to gather information about them. The main reason for this is the existence of the Internet, the fact that parties have been increasingly using it, especially in the form of party and candidate websites, which are an excellent source of information concerning campaigns, as they are usually more detailed than newspaper articles. In the case of pre-2002 campaigns, one has to rely on articles from the printed press and cope with less information.

The main sources of the data used in this paper are party websites²² and quality printed press. Additional sources will be contemporary accounts of local campaigns²³, various leaflets and billboards, and interview with a Fidesz activist.

The data will be used to describe the campaigns as precisely as possible, within the theoretical framework.

4. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As the main focus of the present paper is the evolution of campaigning, some of the relevant literature will serve as the starting point of the research. The theoretical framework established by Norris (2002) and Maarek (1995) will occasionally be completed with some Hungarian features.

In premodern campaigns, according to Norris, “the campaign organization is based on direct forms of interpersonal communications between candidates and citizens [...], with short-term, ad hoc planning by the party leadership” (Norris, 2002: 134). In the relatively short campaigns local parties select the candidates, provide the resources and plan the implementation. The most important intermediary between parties and the public is the partisan press. This model requires active involvement of citizens, because campaigning involves events like rallies, doorstep canvassing and party meetings.

Maarek links the beginnings of campaigning with the presence of what he calls traditional tools. On the basis of the kind of communication they enable, they can be subcategorized as interactive and unidirectional tools. As they offer the opportunity for citizens to meet the politician directly and to react immediately to his communication, interactive tools are “potentially the most effective” (Maarek 1995: 89). Their main disadvantage is that they are rather time-consuming, and can only involve a limited number of people. Interactive tools are more or less the same as those mentioned by Norris, though Maarek notes that some establish actual direct contact - e.g. meetings with main supporters or canvassing - while other only substitute direct contact - such as public meetings, rallies, or walkabouts. Most interactive tools involve politicians, usually a candidate, others, e.g. canvassing, can be practiced by activists as well. Among unidirectional tools Maarek lists information brochures, partisan press, posters and leaflets.

²² Thanks to Balázs Kiss for the daily downloading of the websites.

²³ *Parlamenti választások 1998* [Parliamentary Elections 1998] (1999). Budapest: MTAPTI, Századvég.

A few notes and additions must be made, if campaigning in Hungary is concerned. First of all, canvassing - calling on people at their homes²⁴ - is a 'built-in' or 'obligatory' element of Hungarian electoral system, because candidacy is attached to the collection of recommendations²⁵. Secondly, whistle-stop leadership tours, during which politicians travel round a region, stopping in 4-5 towns only to hold a short speech, are increasingly used in recent Hungarian election campaigns. Finally, another interactive tool, which is also gaining ground in recent campaigns, is 'street-standing'. This tool involves a few activists, who distribute partisan press or chat with passers-by, usually from behind a stand, in a public place, sometimes accompanied by a politician.

The shift towards modern campaigns and audiovisual tools developed with the growing influence of audio-visual media in general and television in particular. In modern campaigns parties simultaneously use national and regional strategies, which is why the campaign organization becomes more closely coordinated on a central level by political leaders. Professional advisors start to help politicians in designing advertisements, conducting polls or scheduling important media events. Most voters become passive spectators of the events, as "the main focus of the campaign is located within national television studios" (Norris 2002: 134). Audio-visual means are assumed to have a delayed effect (Maarek, 1995: 111) and their other disadvantage is that it is sometimes difficult to exercise control over the medium. The most obvious examples of audio-visual campaign tools are televised debates, talk shows, televised newscasts, and political TV commercials. Although Norris points out that the emergence of radio and movies started to nationalize campaigns even prior to the era of television, the basic idea - national-level campaigning - can involve both radio and TV.

The rise of the post-modern campaign is "the result of several related developments, such as the fragmentation of television outlets, the shift from national broadcasting [...] and the opportunities for newer forms of party-voter interaction" (Norris, 2002: 139-140). In post-modern campaigns professional consultants become more co-equal actors with politicians. Local operations of the 'permanent' campaign become more strongly coordinated on a central level. Direct marketing methods start to gain ground, when it becomes obvious that "the deluge of messages conveyed over unidirectional or indirect mass communication channels finally made them superfluous" (Maarek, 1995: 137). This is why political marketing borrows a new set of tools from commercial marketing, commonly known as 'direct marketing methods'. They have two traits in common: they return to bi-directional communication, and re-establish a direct link between the politician and the elector, or at least, simulate these. The main advantage of these tools is precisely this: as Norris puts it, the new channels of communication potentially allow greater interactivity between voters and politicians. The most common tool of this group is the direct mail, but Maarek also mentions phone marketing, the circulating of videotapes, and computer networks. Norris puts direct mail to

²⁴ Campaigning at place of work is forbidden in Hungary

²⁵ A candidate wanting to run in a single-member constituency (SMC) in Hungarian parliamentary elections, has to collect 750 recommendation sheets from the citizens of that constituency. This collecting is usually done by activists who canvass from door to door. Parties must pay attention to gather the recommendations in time: A party can only start a regional list (RL), if it managed to put up candidates in ¼ of the SMCs of that regional constituency (RC), and a national list, if it managed to put up seven RLs. The 386 mandates are distributed as follows: 176 from SMCs, a maximum of 152 from RCs, and a minimum of 58 from the national (compensatory) list. Citizens have two votes: one is cast for an SMC candidate, the other is for an RL. If the first round is unsuccessful (no candidate receives majority in the SMC), there is a second vote for the SMC candidate. If the first round is invalid (less than 50% of voters participate), the first round is repeated, thus citizens vote once again for an SMC candidate and an RL. www.valasztas.hu/04/en/13/13_0.html

the 2nd phase, which is probably more valid for American terms, but less so when Europe is concerned.

The point, which both Norris and Maarek make, is that as development proceeds, one can observe the widening of the range of campaign tools, rather than one extruding the other. According to Norris, “the traditional campaign, built on personal networks of volunteers and face-to-face candidate-voter communications, continues to be common” (Norris, 2002: 136), especially for parties with limited financial resources.

The summary of the above can be found in Table A in the Appendix.

5. CAMPAIGNS 1998-2004

5.1. *The General Elections Campaign 1998*

5.1.1. *Context and general remarks*

Although opposition parties often rely on negative advertising and attack ads, the Fidesz led a fundamentally positive campaign in 1998. The campaign had two, interconnected themes: the election program and the party's new image. Instead of criticism, the party put emphasis on its own program. They acknowledged the achievements of the government, but claimed that they could do it better²⁶.

Advertising of the new image started with the program speech of the party's PM candidate (that is, party leader Viktor Orbán) on 9th April, approximately one month before the election. The Fidesz's slogan “There is an alternative: the Civic Hungary” was a response to the MSZP's communication, which said that “In today's Hungary there is no real alternative to the present Government”²⁷. The party was rather successful in accomplishing a difficult task, i.e. making the public believe in their ability to govern the country²⁸.

The notion around which the Fidesz built its campaign was the term ‘civic’ (as in Civic Hungary, civic life, civic future, and the official name: Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party). It was not entirely obvious what the party meant by these - this was the main advantage of the term²⁹ - but in their manifesto, the party visualized a country, where citizens, who have plans for the future and willpower to achieve these, will be helped by the government.

The central coordination of the party's campaign was in the hands of MP Tamás Deutsch³⁰. In addition to politicians, professional consultants were also employed in the central

²⁶ Juhász 1999

²⁷ Quoted from that time PM Gyula Horn. This sentence, however, reminded citizens of the forty years of communism, when the governing party really had no alternative.

²⁸ The party got less than 8 per cent of the votes in 1994 (<http://www.vokscentrum.hu/vtort94.htm>). In the first round of the 1998 elections, although the MSZP won, the difference was not as big as it had been assumed. Right-wing cooperation in the second round resulted in the victory of the Fidesz: coalition government was formed, which comprised of the Fidesz, the MDF and the Smallholders' Party.

²⁹ Cf. Kéri, 1999

³⁰ Népszabadság, April 21.

coordinating body, for example, a Hungarian marketing company called 'Happy End'³¹. The advisors had different jobs in the Fidesz campaign, but information about them is limited³². Their task was not only to formulate the campaign slogan, work out the design of the advertisements and decide where to publish them³³, but the creation of the new image as well.

The available information suggests that the central coordination decided on a campaign whose most important message is the new image, which will be conveyed to voters through the popularity of country-wide reputable politicians and the national television. The Fidesz campaign seems to be strongly controlled on the central level. As one of the MPs said in an interview, local campaigns were subordinated to the central strategy³⁴. Local slogans for example, had to be accepted by the party headquarters. The party did not seem to attribute great importance to local campaigning, anyway.

At the local level, each candidate had a campaign organization. These few-member teams consisted usually of volunteers, as candidates had no resources to pay them³⁵. Namely, the central coordinating body decided that the smallest possible amount of the money should be devoted to local campaigning. The local branches had limited autonomy, as they were controlled not only by the central party headquarters, but also on county level (ibid).

It was decided well in advance that the Fidesz would spend the most on media appearance³⁶, first of all, on advertising the most important points of its election program on TV. They started to broadcast TV and radio commercials even before the "cheap period"³⁷.

It seems likely that the campaign occasionally used polling as the source of feedback, but only in a limited way, concerning individual steps. There was a poll, for example, probably commissioned by the party, which intended to measure the reception of the phone campaign introduced by the Fidesz³⁸.

From the Fidesz's point of view, it is definitely television that must be considered the most important medium. Not only because the party devoted most of its resources on TV and radio ads, but also due to the fact that the most important event of the campaign was connected to this medium.

5.1.2. Campaign tools and events

Traditional tools based on direct or semi-direct contact between the party and citizens did not form an important part of the Fidesz campaign in 1998. They seemed rather ad hoc, and did not show a strong 'local' character.

³¹ Debreczeni, 2002.

³² The Fidesz is a rather mysterious party in the sense that strategic information hardly ever slips out.

³³ Népszabadság, 1998, May 4; Debreczeni, 2002.

³⁴ Kákai, 1999

³⁵ Szoboszlai & Szarvák, 1999

³⁶ Népszabadság, April 20 and 21, 1998; Kákai, 1999; Szoboszlai & Szarvák, 1999

³⁷ After 20th April, parties were given a considerable (75-95 per cent) discount from the national TV and radio advertising fees. Népszabadság, April 1, 1998

³⁸ Népszabadság, May 4, 1998

Canvassing, as it was mentioned earlier, is a built-in element in Hungarian electoral system. In early April 1998, some parties, including the Fidesz, declared that they would not stop canvassing, even though they already managed to collect the necessary number of recommendations³⁹. Seemingly, the party attributed some importance to establishing personal contact with voters, but not too much.

At least, this can be assumed based on the low frequency of rallies, program speeches and town meetings, which would still enable contact with electors. The local rallies and meetings of the Fidesz had the following traits in common:⁴⁰

- In most of the cases, well-known politicians visited the countryside
- Local candidates had considerably smaller role, they did not hold speeches too often
- Program speeches mentioned issues of national relevance rather than local problems
- The events attracted very low interest, although they were advertised in advance

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the Fidesz - though had some local events - did not put great emphasis on these. This claim is in line with (and further supported by) the decision of the party's central coordination⁴¹, according to which the campaign would rely more on leading politicians and party image than local candidates and issues of local relevance.

Regarding unidirectional tools, the same can be said as about local events. The Fidesz-leaflets - even the ones intended to introduce the local candidate - were the same nationwide (except for the candidate's photo and name, of course). They were about the Fidesz and its election program, and only about 25% of the full content dealt with the candidate, and in a few cases, with local issues⁴². In other words, even local leaflets tended to focus more on national concerns than local ones.

Audiovisual tools seemed to play the most important role in the Fidesz's campaign. Party leaders thought that national campaigns are the most powerful ways of mobilizing voters⁴³. It was pointed out before that the party considered it important to advertise its program on the national television even if it meant extra costs. Generally speaking, however, television did not have a significant role in the campaign until the first round.

The *Orbán-Horn televised debate*, which took place after the first round, is linked to this medium, and it has often been referred to as an event playing a decisive role in the final outcome of the elections. Until the last minute it was not sure whether this important event of the campaign would really be organized. Viktor Orbán, the Fidesz's prime ministerial candidate called the Prime Minister for a debate five times⁴⁴, all of which were unanswered or cancelled. The challenger had only one condition: the debate should be broadcast live on the national TV. After the first round, whole-page ads appeared in the national dailies which demanded the debate to be held, which finally took place 4 days before the second round. The event provoked tremendous interest, huge crowds waited outside the university building,

³⁹ Magyar Nemzet, April 6, 1998

⁴⁰ see Rábai, 1999; Kákai, 1999; Bánlaky, 1999; Szőgyi, 1999; Juhász, 1999 and Békés, 1999

⁴¹ Szoboszlai & Szarvák, 1999, also Velkey, 1999

⁴² Bánlaky, 1999

⁴³ Szoboszlai & Szarvák, 1999

⁴⁴ Magyar Nemzet, April 30

which housed it, and according to calculations, a record number of spectators watched it⁴⁵. Opinion leaders and political scientists more or less agreed on the victory of the challenger.

In slight contrast with what has been said so far, the Fidesz did try to seek personal contact with electors. The tool they used was a kind of *phone marketing*. Nothing like that has ever been used in campaigns, so the phone-campaign was undoubtedly the biggest novelty in 1998. Being called on the phone by a leading politician stimulated different reactions, some found it rather bizarre, but some were proud. Results of the opinion poll mentioned earlier showed that the overall welcome was favorable, and this is supported by the number of call-backs as well⁴⁶.

The short recorded message, which electors could hear on the phone, was told by Viktor Orbán, who recommended the party and its local candidate⁴⁷. At the end of the message, a number was given for those who wanted to obtain further information, but one could also ask for a second call. The phone calls were shorter than one minute, so the initiative did not mean a tremendous asset to the expenditures, although the party tried to reach all households with a phone. This campaign tool can only be regarded as “quasi direct”, because it did not actually establish a direct link between candidate and citizen as the message was recorded. It, however, offered the opportunity of bi-directional communication to citizens, at least to those who either dialled the given number or asked for a second call.

5.2. The General Elections Campaign 2002⁴⁸

The 2002 elections were in many aspects similar to those held in 1998. First of all, polls clearly predicted the victory of - and thus, a second term for - the Fidesz. The governing Fidesz, and especially PM Viktor Orbán decided on a positive and peaceful campaign, which emphasized the achievements of the previous four years and ignored the opposition. Just like the MSZP four years before, the Fidesz lost the elections.

The most important new element of the 1998 Fidesz-campaign was the Prime Minister's whistle-stop tour. As the aim was to convey the campaign message to as many citizens as possible, the Prime Minister travelled round all of the 19 counties before the first round of the elections⁴⁹. Within 11 days he had been to more than 30 towns and numerous smaller settlements.

Although the main message of the campaign was the success of the government, it was translated to local messages, similarly to the technique described by Ward (2003). What Orbán did was to “present the party's national themes by using local issues” (Ward 2003: 589). His visits, namely, were usually combined with the opening or foundation ceremonies of various establishments in the town, such as schools, hospitals, hotels or factories. The speeches followed the same structure everywhere, but they usually had some local relevance

⁴⁵ About 1.7 million people were estimated to watch the live broadcast; and almost 2,5 million if viewers of the late night repetition are counted as well. Magyar Nemzet, 1998, May 19

⁴⁶ Haskó & Hülvely, 1999

⁴⁷ Kapitány & Kapitány, 1998

⁴⁸ All details referred to in this section originally formed part of the paper “Campaign and Turnout in Hungary (2002)” presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Uppsala, April 2004. <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ECPR/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/uppsala/ws9/Mihalyffy.pdf>

⁴⁹ The first round was held on 7th April 2002, the second round on 21st April, 2002.

too, and even more so after the first round, when Orbán frequently talked about local achievements of the government, such as the construction of a sports hall, and made promises, some of which were also locally relevant⁵⁰.

The rallies finished with the symbolic act of signing the “Contract with the Citizens”, through which citizens could actually get involved in the campaign. The “Contract” was the short, ‘popular’ version of the party’s election manifesto. It was put up on the wall, Orbán signed it first, followed by the mayor of the town, the local representative or candidate of the area, and finally the audience was also called on to sign it.

5.3. The European Parliamentary Elections Campaign 2004⁵¹

5.3.1. Context and general remarks

The European Parliamentary elections were held right in the middle of the four-year term of the government on June 13, 2004). The Fidesz realized that this opportunity can be used to assess the government’s performance (“mid-term test”). Being in opposition, the party relied on the elements of negative advertising, but maintained a moderate tone.

The main *message* of the campaign was that the government was doing poorly. The party tried to draw the attention of the public to tax increases, rising prices of consumer goods, energy and medicine, the growing of the national debt, and frequently quoted the MSZP’s election pledges, which remained unfulfilled. The central notion of the party’s campaign was ‘Insecurity’, suggesting that ‘Hungary became the country of insecurity’, where everything - homes, jobs, everyday life - is threatened. The party’s response to this situation was grabbed in the three-word slogan ‘Labor, Home, Security’, - also the subtitle of the so-called ‘National Petition’, the party’s main campaign tool, which was circulated in order to force the government to modify the budget. In the meantime, the Fidesz-campaign had another slogan, ‘Together We Succeed!’, which was also the title of the Party’s European Manifesto.

After the electoral defeat in 2002, the Fidesz started a large-scale restructuring, which showed the party’s increased attention on local politics. The first step of this process was the quasi-spontaneous foundation of numerous ‘Civic Circles’, in other words, small organizations of citizens with right-wing orientation. As the second step, Electoral district activists (EDAs) were appointed in electoral district, whose job was to establish a personal link between the party and the citizens⁵². The third step was the transformation of the party itself. It was re-named as Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union, and a candidate-to-be was appointed in each of the 176 single-member constituencies (SMCs) through 2003-2004. The newly appointed candidates, or constituency leaders were nominated by party leader Viktor Orbán and were chosen by two principles: local reputation and willingness to engage in local activity. The concluding step of this process of restructuring was the so-called ‘Convention of the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union’, which was the first big event of the campaign.

⁵⁰ The second whistle-stop tour concerned only the constituencies, where there was a slight chance for the right-wing candidate’s victory. In 18 out of the 22 constituencies Orbán visited, a right-wing candidate won.

⁵¹ This section is based on the paper “The Fidesz’s European Campaign 2004”, to be published soon.

⁵² Interview with a Fidesz-activist. Manuscript. NOTE: there are 600-1200 citizens in each electoral district.

The structural modernization can be regarded as the start of preparations. Though the President of the Republic proclaimed the European parliamentary elections on March 17, most of the parties, including the Fidesz, were engaged in campaigning well before that. The first Fidesz-leaflets, for example, were distributed in January.

Numerous professionals assisted the campaign, who were as important actors as politicians. The Fidesz's campaign manager in 2004 was one of the party's candidates for member of the European Parliament (MEP), András Gyürk. As far as it can be traced, the party leadership received help from various professional consultants. First of all, the party was assisted by a Hungarian-owned communications and PR company (CCC+Bogner). Secondly, the party also received some assistance from the European People's Party, resulting from their agreement signed in January, which concerned campaign techniques and messages. Finally, the Gallup polling institute also helped the party, for instance it carried out a survey on the welcome of the Petition.

The organization, which operated the 2004 campaign, had multiple levels. While the central party headquarters was occupied with the overall (nationwide) coordination, electoral district activists and constituency leaders were given special tasks on the local level. The EDAs' job was to collect the signatures for the National Petition in their district in the form of street-standing. SMC leaders, on the other hand, were responsible for 6000 signatures to be collected in their constituency⁵³. The constituency leaders were coordinated by 12 regional supervisors. The restructuring thus points towards the establishment of a campaign organization, which is essentially local-active, but strongly coordinated at a central level, which conforms to Norris's post-modern stage.

A significant change occurred in the party's campaign, as regards feedback: the creation of the campaign strategy was preceded by a large-scale opinion poll. At the meeting of the parliamentary faction on 9th March, the party leader made the results of a recent poll known, saying that as electors are not interested in the European Union or European matters, the campaign has to focus on issues like employment, agriculture, price increases and crime, which are in the forefront of public attention.

The party strongly relied on various leaflets, brochures, posters, information booklets and websites. Presence in national television and radio seem to be less important for the party than meetings with electors. There were a number of websites launched during the campaign period, some of which performed only campaign functions.

If parties are compared, the Fidesz reported to spend the most on its EP-campaign⁵⁴. In relation to the number of candidates each party managed to send to the EP, the Fidesz-campaign was probably the cheapest⁵⁵.

5.3.2. Campaign events and tools

In the EP campaign, the Fidesz applied tools, which enable direct or semi-direct contact with the electors in great numbers and of different types: whistle-stop leadership tours, mass meetings/rallies, town meetings and finally, meetings with special supporters and street-standing.

⁵³ Namely, when Orbán started the National Petition, at the Convention of March 27, he called for 1 million signatures to be collected, for which 6000 signatures were needed from each of the 176 SMCs. (176x6000=1056000)

⁵⁴ As there was no legal limit, and parties did not have to present an account of costs, they could spend as much as they wanted.

⁵⁵ About HUF 310 million, cf. Magyar Nemzet, 2004, May 5

Whistle-stop campaigning usually meant Viktor Orbán's regular visits to the countryside. As he was not an EMP candidate, his job probably was to advertise the Petition. Sometimes he was accompanied by candidates who popularized the party's manifesto entitled "European Program". These events were usually rallies, where the politician(s) delivered a speech in front of a crowd, usually in some public place such as a square. On some days, the team visited 4-5 towns, and each county was visited at least once.

There were also mass meetings in the capital. The campaign opening ceremony, where EMPs were introduced to the public, was held in Budapest, on May 9, and also the closing rally on June 6. Some town meetings were also organized, chiefly in the capital, to which one or two leading politicians were invited, who could be asked questions by the audience after their speech.

Tools involving personal contact usually meant party leader Orbán's meeting with different groups of supporters: with young activists in a pub, with the right-wing intellectuals in a fancy hotel, with famous people and supporters in a fancy café.

Finally, the tool, which best served the purpose of establishing direct contact with the citizens, street-standing, was practiced by activists. It was very well organized, because the activist of each electoral district had the task to collect signatures for the National Petition. The party's website was regularly updated with the scenes (usually squares, car parks, etc.) of street-standings. Among these, one can find people, especially in villages or small towns, who were collecting signatures at their shops (like the hairdresser's, bakery, stationery, etc), moreover, at their homes as well. They were trained on how to answer questions or chat with the electors.

One conclusion which can be made concerning the Fidesz's EP campaign is that the party did not rely on unidirectional tools too strongly, but as far as they did, they tried to put some trick in them, especially in the ones which used negative advertising. For example, the party had a digital billboard placed at one of the busiest junctions in Budapest, which showed the growth of the national debt day by day. Another billboard, advertising the claimed 1 million signatures, was put on a car and traveled round the country: a rather post-modern style of whistle-stop campaigning. One of the party's leaflets contained a check, with the shocking sum of HUF 228108 (the national debt per person), which looked just like a normal check at first sight. Another Fidesz leaflet borrowed the design of hypermarket catalogues, except for the fact that it advertised price-increases.

Audiovisual tools did not seem to play an important role in the 2004 campaign. There were no televised candidate debates, which could have attracted significant interest as in 1998 or 2002. The party had a political commercial on TV, which now seems an obligatory element of election campaigns.

Finally, (quasi-)direct marketing methods were employed in the Fidesz campaign to a considerable extent. Most of these tools were not at their peak, in the sense that they did not enable bi-directional communication, or only partially did. This is why they do not mean a huge step in themselves, but clearly define the direction in which the party's campaign communication is going.

First of all, a new party website was launched to commemorate the important milestone of the party history: the Convention of the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union⁵⁶, which almost exclusively served campaign purposes. The news items were all about the campaign, there was a timetable for upcoming events as well as a diary for past ones. Furthermore, one could

⁵⁶ The original website became the page of the parliamentary faction.

also express opinion, though in a rather limited way: an opinion poll was launched about a new topic each week, with set answers. What is more, one could also sign the Petition online, that is, citizens could get involved in real political activity via the www.

Secondly, the party's youth organization also launched some websites, which exercised a comic way of negative campaigning. For example, one could "adopt" potholes at one of the sites, through donating a certain amount of money for the pothole to be repaired. Neither of these websites, however, were suitable for proper interactivity.

Finally, the National Petition, which was probably the most original campaign tool used in 2004 can also be put among direct methods for two reasons: one being the method of collecting the signatures, the other is its future consequence. The Petition performed numerous functions. Before anything else the aimed 1 million signatures can be regarded as a demonstration of powers, and the time needed for it to be accomplished, tested the party's capacity to mobilize its supporters. It offered opportunity for party leaders, candidates and activists to meet the electors, and for the new campaign organization it could act as an operation test. Lastly, it helped the party to the creation of a database and thus, to database marketing, which is inevitable for the success of direct marketing methods. The first proof of the existence of the database was a thank-you letter from Viktor Orbán, sent to those who had signed the Petition.

5.4. The Referendum Campaign 2004

The campaign, which preceded the referendum held on 5th December 2004, was of great significance in the history of campaigning. First of all, referenda are not very common in Hungary⁵⁷, and campaigning before referenda are even less so. Secondly, both of the questions, which the popular vote of 2004 posed, provoked great disagreement between different parties and their supporters. In this light, it is not surprising that the five weeks⁵⁸ which preceded the referendum, was a period of rather active campaigning. Even though the 2004 European elections deployed a large arsenal of campaign tools, and similar tools were used in this campaign as well - rallies, whistle-stop tour, posters and leaflets - there was still further to go.

In spite of the fact that the time available for campaigning was very limited, the Fidesz stepped forward with something entirely new: a direct mail action. Although campaigning in the national media would have been less time-consuming, moreover, a larger segment of the society can normally be reached through national television than through mailing, the Fidesz chose to focus its campaign somewhere else than "big media".

One, rather obvious reason could be the party's intention to establish direct contact with citizens. The number of direct mails (3 million)⁵⁹ sent to citizens suggests that the Fidesz wanted to target a large segment of the society⁶⁰. The way the letters were delivered, however, shows that the Fidesz did not target the crowd, but the individual. Namely, as they might have

⁵⁷ Between 1989-2004, only 4 national referenda were held. Two of these, (1997: NATO membership, 2003: EU membership) did not really divide the country - the majority supported both.

⁵⁸ The referendum was proclaimed on 27th October by the President of the Republic. (Népszabadság 28th October 2004).

⁵⁹ Magyar Nemzet, 19th January 2005

⁶⁰ The referendum is successful, if more than 50 per cent of franchised citizens participate, or, if at least 25% of the franchised citizens vote the same way.

arrived too late otherwise, the letters were given to EDAs, who delivered them through canvassing. This meant the burden of delivering a few hundred letters within a few days, which is why activists were allowed to ask for help from friends or neighbors. They were asked to chat with the addressee if they could, and ask them if they were planning to participate in the referendum. Another, equally obvious explanation for the use of the direct mail in this campaign could be that not only the effectiveness of direct mail could be tested, with considerably smaller risk than a national elections campaign, but the party could also experiment with its technical implications, and keep the campaign organization in move.

The direct mail performed all kinds of functions: It contained the party's position on the referendum questions, and by using the answer sheet one could indicate his willingness to support the campaign, donate money, and ask for information.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper described and compared Fidesz campaigns within a theoretical framework. The first one of the Fidesz-campaigns described in the paper put the greatest emphasis on national level campaigning. The party allocated its resources to ensure presence in the national media, TV in particular. The message was the new image of the party, which they tried to "sell" through the popularity of the leading politicians of the party, especially Viktor Orbán, the PM candidate. The local level was considered less important, which is why local campaigning lacked autonomy, resources and ideas in 1998. Coordination, feedback and other characteristics of the campaign suggest that it best conforms to Norris's modern stage.

Various characteristics, for example the increased use of polls as feedback, or the growing number of professionals employed in the party's campaign in 2004 suggest that the tendency, which can be observed, leads to post-modern campaigning. The tools and events, which constituted the campaigns concerned in this paper, are summarized in Table 1. The widening of the Fidesz's campaign arsenal is clearly shown by the table.

The signs of interest in local campaigning, the emergence of local messages, could first be observed in the 2002 elections. Since then, whistle-stop campaigning has been a permanent element of Fidesz campaigns. More recent campaigns reinforce the assumption that the party's interest in more direct communication forms and personal contact is increasing. The conclusion, which can be drawn from the referendum campaign is that the party favors direct marketing methods even if some factors - for example time - make their use difficult.

The successful use of direct marketing tools is strongly linked to grass-root campaigning and the establishment of a campaign organization, which can work effectively on a local level, but is coordinated at the central level. The restructuring of the Fidesz after 2002 definitely points in this direction. The party heads for reaching voters primarily through interpersonal communication. The other leading party, the MSZP might have realized the importance of this, because it recently started a similar restructuring.

Table 1: Summary of campaign events and tools found in at least one of the campaigns

| Campaign | 1998 General elections | 2002 General elections | 2004 EP elections | 2004 Referendum |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Tool / event | | | | |
| Canvassing | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓* |
| Street-standing | - | - | ✓ | - |
| Town meeting | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| Rally, mass meeting | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Whistle-stop tour | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Information brochure | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Poster/ billboard | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Leaflet | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Televised debate | ✓ | ✓ | - | ✓ |
| TV commercials | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Phone marketing | ✓ | - | - | - |
| (Interactive) websites | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Direct mail | - | - | - | ✓ |
| SMS campaign | - | - | - | ✓ |

* NOTE that at the referendum campaign no supporting sheets had to be collected, nevertheless the Fidesz applied this tool.

APPENDIX

Table A: Evolution of Campaign Communications

NOTE: This table is a modified version of the original, extended with some - mainly Maarek's - campaign tools. Alterations to the original are underlined. For the original table, see Norris: 2002, p. 130.

| | Premodern | Modern | Post-modern |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <i>Campaign organization</i> | Local and decentralized party volunteers | Nationally coordinated with greater professionalism | Nationally coordinated with decentralized operations |
| <i>Preparations</i> | Short-term, ad hoc | Long campaign | Permanent campaign |
| <i>Central coordination</i> | Party leaders | Central party headquarters, more specialist advisors | Special party campaign units and more professional consultants |
| <i>Feedback</i> | Local canvassing and party meetings | Occasional opinion polls | Regular opinion polls plus focus groups and interactive websites |
| <i>Media</i> | Partisan press, local posters and pamphlets, radio broadcasts | Television broadcasts through main evening news | TV narrow-casting, direct and mediated websites, email, online discussion groups, intranets |
| <i>Campaign tools and events</i> | <u>Interactive: meetings with supporters, canvassing, street-standing, town meetings, rallies, whistle-stop leadership tours</u> <u>Unidirectional: information brochures manifesto, partisan press, posters, leaflets</u> | News management, daily press conferences, controlled photo-ops <u>Audiovisual: televised newscast, televised political debates, political TV commercials, talk shows</u> | Extension of news management to routine politics and government <u>Direct marketing methods: direct mail, phone marketing, direct marketing by TV and radio, circulation of videotapes, computer networks, sms</u> |
| <i>Costs</i> | Low budget | Moderate | Higher costs for professional consultants |
| <i>Electorate</i> | Stable social and partisan alignments | Social and partisan dealignment | Social and partisan dealignment |

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