CHAPTER V
REFLECTION OF CHANGES IN PARTY AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Party system constitutes the most significant attributes of a democratic State. They represent the major channels of interest aggregation and also help carry forward the citizen’s interest to legislative body. They are the means through which political elites supply policy alternatives, and create the major routes for citizens to organise their demands. Parties also play a crucial role in the nurturing of democratic governance because they facilitate in legitimising the role of the state as a governing institution. However, a free and fair election can give parties the space to compete for office and create a prime criterion for a liberal, democratic system. Outside elections, political parties also have long been the most important mediating institutions between citizen and the state. In particular they are the central actors in any democratic state.

The first part of the chapter will discuss the significance of political parties in a democratic state in general. Next it strives to trace out the evolution of the Hungarian multi-party system during the 1990s, and the type of electoral system and electoral reforms. The concluding part of the chapter tries to analyses the dynamics of parliamentary elections of 1990–2006, and the role of the opposition in Hungary. The chapter is an attempt to comprehend the various electoral trends that emerged after 1990 and their impact on the evolution of political culture.

V. Characteristics of Political Parties

There are certain basic characteristics of a political party which enables them to function in a democratic system of government. Sigmund Neumann holds that every party, in its essence signifies partnership in a particular organization and separation from others by separate programmes. Besides these, participation in decision-making process or at least the attempt at and chance for such a mobilisation for action is another important feature of all parties. Thus, a political party which is democratically elected should have three other important characteristics—
• Within the broad spectrum of ideological unity it tolerates, permeates and accepts
  the existence of groups as part of the whole.
• All parties accept each other as competing parties in the struggle for power.
  Together they constitute the party system.
• Each political party stands committed to uphold the interests of the whole
  community i.e. the national interests and it is because of this interest that the party
  system works as a shared field of activity, but political parties are also sectional
  i.e.—they have different mass bases and ideologies. Some may represent
  particular regions, ethnic groups or social groups. Their perception of national
  interest also differs.

La Palombara and Weiner also prescribe certain features of a political party,
• There must be continuity in an organisation whose expected life span is not
  dependent on the life span of the current leaders;
• Manifest and presumably make organisation permanent at the local level, with
  regularised communications and relationships between local and national units;
• Self-conscious determination of leaders at both national and local levels to
  capture and to hold decision-making power alone or in coalition with others, not
  simply to influence the exercise of power and
• A concern on the part of the organisation for seeking followers at the polls or in
  some manner striving for popular support (Weiner and Palombara 1966: 6).

In general, partnership, ideological differentiation, participation in decision making, unity
in diversity and national interests are common characteristics of all the parties.

V.1 Functions and Role of the Political Parties

Political parties are life lines of modern politics. They play an important and
dominant role in the actual operation of the political system. It is nevertheless not
difficult to formulate a broad view of party activities and functions which they perform in
a modern democracy, though there are different views on the role and functions of a
political party. According to Alan Ball, one of the most important functions of parties is
that of 'uniting simplifying and stabilising the political process. In addition, political parties provide the highest common denominator. Moreover, they bring together sectional interests, overcome geographical interests, and provide coherence to sometimes diverse government structures'. A more comprehensive list of six functions of political parties can be drawn on the basis of his description. In his opinion, political parties

- Structure the vote in the modern democracy and often carry out the process of broader opinion structuring.
- Integrate citizens into the broader community and mobilize the masses for participation in the political process from the simple activity of voting to more complex and dedicated form of behaviour;
- Facilitate the recruitment of political leaders;
- Form public policy, primarily by influencing the content of public thought and discussion, by formulating programmes which party leaders then feel constrained to implement once elected to office, or by bringing pressure on the incumbent government,
- Aggregate interests on some what uncertain process that may range from activity which simply takes note of social interests to that of restructuring behaviour designed to achieve the objectives they give rise to (Jha, 1999: 280).

In contrast, active roles to political parties have been attributed by S. Neumann. In his opinion, less developed countries and particularly in fluid conditions of the post-communist societies, the parties play an important role in managing the 'chaotic public will', transforming the private citizen into 'a political animal', developing links between government and public opinion, and electing political leaders (ibid). After 1990, Left party started changing its nature and character; they started following popular policies which made them to get closer to classical capitalist political parties. The disintegration of Soviet Russia forced them to change their ideological inclination. However, they became a potential agent of reformer and survived in post-communist liberal political market economy. Before 1989, Hungary was governed by the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) which had assimilated the very basics of hegemonic Party.
Lipset and Rokkan (1967) have seen that political parties are essentially 'agencies of mobilisation and broader federation'. Political parties play a vital role in structuring participation and socialising followers to accept democratic norms. They described parties as the principal agents of transforming societal conflicts into political divisions. Political parties translate group interest to political oppositions by crystallising and articulating conflicting interest; constructing alliances; setting up organisational networks and devising electoral strategies. The communist successor parties played such a potential role during reform. For example, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)\textsuperscript{142} had created the prevalent conditions for political and economic reforms in Hungary during 1989–90. In 1990 the first parliamentary elections the Communist government was finally voted out of power in Hungary.

The institutionalisation of political parties in Hungary was a dialectical process. On one hand, a highly diversified political landscape emerged; there was a broad anti-communist sentiment that united the democratic, liberal opposition. The transformation was completely elite-driven. Hungary had a long history of intellectual dissidents and politicians, where the gap between the political elites and the masses reinforced disillusionment and distance between the rulers and ruled. On the other, the transformation from one-party system to multi-party, parliamentary democracy was very gradual, peaceful and stable.

The role of the communist party was decisive in the Hungarian transition and after it. Even during the Kadar Era\textsuperscript{143} few parties' like the Smallholders and Christian

\textsuperscript{142} In Hungary, the concept of 'negotiated revolution', was being advocated, that is, they brought forward the consensus based change in their state. The goal of the opposition round table talks has created the conditions for a peaceful transition to democracy. With this, a set of political agreements and understandings between the outgoing and incoming political elites were concluded in 1989–90. The Negotiation Round Table Talks, started from June – September 1989 was an important agreement that brought several changes in the political system. The Round Table Talks of September 18, informal pacts between the new political forces and incumbents, and the political agreement of May 1990 between the victor, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF), and the runner-up Alliance of Free Democrats (AFD), of the March – April 1990 elections were the major road markers of this process.

\textsuperscript{143} His era was popular for his, soft dictatorship and his reform communism known as 'Gulash communism'.

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Democratic Party\textsuperscript{144} were working as safety valve mechanism. After the freedom of Association Act in 1989 they became legitimate part of political transition and later democratic consolidation in Hungary. This chapter is an attempt to understand the role of Hungarian Parties in the transition and the establishment of liberal democratic regime. In brief, it will discuss the emergence of multi-party system in Hungary and their journey to consolidate democracy during 1990–2006.

V.2 Change in Electoral Laws: 1989–90

Independent voluntary organizations or parties were not permitted in Hungary until the late 1980s, but thereafter the sector grew significantly. The Hungarian law generally permitted organisations to undertake any activities that are not prohibited by the law. However, the activities of foundations must meet a long-term ‘public interest’. Political activity by organisations is permitted, but Public Benefits Organizations (PBOs) may not engage in ‘direct political activity’. The Constitution and laws were legitimizing the articulating role of non-governmental organisations in the development of policy. However in practice, that role was often limited by Party monopoly. This tendency of limited freedom and squeezed articulation in Communist Hungary has been questioned by liberal minded, pro-West oppositions. Therefore Hungarian RTTs first tried to implement the freedom of association act of 1989. They tried to do it in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Helsinki Pact of 1975.

The first meaningful legal change took place with the amendment of the Act on Associations. This Act created a legal framework for multi-party parliamentary democracy. Though the law before 1989 was allowed the setting up of political parties it treated, ‘any one who wanted to organise such thing expected apolitical repression’. The creation of the Act on Associations was immediately followed by its broader and

\textsuperscript{144} The Smallholders and the Christian Democrats are referred as ‘historical parties’ because their formation predates Communist rule. Smallholders were Hungary’s largest Democratic Party in the immediate post-war period, winning an absolute majority of the votes in the elections of 1945 before the Communist seized power.
narrower political and legal interpretations. According to the broader interpretation, the sphere of the right to Associations included also the right to organise political parties. In other words, the legal conditions of multiparty system created. In fact all the old parties (Independent Small Holders’ Party, People’s Party, and Social Democratic Party) recognised between November 1988 and January 1989. In accordance to it the new parties growing out of Social Movements, Hungarian Democratic Forum, Alliance of Free Democrats, and Federation of Young Democrats as a consequence of a de facto multi-party system evolved with in the institutional framework of the one-party.

The second phase of political transition (March–October 1989) was characterised by negotiations between the state-party and oppositions. The significance of the phase is also indicated by the fact that a number of social scientists labeled the Hungarian transition as ‘negotiated revolution’(elite driven, it was not mass movement like Solidarity in Poland or not like Czechoslovakia represented with a leader like Vaclve Havel). In the meantime a negotiated type of transition was launched in Poland with the participation of the most important political forces. The Polish pattern seemed to be suitable to be followed both by the Communist Party as well as by the oppositions.

Finally the parties agreed on discussing the political issues in six committees. The sub committees were the following: (a) the amendment of constitution; (b) law on parties and the financing parties; (c) electoral laws; (d) Principles of the amendment of penal law; (e) publicity, information policy; (f) safeguard on the non-violence of transition. The negotiating parties amended the Constitution of 1949 so that it would be suited to representing the multi-party system. Hence, in Hungary political parties can be freely formed and can function freely, and through they can not directly exercise public authority, they may participate in the shaping and expression of popular will (Bozoki, 1992: 62–65).

145 Non-elite masses were of fundamental importance in the Hungarian transition. The transition was a complex interaction between elites and masses. The transition received mass legitimacy through opinion polls and lastly by November referendum.
Following the acceptance of free political association through this Act, the Hungarian Constitution legitimised multi-party system as fundamental to its polity process. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, political parties may be established and may function freely, provided they respect the Constitution and laws established in accordance with the Constitution. Political parties shall participate in the development and expression of the popular will. They may not exercise public power directly. Accordingly, no single party may exercise exclusive control of a government body. In the interest of ensuring the separation of political parties and public power, the law shall determine those functions and public offices which may not be held by party members or officer.\textsuperscript{146} The Constitution has denied any exclusive control of party over politics like—the Communist Party. At the same time it allowed Labour Unions and other representative bodies to protect and represent the interests of employees, members of co-operatives and entrepreneurs.\textsuperscript{147} This is how Hungarian polity has given space to multiple associations to articulate views which have been long denied in Communist era.

2.1 The Agreement between Ruling and Opposition Parties

Development of electoral systems is essential for democracies to function well. Consequently, the institutionalisation of parties within well-established electoral rule is crucial to consolidate democracy. In the whole region all the countries had institutionalised the multi-party system and were given the freedom to perform in the first general elections. There are different types of electoral law throughout the region. Thus, the collapse of communist in Eastern Europe had generated a wave of electoral reform that touched every state in the region. This wave nullified the previous electoral apparatus designed for effectively non-competitive electoral processes. However the laws were remoulded to make it fit for competitive multi-party politics.

The uncompetitive and undemocratic nature of the communist-era electoral systems was one of the principal topics of complaint during the protests that led to the

\textsuperscript{146} Article 3(1)(2)(3) respectively. of Hungarian amended constitution of 1997.

\textsuperscript{147} Article 4.
collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. Though limited reforms had been introduced in the 1980s in states such as Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union, the electoral laws in force at the start of 1989 all enabled the ruling communist parties to exercise a *de facto* monopoly on electoral competition. Even in states where non-communist parties were tolerated (Poland, Bulgaria) and those in which multiple candidacies were at times allowed (Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia), elections could not be considered competitive multi-party contests, because measures were taken to ensure that there was no genuine competition between opposing political organisations. Electoral reform was therefore high on the list of priorities of the so-called ‘democratic forces’ that spearheaded the transitions. Their main aims in the electoral sphere were in all cases to create the conditions for multi-party competition (or at the very least, competition among partisan groupings).

This meant dismantling the Communist-era system of single-party politics in which political power was channeled through personal power bases constructed on the foundations of patronage and clienteles. Modernising electoral institutions was therefore largely a matter of de-personalising the basis of competition, and making alternative party platforms rather than personalities being the main objects of choice. The desire to entrench multi-party competition was the driving force behind the choice of list proportional representation. In virtual sense all the countries in the region tried voters to choose from among parties rather than from among individuals which may foster programmatic competition and limiting the ability of politicians to use elections to increase their personal power. The ‘democratic’ oppositions also had to contend with the fact that their members—in many cases even their leaders—were often inexperienced and not well known by large sectors of the general population. Though there was an initial aversion to parties as such on the part of some of the participants in the mass movements that helped to topple communism, it soon became evident that parties were necessary organisational structures in a competitive electoral senario.

During the Communist era politicians were known (and often liked, despite their party affiliations) by large numbers of citizens. Moreover, in as much as communist party
apparatchik had been responsible for disbursing resources under communism, many groups of citizens had developed long-standing ties with prominent party members in their region. One of the internal motives behind the drive to adopt list Proportional Representation (PR) was thus to seek to undermine such ties by obliging voters to vote for an entire organisational structure, rather than for individuals (though certain of the list PR systems adopted did include provisions for casting preference votes among list members). This meant that the ex-communist parties had to face up their legacy and image as organisations; they could not rely on the personal popularity of their members alone to gain seats. The choice between single-member and PR systems was therefore seen more in terms of voting for individuals versus voting for parties than it was in terms of the range of concerns more common in Western debates (disproportional, fragmentation, single-party versus coalition government). Due to identical reasons Hungarian reformer had chosen a very complex electoral system. The threshold of 5 per cent, (4 per cent till 1994) in Parliament had given less space for the fragmentation. It lowered the instability experienced by the entering of too many parties to parliament.

In the Eastern European context, the additional mechanism of the round-table must be added. At the time of the communist collapse, pacts were negotiated between the departing communist leaderships and the democratic oppositions in a number of Central European states (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria). And these so-called ‘round table talks’ (RTTs) often resulted on agreements as to electoral systems and various other aspects of the conduct of elections. The RTTs intended to build an electoral system that would limit the chances of the return of the authoritarian system. However, the Hungarian mix electoral system has helped in many ways but its high ratio of threshold has not giving any space to small parties.

2.2 Changes in Rules

The Parliamentary system employed in Hungary is the product of a political compromise reached at the time of the regime change in 1989. The historical parties (the Smallholders, the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats) favoured the county-
based list system used in the election of 1945 to 1947. The Socialists and the Free
Démocrats meanwhile, supported a system of single member districts, and FIDSZ
advocated the introduction of a mixed system. Because of the opinions of the parties and
the uncertainty already perceptible in public opinion towards the parties, it was not
possible to eliminate single-member districts (SMDs)—which offer a more direct
relationship between the voter and the representative and greater accountability of the
politician. In the end, the compromise that was reached between the parties negotiating
over the institutional form of the democratic system involved a mixed-electoral system.
This was enshrined in the law before the end of 1989, and it has continued to operate,
with minor modification, till today.

Mixed-electoral systems, defined here as electoral systems that provide voters two
votes for the legislature one for a party-list in a PR and one for a candidate in a SMD tier
have emerged as a major alternative to strictly PR or SMD systems. In case of Hungary
the mixed electoral system distributes, the 386 seats in the Hungarian Parliament by
means of two principles and three institutional mechanisms. One hundred and seventy-six
seats are distributed using regional party-lists according to the principle of PR. The voters
have two votes: one for the candidates in their single-member districts and one for the
regional party-lists. The remaining seats—at least 58—are distributed using national
party lists in a contemporary system based upon the principle of proportionality that
employ surplus votes from the single-member and regional list contests. We will consider
it each of these three mechanisms in turn.

The electoral law divides the country into 176 SMDs, each containing
approximately 60,000 eligible voters. Strict nomination requirements must be passed
before a candidate contest in for election in these districts. The electoral law stipulates a
two month official electoral campaign, the first month of which is devoted to maintains,
and in order to stand in a single- member district, a candidate must gather the signature of
750 eligible voters living with in the district.
The first round of the election in any given district is valid if the turnout exceeds 50 per cent. If this requirement is fulfilled and one candidate wins more than 50 per cent of vote cast, that candidate is declared the winner. This however, happens only rarely in five of the 176 district in 1990, two in 1994 and in 1998. If the turnout requirement is met but no candidate wins more than 50 per cent of the vote, a second round is held two-weeks after the first. The first three candidates from the first round plus any further candidates winning more than the 15 per cent of the first round vote are entitled to run in the second round, through they may withdraw the rounds if they wish. The turnout requirement at the second round is only 25 per cent, and only a relative majority, is needed for victory.

If the turnout requirement at the first round is not met (as was the case in several districts in 1998) the same procedure is followed, except that all the candidates are able to run in second round. For the purposes the regional list part of the election, the country is divided into twenty multi-member districts. These match the units of regional administration—the 19 counties and the capital city. These districts return differing numbers of deputies, ranging from four to twenty-eight, depending on the size. A party can put forward a regional list in any given region only if it is successful in having its candidates nominated in at least one-quarter of the SMDs but not less than two districts—within that region.

Provided that the turnout exceeds 50 per cent, the distribution of regional list seats is determined at the first round of election, if the turnout is below 50 per cent, as was the case in two counties in 1998, a second round is held with a lower turnout requirement. The parties are able to enter parliament through the lists only if they pass minimum threshold—in 1990 it was 4 per cent of national total of votes cast in the regional list elections. Since 1994, threshold increased to 5 per cent.

No votes are cast specifically for the national list seats and distributed on the basis of a national poll of votes that is created from two sources. First, fractions of the full quota of regional-list elections that remain after the distribution of seats are transferred to
the national poll. Second, all votes for losing candidates in the second round of the SMD elections are transferred. In addition, however, any seats that cannot be distributed on the regional level (that is, any seats for which a full quota of votes does not exist at that level) are transferred to the national level. As a result, the numbers of seats are available only to parties that pass the threshold for entry into the parliament in the regional-list election.

The condition for putting forward a national list is that the party successfully put forward regional lists in at least seven of the regional districts. The parties that are able to put forward a nationalist list can participate in the campaign programme during the second month of the campaign on national state television and radio. The systems of nominations act as an important selection mechanism before the elections have been started. Twelve parties were able to put forward national lists in 1990, 15 in 1994 and 12 in 1998 (Korosenyi, 1990: 39, Korosenyi, 2002:117–119, Magyar Kozolony, 1998, no.47, Sozobszlai, 1995: 45).

2.3 Critical Assessment of Electoral Rules

The electoral system which was created on the drawing boards of the RTTs, were not perfect, provided a satisfactory legal framework for the voters’ participation. The law provided decent opportunity for the new political forces to maneuver themselves into the strong hold of power. Almost all states led to a ‘hybrid’ electoral arrangement mechanically combining both basic systems. Most frequently, institutional modifications that were successfully enacted were marginal adjustments of the size of legal thresholds and the magnitude of electoral districts (incase of Hungary its 5 per cent, Bulgarian 4 per cent and Czech Republic of 5 per cent ).

148 To understand better about the legal threshold in Central East European States see, Olga Shvetsovas, Electoral Studies,18, 1999,pp 397–409.
But the effect of this threshold in electoral system has made the life of the small parties miserable in Hungary. Strategic voting (voting according to second preference and non-voting) was facilitated by large emotional and ideological difference between two poles. The political, cultural, media and religious elites have a bipolar structure. Members of the elites, systematically attacking the parties fall below 5 per cent, claiming that these parties prepare the ground for the victory of the opposite side. The originally more fragmented public has gradually accepted the bipolar structure of elites, and has joined the leading party of his or her chosen side. That is, the electoral system reduced the number of parties not alone, but in combination with high polarization (Eneydi, 2007:116–134).

In conclusion we can say that Hungary’s electoral system can be sophisticated as a complex machine with which for many reasons the parliament is hesitant to tamper with or to redesign. As a result the system is unlikely to be reformed except in minor ways that would not significantly change its character. The parliament has changed the list threshold from 4 to 5 per cent, but beyond some discussion of eliminating the run-off round in SMDs, electoral reform of 1998 is not constructed as a move towards simplicity. So, the institution that the negotiating parties shaped in 1989 now shapes the parties, and discourages them from trying to undo it. As a result the Hungarian electoral system is likely to remain complicated for quite some time. However, the complex, patchwork of Hungarian electoral institution—

...the by-product of a struggle by leaders of old, reconstituted, and new political parties to maximize their political power in the future Parliament by creating an institution which they believed would achieve this end.....however, their view of ex post positions became clouded by uncertainty, they reacted in the predicted manner by choosing institutions which would share in multiple ways. (Schiemann in Bozoki 2002: 187)

The most meaningful result of the law has brought the change in the form of government; the Hungarian Republic now has a government based on the principle of the

149 The threshold for being eligible for list-seats is 5 per cent. In 1989 the leading parties of Opposition Round Table aimed at 3 per cent, then agreed on 4 per cent. But by 1994 they had realized that their interests were better served by an even higher threshold: 5 per cent for single parties, 10 per cent for two-party alliances and 15 for larger coalitions (Eneydi, 2006: 187).
division of power and it has a parliament, a republican executive which conform to the European standards. The Hungarian parliament supports multi-party system long denied under the Communist regime. Throughout these years the ruling elite always aimed at establishing a European-style administration with viable democracy and parliamentary norms. The presiding governments from 1990–2006, were attempting to cherish the very basic of parliamentary democracy—multi-party system, alternative opposition and responsible government.

V.3 The Origin and Establishment of Parties

The democratic transition in Hungary began after 1989. The disintegration of one party system that had dominated for four decades began in the mid-1980s, and by 1987–88 had reached the stage where the various critical and oppositional groups sought to organise politically. During the 1990 elections, a party system has emerged, in comparison with the diffuse anti-communist movements of the other transition countries. The opposition to the communist system did not begin life as an adhoc grouping or a united ‘front’. Rather it was divided from the start by political orientations, interests, and traditions. The opposition parties were established on the basis of these divisions, and they thus proved to be a lasting organisation.

After the 1980s, several political parties were formed which could be classified into three group (Korosenyi 1999: 33). The first group was composed of the historical parties—the Independent Small–Holdors Party (FKGP), the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP), the Hungarian Social Democratic Parties (MSZP) and the Hungarian People’s Party (MNP). Among them, only the first two entered parliament in 1990 and 1994, and only the Smallholders gained parliamentary representation in 1998. The common feature of all of these parties was that they were driven by their historical perceptions. They operated for a longer or shorter time and gained political significance before the communist take over of 1948–49, during the short period of limited but still competitive democracy following the Second World War. The historical parties
combined won around one-fifth of the voters in 1990 and around one sixth of the voters in both 1994 and 1998.

The Second group comprised of those new parties which formed from the dissident intelligentsia group during the last years of the Kadar era. The Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and the Federation of Young Democrats (FIDASZ) belong to this group. The 1990 election brought success for these parties—they won in total of more than half of all the party list votes cast. In both 1994 and 1998 they won close to 40 per cent of the votes, but their relative strength had changed totally by 1998, while FIDESZ had by then become a large party, the SZDSZ had gradually fallen back, the MDF—the electoral victor in 1990—had become very small indeed.

The third group belonged to the successor parties of the old Communist Party. The Communist Party (officially, the Hungarian Socialist workers party, or Magyar Szocialista Munkaspart (MSZMP) split into two at its October 1989 congress. The reformers, who gained the upper hand at the congress, formed the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), while the conservatives continued to operate under the old MSZMP banner, later shrunken it to the Workers’ Party (Munkaspart, MP). The MSZP was able successfully to inter competition with the opposition. It entered parliament as the fourth largest party in 1990, with 11 per cent of the votes and in 1994 it was the party in power. The MSZMP/workers’ party has, by contrast, been unable to enter parliament and has fallen back to the political periphery. In 2002 and 2006 elections MSZP is managing to winning the majority of parliamentary seat and forming the government. However, the pre-poll alliance between MSZP and SZDSZ won only 6 seats in 2002 parliamentary elections (2.25 per cent).

By the time of the 1990 elections, the parties already possessed characteristic political profiles, party programmes, national organisations and relatively sizeable memberships thus becoming similar to majority of the parties in the Western democracies. However, parties in Hungary did not pass through the mass-party stage of
development, as remained electoral parties. Their structure and membership were comparable more to those of the middle-class parties that developed in the Parliament of the nineteenth century than to those of the social-democratic or communist parties that emerged outside Parliament around the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. They are less centralised than the latter. They have no institutional membership, only individual member. By the end of 1991, the combined membership of all parties was only quarter of the million that is, only 5 per cent of the electorate (Korosenyi 1999: 33).

After this brief account, it’s clear that the rise of the Hungarian political parties have been characterised by three features of policy character, leadership and social base not according to their membership/strength. The Hungarian Parliament has ‘historical’ parties who are looking back to the past and emphasizing the continuity of the pre-Communist system (the Independent Smallholders’ Party, the Christian Democratic Peoples’ Party), as well as modern parties stressing the importance of a new beginning as against the old traditions (the Alliance of Free Democrats, the Federation of Young Democrats). The Hungarian Socialist Party is in a special situation as it has been transformed into a modern parliamentary party out of the old Communist party, hence it has been able to get rid of the depressing heritage of its past with a lot of difficulty (Bozoki, 1992:163–64)

In contrast to their distinction all the parties of Hungary voiced identical to join EU. It became a fundamental goal for most parties (particularly MDF, FIDESZ, MSZP and SZDSZ) in 1989. MSZP, SZDSZ and, to a large extent, MDF continued to be to the fore in accepting EU norms and regulations. This also applied to FIDESZ until the late 1990s, when the party’s position became more ambiguous. For most of its career KDNP also cultivated a pro-European image but in more radical period, between 1996 and 2000, it became Euro-skeptic. The Smallholders (FKGP) never possessed an elaborate vision of Hungary’s role in the EU, but always regarded the defense of domestic agricultural producers as the primary task of the government. The extreme right MIEP and extreme left Labour were the only parties that opposed Hungary’s integration with the North
Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the EU, an opposition derived from their common radical stand against the influence of multi-national corporations (Eneydi, 2006: 179).

However, after more than 40 years of one-party dictatorship, Hungary held almost five regular elections. All the elections can be considered as successful because each produced a stable government. That rightly indicates that no mid-term elections had taken place. But this stability was not extended to individual parties. For example, in the first parliamentary elections the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) was the winner, which lost its creditability by 1998 elections. In the same time, the FIDESZ became the strongest party by 1998. Likewise, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), heir to former communist party also enjoyed a spectacular growth in popularity. It is serving as the ruling Party from the last consecutive elections—2002 and 2006.

3.1 Ideological Classifications

In Hungary, the evolution of political parties was based on three important factors i.e. cultural, ideological and personal factors. There was no mass opposition to the communist regime in 1989. The reform Communist Party has itself created the platform for change. Prior to 1990 parties already existed as underground opposition movement or as safety valve measures. On the basis of these three factors, three political camps had been formed — the Liberal, the National Conservative/Christian and Socialist during the 1990s. The parliamentary parties all belonged to one of these camps. The socialist camp was formed by the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), the liberal camp by the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and the Federation of Young Democrats and the national conservative /Christian camp by the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Independent Smallholders Party (FKGP) and the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP) During the second half of the 1990s, some change occurred in this structure, with FIDESZ moving from the liberal camp to the national conservative camp. The extra-parliamentary parties and the parties formed by defections from the larger parties were also, for the most part, were associated with one of these camps. Each camp was tied
together not only by common political and ideological orientations, but also by the very similar socio-cultural composition of their core political elites and electoral bases, and by shared political attitudes and world views (Korosenyi, 1999: 31–32).

### Table-V.1

**Characteristic of the Three Political Camps during the First Half of the 1990s**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socialistic</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>MSZP</td>
<td>SZDSZ,FIDESZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Based on human rights, liberal economics</td>
<td>National, Christian, Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Intelligentsia of traditional mindset/ neo-traditional</td>
<td>Christian middle class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party elite</th>
<th>Nomenklatura elite</th>
<th>Liberal/radical intelligentsia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social elite</td>
<td>Leaders(functionaries of the Kadar era)</td>
<td>Intelligentsia/ rightist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social basis (electoral base)</td>
<td>Former MSZMP Members</td>
<td>Those not integrated into church or communist system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleavage</td>
<td>Nomenklatura</td>
<td>Secularised, not integrated into communist system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Religious &amp; traditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Koroseneyi, 1999: 32

### 3.2 Restructuring Parties on Societal Line

In modern era, multi-party system has proved to be only viable and possible form of democracy. It always nurture differential viewpoint, ideologies and gave platform to it. It mobilises people according to that line and tries to articulate their interest through electoral means. While mobilising voters many times they try to applause the deep rooted societal norms or traditional differences of past. It means that the political parties try to input these societal differences into political divisions. With in the past two decades Hungarian political parties tried to elevate the traditional issues into their political manifesto. To comprehend the existing norms of cleavages and their political divisions in
Hungarian post-communist state, it is important to know the Lipset and Rokkan\textsuperscript{150} view on it. Though its is not completely true in case of Hungary but time to time major political parties tried to restructure society on these lines.

In case of the Hungary political cleavages, they are going beyond the issues, conflicts and interests of not purely economic or social in nature. For example, in the Hungarian political parlance, FIDESZ was anti-communist, liberal and radical in 1990 (Bozoki, 1989). The practice of direct democracy within the party, the cultural values and non-conformist behaviour of its activists, together with its leaders’ ambition to represent a new style of politics made the party similar to the Western Left-libertarian parties later. In the year 1992, the party joined the Liberal International and owned strong popularity (Eneydi, 2005: 7).

After the defeat in the 1994 elections, the party headed by Orban continued the modification of its vocabulary and the adjustment of its self-identity. He started speaking of ‘Christianity’ as his guiding principle in politics. Family became the central category of the party’s programme and the word \textit{polgar} meaning ‘civic’ was chosen as the new label of identification. In 1995, the party changed its name to FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Party, whose ambition was to coordinate the anti-Socialist spectrum.

By 1995–1996, FIDESZ had accepted all clerical demands of traditional Right-wing parties. Being in government, the party increased the volume of government subsidies to churches; elevated mainstream Christianity to the status of governmental philosophy; double the amount of time devoted to mainstream religious programs in public television and radio (ibid). By the 1995, FIDESZ had started doing alliance with

\textsuperscript{150} Lipset and Rokkan identified four classical cleavages in Western Europe—those of state versus church and centre versus periphery, which arose during the era of nation-building, and those of land versus industry and employers versus workers, arising from the industrial revolution. These cleavage dimensions have since been formulated and empirically operationalized with reference to late-20th-century society. The church/state cleavage is now recast as secularised versus religious, and the employer/worker cleavage as middle-class versus working-class, while the centre/periphery cleavage captures resistance to the state-often based on ethno-religious conflicts-urban/rural cleavages is recast as sectoral conflicts. Cleavages are many times institutionalized in the form of political parties and other associational groups.
conservative parties' like Smallholder Party (FKGP) and Christian Democratic Party (KNDP). Subsequently the prominent Hungarian parties started wooing traditional, religious cleavages existing in society by making alliance with ideologically contradictory parties.

In foreign policy matter also FIDESZ had changed its stance. It altered its objective to rebuilt Hungarian 'middle power', which adheres to the Hungarian minorities' rights. Cabinet members regularly traveled on 'private visit' to Romania and Slovakia and financed the Hungarian minority organizations there. In 2001 the FIDESZ government came up with the so-called Status Law, officially named the Benefit Law. This law extends various benefits to Hungarians living in neighbouring states as minority. The assistance offered include travel and healthcare benefits, limited work permits in Hungary and monetary rewards to those attending Hungarian language schools abroad. This legislation became the bone of contention in neighbouring Slovakia and Romania.

The ongoing debate shows that changes are intriguing in the ideological nature of one of the major party—FIDESZ. During the election campaign the FIDESZ posed a Central-Right party but by end of 2001 it depicted itself as conservative, radical and Right party. Meanwhile, the party has started criticising privatisation and other multinational business enterprise. It started creating a combination of liberal and socialist economy and named it as the 'Hungarian Model'. However, to go back to the past and strengthen the Hungarian nation, they had popularised ‘nation’, ‘family’, ‘faith’ value, human-dignity which are the slogan of Conservative Party like the Smallholder and Christian Democratic Party. By using these types of jargons, leaders became partially successful in gathering vote bank in rural and backward parts of Hungary. During this period Hungarian society became deeply divided between government and opposition. The division was not completely based on ideological grounds. In contrast it became catch-all party after adding FKGP and KNDP into its camp.

By the year 2001 the MSZP had thoroughly re-evaluated its failure in the last election. The party had reorganised its internal structure and worked hard on the
programme for next election in 2002. The party programme centred round the social democracy and stronger commitment to national values. During election campaign MSZP had given emphasize on the ‘reform of various institutions like judiciary, healthcare and banking system’ and to tackle the fast growing unemployment. In the 2002–2006 periods, the MSZP government worked hard to rebuild the lost relation between neighboring nations like Romania and Slovakia. In the leadership of Prime Minister Peter Medegyessy—a moderate centrist—Hungary joined EU in 2004 and delegated its member to European Union Parliament (MEP).

However, the most challenging issue was that, the PM Peter Medegyessy had lost his candidature in 2004. Being a technocrat he failed in many ways to the bureaucratic problems. Especially, the issue of unemployment and economic hardship had not been answered meticulously by him. Though he had performed better in symbolic areas like, improving pensions and foreign relations but he lost his candidature as PM. Subsequently, he was replaced by a young politician, Ferenc Gyurcsany. Though recovery of the Left from opposition status took place with a small majority (See the election analysis of 2002, parliamentary elections in Table–V.6) but still the government is working as ruling majority. However, the Prime Minister has been changed.

V.4 Hungarian Parties: An Overview

The new political system nurtured a dynamic multi-party system in Hungary. In this part we will analyse the origin, nature and ideology of these parties. The ideological inclinations of party, like their socio-cultural character affects the party strategies to orient the voters. By analysing this we understand their approach in forming government and their policy prescriptions. There are more than 10 parties which are active in recent day Hungarian polity. Sometime they create pre-poll alliance in order to win majority in parliament. There are no strict trends to party coalition and alliance making in Hungary. However, an overview on their features can give us spectrum of idea how they articulate various interest of citizen time to time.
4.1 Hungarian Socialist Democratic Party (MSZP)

The MSZP is the oldest of the historic parties, which was founded, in the 1889 and between 1922 and 1944 it was driven underground by occupation, where it was only a small opposition party in the Hungarian parliament. In 1948 the MSZP was coerced to merge with the communist party and follow the Marxist ideology of social policy democracy. It also favoured free market in economy, which is controlled by social policy political actor. The party’s revival in late 1980 was materially supported by Karoly Grosz, the MSZMP’s (Hungarian Socialist Worker’Party) secretary general following Janos Kadar’s exit from politics in May 1988. However, by 1989 the MSZP’s traditional skilled blue collar worker constituency had long disappeared. They either became part-time entrepreneurs in the ‘second economic’ or remained loyal to the old regime. In either case, after 40 years of communist rule the MSZP’s elderly leaders were left with few followers. By the end of that year the party split into several feuding factions, and upon failing to receive 4 per cent of the votes cast at the 1990 elections, has faded into oblivion (Barnabas, 1991: 113).

On economic issues, the Socialists have often been greater advocates of liberal, free market policies than the conservative opposition, which has tended to favour more state interventionism in the economy through economic and price regulations, as well as through state ownership of key economic enterprises. The MSZP, in contrast, was forced to implement a strong package of market reforms, austerity and privatisation in 1995–96, when Hungary faced an economic and financial crisis. Besides a more liberal approach to the overall economy, the MSZP also differentiates itself from the conservative opposition through its more recent focus on transforming state social policy from a collection of measures that benefit the entire population, such as subsidies available to all citizens, to one based on financial and social need. This indicates an effort by the party to return to more traditionally ‘socialist’ values which are not part of liberal market economy.

\[151\text{Ideology of MSZP is left wing, modernizing, social democratic, reform in nature. It has strong base in rural and semi-urban Hungary. In comparison to other political parties like FIDESZ, MSZP has strong internal democracy and infrastructure.}\]
In political terms, the MSZP differentiates itself from its conservative opponents mainly in its rejection of nationalism. The party, along with its minority liberal partner in the governing coalition, campaigned against extending Hungarian citizenship to ethnic Hungarians living in neighboring countries in a December 5, 2004 referendum. The referendum was defeated, but tensions remain over the fate of Hungarian minorities abroad, which in some countries have faced hostility or even a degree of persecution at the hands of majority cultures, particularly when nationalist or populist governments have been in power in those countries. At the 2006 elections, the MSZP won with 43.2 per cent of party list votes, which gave it 190 representatives out of 386 in the Parliament. The MSZP was therefore able to retain its coalition government from the previous term. In earlier elections, the MSZP polled 10.89 per cent (1990), 32.98 per cent (1994), 32.92 per cent (1998) and 42.05 per cent (2002). The current surveys show, that the MSZP has 20 per cent of polled quota. It shows a serious decline in support of the party.

4.2 Independent Smallholders’ Party (ISP)\textsuperscript{152}

The ISP founded in the early 1920s was well repressing in the parliament prior to 1944. It was also a historic party. Unlike the HSDP, the ISP received 57 per cent of vote cast at the first pre – post war election in November 1945 and was the largest political party. The ISP played an important role in Imre Nagy’s coalition government in October–November 1956, its remaining leaders ended up in exile or in jail. The natural constituent, of the party are, small farmers and rural entrepreneurs of Hungary, survived, albeit mainly as members of forcibly collectivized farm throughout the Kadar era. However, rural Hungary had undergone radical social transformation between 1948 and 1989. Form the late 1960s onwards, together with new provincial proletariat, a new ruler middle class of university and college trained experts, farm managers, and local professionals were showing their interest in the party. Now the Party has renamed and refounded Independent Smallholder and Agrarian Workers Civic Party.

\textsuperscript{152} Ideology of this party is nationalist, conservative and agrarian in nature.
4.3 Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)

Alliance of Free Democrats was founded in November 1988 as liberal anti-communist organization. It propagated the ideas of European social democracy. Its ideological orientation was balanced by radical anti-regime policies and promoted its appeal to different social elements. It emerged as an aggressive opposition as it believed that social problems could be resolved through voluntary associations rather than state. One of the main democratic forces (with democratic forum) during early transition period and junior partner in Socialist led coalition government after 1994 elections. Privatization and financial scandals led to a fall in public support and resignation of Chairman Ivan Pett in 1996. Though, the party defines itself as left of centre, its actual policies make this questionable because of its predominant market orientation and political impatience (Barnabas 1991: 114). Now the leader of the party is Gabor Kuncze. He acted as the party leader from 2001–2007. The party is a part of ruling coalition 2002 and 2006.

4.4 Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)

MDF founded in September 1987 emerged as a major leader (with free democrats) of anti-communist movement and scored a major electoral success in the 1990 election. It was the oldest opposition force, which transformed itself into a party in 1989. It is a heterogeneous party including populist and liberal traditions as well as Christian-Democratic views. Therefore there existed a cleavage between urbanism and populist view point. It accepted social market economy rather than unlimited market economy. In government it became increasingly weakened by splits and internal divisions, and secured its parliamentary position in 1998 largely by virtue of alliance with FIDESZ (ibid).

MDF is a centrist right and liberal, and a Christian Democratic, political party in Hungary, led by Ibolya David. Its emblematic figure was Jozsef Antall, Prime Minister between 1990 and 1993. Before 2002 it was part of a coalition government with the larger FIDESZ. It had 24 seats in the National Assembly between 2002 and 2006. It received 5.04 per cent (272,831 votes) of the votes in the 2006 Parliamentary Election, thus securing its place in the next Parliament. MDF has essentially split, with the majority of its parliamentary representatives ousted from the party. Ibolya Dávid regularly accused
the FIDESZ, largest conservative force in Hungary of trying to annex her party. The two parties had a bitter quarrel following the first round of the 2006 Parliamentary Election on the possible withdrawal of MDF candidates to support the FIDESZ. The presidency of the party decided not to do this but a number of MDF candidates decided to withdraw at their own discretion. This shows the organizational capacity of the party is weakening these days.

4.5 Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) / Hungarian Civic Party (MPP)
It was born from the young intellectuals opposition movement in the 1980s and stands on liberal principle supporting a fine market system with a minimal role state redistribution, speedy privatization and limited attention to social policy. The primary social role of state should be promotion of capital accumulation and secondly to redistribute income. The AYD defined itself as left of centre in 1990 and social support came primarily from urban based young intellectuals with a weaker presence in the countryside and lack of effective grass roots organisation (Lewis 2000: 165).

4.6 Hungarian Justice And Life Party (Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja, in short: MIEP)153
It is a Right-wing Political party in Hungary led by Istavan Csurka. It was founded in 1993. At the legislative election in 1998 the party won 5.5 per cent of the votes and gained parliamentary representation, with 14 seats. At 2002 election to National assembly, April 7 and 20, 2002, the party won 4.4 per cent of the popular vote and no seats. In 2005, MIEP joined forces with a newer, Right-wing political party, namely the Movement for a Better Hungary. The new political formation has been registered under the name the MIEP-Jobbicks Third way Alliance of Party and it purposed to speak for Christians, stands up for the rights of Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries and boasts a ‘law and order’ agenda, in order to crack down on crime against minorities in Romania and Slovakia.

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153 They are radical in nature and their politics is based on ultra-nationalist spirit. Anti-Semitism, chauvinism, anti-globalization, anti-communism, anti-liberal and clericalism characterize the ideology and rhetoric of this party.
4.7 The Movement For A Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, or Jobbik for short)

It is a radical Right-wing party. Its predecessor was founded in 2002 as the Right-wing Youth Community (Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség – Jobbik), which consisted mainly of university students; it was organized as a party in 2003. Besides MIEP, which lost most of its voters, the Movement for a Better Hungary is one of the best-known formations of the radical Right-wing in Hungary. It says in its deed of foundation that the Movement for a Better Hungary aims at ‘completing the change of regime and establishing a society more equitable than the present one’. It defines itself as a value-oriented, national Christian party, which uses radical methods to represent the whole of the nation. The organisation proudly stands up for nationalism, but denies being chauvinistic. They regard equally as their adversaries MSZP, SZDSZ, which they call ‘extremely liberal’, and FIDESZ, which they say is ‘a middle-class party with liberal roots’, though they cooperate with the latter in a few self-governments. Since Gabor Vona was elected president Jobbik has declared ‘peaceful co-existence’ with all Right-wing parties, therefore its reservations against FIDESZ have also been moderated.

Supported both by far-Right voters and by disgruntled ex-socialists, Jobbik is the big new thing in Hungarian politics. The party did best in the country’s rundown, often jobless eastern regions, where it played on growing fears of crime, which it linked to the Roma (Gypsy) minority. Jobbik denies anti-Roma racism; it says it is just against gypsy criminals. But the badges, black trousers and heavy boots of its uniformed wing, the Magyar Garda (Hungarian Guard), which marches in formation against Roma wrongdoers, evoke unhappy memories of Hungary’s past. Jobbik’s public face is now Krisztina Morvai, a blonde, tele-genic law professor, a feminist.

4.8 Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP)

Christian Democratic People’s Party was officially founded in early 1989. Its immediate predecessors were the Aron Marton Society (a group of catholic intellectuals) and the National association of large families. The founder of the party had been politician in the
Democratic People’s party that operated between 1945 and 1948. The KDNP emerged more as a Christian-social than a Christian-democratic party. It came into existence in 1989 and was the weakest partner in post-1990 coalition government. It program was based on ‘Christian Philosophy’ which was the guide line for the solution of all problems. Individual Freedom is at the center of all aspirations. The three key principle of the party are the Christian state which is the depository of public good, popular sovereignty and parliamentary democracy (Korosenyi 1999: 45–46).

4.9 The Association of Somogy (Hungarian: Somogyért, officially: Somogyért Egyesület)

It is a local political party in the county of Somogy in Hungary allied with the ruling Hungarian Socialist Party. At the last legislative elections; April 9 and 23, 2006; the party won one constituency seat. It was founded on 24 May, 1994, by 109 well-known politicians and entrepreneurs in Somogy. Today its membership amounts to approximately 4000. It is led by Dr. Istvan Gyanesi engineer and economist, chairman of the Somogy County General Assembly. Since the 2006 legislative elections, he has been a non-partisan member of the Hungarian Parliament.

4.10 The Centre Party (Centrumpárt)

It is a political party in Hungary. At the last legislative election, on 9 and 23 April 2006, the party won 0.32 per cent of the popular vote and no seats. The Centre Party came into being in 2001, with the cooperation of the Christian Democratic People’s party (Keresztény Demokrata Néppárt — KDNP) the Hungarian Democratic People’s Party (Magyar Demokrata Néppárt - MDNP) and the Greens. The unusual alliance of centre-Right and centre-Left groups hindered the Centre Party’s effectiveness and, eventually, two of the founding political formations quit the party. The KDNP, after long internal disputes and legal battles, joined ranks with Viktor Orban’s FIDESZ and the KDNP merged with the Hungarian Democratic Forum (Magyar Demokrata Fórum - MDF).
4.11 The European Green Party

The roots of the Hungarian Green movement go back to the beginning of the 1980s, the first attempt to establish an NGO was in 1984, when the Danube Circle (Duna Kor) tried to disseminate secret information on a plan for damming the Danube in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary (Gabcikovo-Nagymaros). The Danube Circle organised several protests since 1986, received significant prizes, such as the Right Livelihood Award (the Alternative Nobel Prize) and was significantly important during the change of regime. The key figures of the Circle decided to establish a civil society, and to support parties which had a chance to take over the one-party (soft) dictatorship. A few months before the first free election, (1990) the Hungarian Green Party (HGP) (Magyarorszagi Zold Part (MZP)) was founded, but didn’t have a chance to win election. The party went through several changes over the years, lost most of its members and turned up again in 1993, one year before the elections with an extreme rightist program. Their favorite slogan was, ‘Plant Hungarian seed into Hungarian women’.

V.5 Parliamentary Elections: Party performance

According to the law on parliamentary elections, the parliament is elected once in four years. Hungary has a unicameral legislature with specified powers (which we already discuss in Chapter III). The Prime Minister (head of the government) is elected from the members of parliament. Being a parliamentary government, the elections to it are of extremely important. Time to time parties striving to capture power appease people to vote them. During the campaign they present themselves with policy alternatives and ideological leanings. In every election a new type of party composition (coalition) took over power. The parliamentary elections in Hungary usually take place in two rounds. Below we will discuss the elections from 1990–2006 (five round of elections, 1990,1994,1998,2002 and 2006).
Table V.2
Election to First Parliament: 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Vote in %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Smallholders and Citizens Party(FKGP)</td>
<td>11.73</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
<td>10.89</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ)</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democrats Peoples’ Party (KDNP)</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agrarian Alliance</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Summary of the May 1990 Hungarian National Assembly Election

Figure No-V.I

Election to First Parliament 1990
5.1 Election to First Parliament (1990)

The decay of the one-party communist rule and the emergence of the opposition parties made it possible for Hungary to have free parliamentary elections in March 1990. The political basis for the 1990 election had developed by the beginning of 1989. There are no big ‘umbrella’ organisations, both the ruling Communist Party and the opposition were divided. On the Opposition side, the Hungarian Democratic Forum and Alliance of Free Democrats were the most influential parties. The frugality in political scene clearly indicated towards a *tabula rasa* situation. It also concludes that the Hungarian Dissident did not have a single, charismatic leader like; Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia before 1993.

The 1990 Hungarian general election was the first free election to be held in the country since 1945. The conservative, nationalist Hungarian Democratic Forum or MDF beat the liberal and more internationalists Alliance of Free Democrats, which had spearheaded opposition to Communist rule in the preceding years, to become the largest party in the Parliament. The MDF leader Jozsef Antall became prime minister in coalition with the Christian Democratic People’s Party and Independent Smallholder’s Party were part.

The Elections were partly a referendum on the falling one-party regime (which explains the poor performance of Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP). The election turned out to be a victory for rights. The Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)-FKGP-KNDP coalition got 42.9 per cent of the (list) votes and with the landslide MDF victory in the SMD run-off, they gained 229 out of the 386 seats (59.33 per cent), offered a strong majority in the parliament. The main reason behind the failure of socialist Left is the fragmentation. All three socialist parties including MSZP refused to form an alliance. There was striking phenomena—the absence of traditional social democratic party, with strong blue-collar and trade union backing.

The voting pattern shows a remarkable regional character to analysis. The geographical distribution of the (list) votes revealed five distinct regions. In the
metropolitan area of Budapest which contained one-fifth of the total electorate, the MSZP and the new parties, especially the Free Democrats, won more than their national average, while Smallholders had a poor result. The industrial (and Catholic) north east region turned to be a stronghold for the (ex)-communist MSZMP and MSZP and for the Catholic KDNP. In rural (and Catholic) mid-south the Smallholders did best. In the rural and Protestant 'Tiszantúl' the FKGP and ex-communist parties had votes above the national average. The most urbanized (and Catholic) north-west became the strongholds of the Free Democrats and the Christian Democrats. In general, the political scene has developed towards a tripolar structure—with a government centre-Right MDF-FKGP-KDNP coalition: with a fragmented and discredited socialist-left (MSZP, HSWP: and with the left liberal AFD- FIDESZ (which was the radical anti-communist opposition of the former ruling MSZMP/MSZP) (Korosenyi, in Bozoki, 1992:72–88).

The Antall government of 1990–94 began market reforms with price and trade privatization measures. A revamped tax system and a nascent market-based banking system emerged. By 1994, however, the costs of government overspending and hesitant privatization had become clearly visible. Slash in consumer subsidies led to increases in food price, medicine, transportation services, and energy. Reduced exports to former Soviet bloc and shrinking industrial output contributed to a sharp decline in GDP, falling 18 per cent from 1990–1993. The unemployment rose rapidly—to about 12 per cent in 1993. The external debt burden, one of the highest in Europe, reached 250 per cent of annual export earnings. During this phase Antall government was unable to tackle such problems. Because of their insufficient knowledge of market reform and newly evoked societal demands like—compensations on privatization, cradle-to-grave economic security (which was provided by Communist regime) and raising unemployment due to privatization. In this political economic scenario the election to second parliament took place.
Table V.3
Election to Second Parliament: 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>previously</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats (FIDESZ)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Smallholders’ Party</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Federation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Summary of the May 1994 Hungarian National Assembly Election,
Source: Fact Sheets on Hungary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Budapest, no.8, 1994
5.2 Election to Second Parliament (1994)

The 1994 Hungarian general election was held in two rounds in May 1994. It saw the return to power of the Socialists in their post-1989 form as the Hungarian Socialist Party, under the leadership of Gyula Horn, who became the prime minister. The Socialist achieved a remarkable revival, winning an overall majority of 209 seats out of 386, up from a meager 33 in 1990. The governing Hungarian Democratic Forum had scored badly in election, falling from 165 to 37. It was also a disappointment for the principal opposition party of the previous parliament, the Alliance of Free Democrats, which failed to capitalise on the government’s unpopularity and lost seats. Poor economic performance, apparent government incompetence and certain nostalgia for the social security of the communist era appear to be the main reasons for the result, together with significant reform of the Socialists’ policies, with commitment to the expansion for the market economy and continued compensation for the victims of communism. Despite winning an overall majority Horn decided to form a coalition with the Free Democrats, to assuage public concerns over the return of ex-communists to power and to achieve a two-thirds majority in parliament.

After the four-year stability of conservative coalition’s rule in Hungary, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) came to power. The eminent Hungarian political scientists rightly expressed the 1994 elections as ‘second generation’ post-Communist resurgence. In this election the partners advocated Hungarian Nationalism, Christian value and private property as their primary focus. In the economic sphere the have shown some amount of disappointment towards previous ruling government. The sluggish economic outcome, higher rate of taxes became the factor of incumbency for the socialist to come back as ruling party.

The parliamentary election of May 1994 the MSZP, has won a majority of 209 seats which shows 54 per cent of the new 386- member parliament. On the other side the Alliance of Free Democrats won 69 seats which the 18 per cent of the total seats. The victory of the reformed communists is remarkable as the Hungarian Socialist Party improved its performance, from 33 seats in 1990 to 209 in 1994 elections.
The humiliating failure of the Democratic liberal Forum was consequence of various factors—

- The high rate of inflation and raising unemployment
- The new generation Hungarians are critical about the imposition of taxes in the name of economic reform (privatisation). The government was hardly taking any new measure for industrial growth and employment.
- The socialist in their manifesto projected them as protector of the social security measures which was neglected by the free liberal Right winner of 1990 elections.

The elections’ most important result was the establishment of the new generation Parliament which was primary centre of political power in the country. Its political composition is clearly identifiable in Table; however, a brief examination of who the 386 members are is necessary. It is noteworthy that the membership continuity is stronger in the new Parliament—while in 1990 95.6 per cent were new members (only 17 were re-elected), the 1994 legislative body includes more than one-third (139) incumbents whose experience may yet prove important in facilitating the smooth operation of the otherwise unwieldy and too large body.

This Parliament, even more than the previous one, consisted of the highly educated professional, technocratic strata of society. Only 20 (5.18 per cent) did not have university higher educational degrees, a higher ratio than previously (63 or 16.32 per cent in 1990). The predominant specialisation areas include lawyers, economists and academics and there are only a few actual workers/technicians basically in the group of 20 without higher degrees. Women are presented in somewhat increased numbers but they are still severely under represented: 44 (11.39 per cent) compared with the former 28 (7.2 per cent). The age composition also changed somewhat: there are 150 deputies below 45 years of age (38.86 per cent) while previously the average age was 45 (Racz and Kurkorelli, 1995: 270).
There were some signs of increasing professionalization and political expertise in the first year, of the Second Parliament (ibid). In contrast to the First and the Second Parliament had, MPs with a background in economic, legal, and technical sciences. This has increased expertise in concrete social processes and to yield ‘better’ laws. So, there were fewer problems with implementation of the laws passed by the Second Parliament. The failure of implementation was the characteristic feature of the First Parliament.

The growing activity of legislative committees has increased required professionalism in policy making. Sixty-eight percent of all resolutions passed by the Second Parliament had been initiated by the government, 24 per cent by committees, and 8 per cent by MP. Second Parliament has increased its ‘productivity’ in passing routine laws with no significant clash between government and opposition, but in the production of basic important laws the confrontation is still too sharp and ideologue (with two walkouts by members of the opposition in protest). The two Hungarian parliaments show that democratic and efficient policymaking by parliament is much more difficult to learn than would have been thought in the early years of democratic privatization (Agh, 1997: 429–30).

During this period the government of Prime Minister Gyula Horn implemented an austerity programme, coupled with aggressive privatization of state-owned enterprises and an export promoting exchange rate regime. During his phase Hungary became one of the fastest growing and most open economies, deeply integrated into the European economy. By 1998 eighty per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was produced by private sector, and foreign owners control seventy per cent of financial institutions, ninety per cent of telecommunications and 50 per cent of trades. The economic policies are not in favour majority of people who wanted the Communist time back. These policies were strongly opposed by FIDESZ the incumbent government of 1998 headed by Victor Orban. Within such political and economic scenario election to third parliament took place.
Table V.4
Election to Third Parliament: 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>+/-</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>+/-</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Hungarian civic Union- FIDESZ</td>
<td>1340826</td>
<td>29.48</td>
<td>+22.46</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>+128</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party- MSZP</td>
<td>1497231</td>
<td>32.92</td>
<td>-6.06</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>-75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Small holder’s Party</td>
<td>597820</td>
<td>13.15</td>
<td>+4.34</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>+22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats</td>
<td>127118</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>-8.93</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Justice and life party</td>
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<td>5.47</td>
<td>+3.68</td>
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<td>Non Partisan</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Hungarian Communist Workers’ Party</td>
<td>179672</td>
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<td>Christian Democratic Peoples’ party</td>
<td>61004</td>
<td>1.34</td>
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Note: Summary of the 1998 Hungarian National Assembly Elections
Source: www.valasztas.hu

Figure No V.III
5.3 Election to Third Parliament (1998)

The 1998 election to parliament tried to establish a balance between Left-wing and Right-wing parties. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) retained 134 out of 209 seats in previous election. This was being challenged by a new-Right wing coalition made Victor Orban. The Hungarian Civic Party (FIDESZ) tried to build a coalition with Young Democrats Civic Party (FIDESZ-MPP) to prove a majority in Parliament. They have created a pre-poll coalition and campaigning on the basis of civic value and greater economic security.

The election was a significant defeat for the governing Socialist Party and their coalition allies, the Alliance of Free Democrats and narrow surprise for Victor Orban’s Right wing FIDESZ. The successful breakthrough into the Parliament by the Extreme Right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party was a major shock. After the election, FIDESZ formed a coalition government the Independent Smallholder Party and Hungarian Democratic Forum.

The Orban government, elected in 1998, maintained the broad macroeconomic reforms of its predecessors. Under its slogan ‘economic patriotism’ the party completely changed its ideology to radical Right views. The new FIDESZ policy included cautious anti-West and anti-globalisation stances. During this phase the government headed by FIDESZ summed up the socialist and free market theoretical mosaic to bring new ‘Hungarian model’ of economy. During this period only FIDESZ tried to change its economic and political stance on policymaking. The ‘nation’ became the most important subject of debate over economic and social policy. To popularise the new ideology, relations with church and other conservative parties, the Party purred lots of fund to church. Leaders spend many millions to ‘private visits’ to neighbouring countries (Racz, 2003: 752–53). The incumbent government put the stress on the ‘regional middle power’ concepts, which promote the Hungarian minorities’ equal right in neighbouring country. The passing of Status law-2001 became major bone of contention among neighbouring Romania and EU. In this broad conservative environment election to fourth parliament took place, where voters’ preferred to chose Socialist and democrat alliance.

211
Table V.5
Election to Fourth Parliament: 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties and Coalitions</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>+/-</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>+/-</th>
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<tr>
<td>FIDESZ + MDF</td>
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<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
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<td>Worker’s Party</td>
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<td>New left</td>
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Note: Summary of the 2002 Hungarian National Assembly Elections
Source: www.valasztas.hu

Figure No-V.IV

Parties and Coalitions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Seats secured</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
<td>178</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungarian Justice and life party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centrum Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker’s Party</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New left</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Election to Fourth Parliament (2002)

The 2002 elections are seen as 'critical', concern in the nature of Hungary’s post-communist democracy and public life. Intense elite polarisation was mirrored at the mass level, where there was an unprecedented degree of engagement with the party battle. Polls had shown the MSZP ahead from mid-1999, but FIDESZ-MPP’s ratings rose from spring 2001 and bolstered by the electoral merger with the MDF the party took a lead of some 4–12 points by mid/late March 2002. This came even as the government technically lost its majority, owing to the FKGP’s ongoing disintegration, although it was sustained by ex-FKGP deputies sitting as Independents. The MSZP resolved internal tensions, centered on its choice of prime ministerial candidate, only in June 2001, when it named Peter Medgyessy, a non-party figure and minister in 1987–90 and 1996–1998. The MSZP’s campaign was widely regarded as unfocused, and Medgyessy as a weaker performer than Viktor Orban, the FIDESZ-MPP Prime Minister, in a campaign again centered on the prime ministerial candidates.

Substantive debate was often submerged by conflict over the campaign itself, but it centered on two themes. First, welfare issues, in which the MSZP and FIDESZ-MPP tried to outbid each other with spending promises. The MSZP had a more egalitarian approach, whilst FIDESZ-MPP wanted to privilege a nascent middle class. The second theme was quality of democracy issues, including corruption. The MSZP and SZDSZ charged that the democracy established since 1989 would be endangered if FIDESZ-MPP won. They highlighted especially the possible role of MIEP if FIDESZ-MPP won but lacked a majority. FIDESZ-MPP targeted an absolute majority only with its formal allies, and ruled out bringing MIEP into government, but sometimes equivocated on forming a minority administration with MIEP support.

Believing that it was set for victory, FIDESZ-MPP campaigned mainly on its record until the first round, supported by events promoting its broader agenda. However, the MSZP scored a surprise first-round win, taking 42.10 per cent of the regional list vote to FIDESZ-MPP’s 41.1 per cent and 25 of the 45 seats (including a joint MSZP-SZDSZ candidate) decided in the first round. The result embarrassed several leading pollsters. It
seemed that FIDESZ-MPP was damaged by extreme statements by some of its figures just before the polls, and that prospective MSZP voters had systematically under-reported or mis-reported their sympathies. The first-round result provoked a shift in FIDESZ-MPP's campaigning, which became negative, more populist, and nationalist in tone, and increasingly centered on mass rallies. These aimed to mobilise second-round voters and gave increasing prominence to Orban's personal power as an orator. (Fowler, 2003: 802)

Hungarian voters went to the polls to elect representatives to their fourth post-communist parliament in April 2002. As in each of the three previous elections, the national polls once again resulted in the replacement of the incumbent coalition. The electoral coalition of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and the Alliance of Free Democrats' (SZDSZ) won a bare majority against the electoral alliance of the incumbent League of Young Democrats-Hungarian Civic Party (FIDESZ) and the Hungarian Democratic Forum. Despite following the pattern of alternation in power, the 2002 election was also unique because, for the first time since the inception of multi-party democracy in Hungary, it produced a four instead of a six-party parliament.

The Parliamentary Elections of 2002 marked that, a Socialist–liberal coalition has replaced the Right-wing government. The election indicated the high degree of bipolarisation around two large parties, one Left and one Right. The campaign was the most intense and polarised in the post-communist era, with an unprecedented degree of public engagement in the party battle. The result was close, leaving the new government with only a small majority. The far right was excluded from parliament. All four remaining parties are strongly committed to European Union membership.

There are several reasons which made election to fourth Parliament as diverse and distinct. It was 'most memorable and most interesting' in the history of Hungarian democracy. First, there was a high turnout (71 per cent) in the first round and 73 per cent in second round. Second, the political campaign was 'highly emotional and became a passionate' race to polarise society. Thirdly, it was the first time when both the victorious parties had come together mentally and emotionally, inspite of their contrary origin–
MSZP and AFD (liberal, who are the underground opposition of Communist time). The basic reason of failure of FIDESZ led Orban government was that it tried to deluded people from their practical economic hardship. He tried to consolidate whole society into two blocs—e.g. friend vs. foe, which ignored other social cleavages.

The Socialist-liberal won the election because; they voiced against the populism of Orban and tried to re-establish parliamentary democracy. They had emphasised the issues of poor and women in a very meticulous manner. For the first time ever, there was a female President of Parliament and a female Home Secretary came in to being. The new Prime Minister, Peter Medgyessy, has often voiced for gender equality which make the cornerstone of modern democracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table-V.6</th>
<th>Election to Fifth Parliament: 2006</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>Votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)</td>
<td>2,336,705</td>
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<td>Alliance of free Democrats (SZDSZ)</td>
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<td>Joint candidate MSZP- SZDSZ</td>
<td>154,616</td>
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<td>FIDESZ – KDNP Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)</td>
<td>272,831</td>
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<td>Joint Candidates MDF and other Parties</td>
<td>14,838</td>
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<td>MIEP (Hungarian Justice and life Party) + movement for A Better Hungary (Jobbick Alliance)</td>
<td>119,007</td>
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<td>Hungarian Communist Party</td>
<td>21,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Party</td>
<td>17,431</td>
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<td>Associations For Somogy</td>
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*Note: Summary of the 2006 Hungarian National Assembly Election*  
*Source: www.valasztas.hu*
5.5 Election to Fifth Parliament (2006)

Hungarian Republic advanced for its fifth parliamentary election on 9–23 April, 2006. Several parties contested the election but only four parties legally passed the required 5 per cent threshold to enter the Parliament. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and the Association of Free Democrats on the Left and Alliance of Young Democrats- Citizens’ Party (FIDESZ- KNDP) and the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) crossed the required threshold to build government. The coalition of socialist-liberal almost won 202 parliamentary seats which show a clear majority in a total 386 house. This is the first time The Association of Somogy won a seat in parliament. It is virtually a local party of Somagy province which, remain part of parliament as a non-partisan member. In the year 2006 Parliamentary election the Hungarian ruling Socialist have won a second term in office with 98 per cent of vote counted. The governing coalition has taken 210 of the 386 parliamentary seats. Viktor Orban, leader of the main opposition party, FIDESZ. It is the first time a government has been re-elected since democracy was restored in Hungary in 1990.
The fundamental message of the 2006 election was that structure of Hungarian party system is stable and discipline like other western European countries. The existing coalition in Hungary, is heading towards the bipolar system, of England or America. During 2006 election two of the personalities (Orban and Gyurcsany) dominated the campaign, and their distinctive manner of campaign shows the Hungarian Political Parties are well consolidated. To some scholars this ‘consolidation or type of polarization has downsized or weaken its ability to mirror social heterogeneity and intensive, polarized competition has undermined long term governmental rationality’. Gyurcsany’s strong personality, sense of purpose and excellent communications skills were among the reasons that helped the Socialist-led coalition retain office. On a personal level, too, Gyurcsany established a clear lead over Viktor Orban, the FIDESZ leader, who before Gyurcsany’s eruption on to the political stage was Hungary’s most charismatic politician.

V.6 The Oppositions

Since the political transformation of 1989–1990 the political parties have been divided in Hungary according to ideological cleavages, best described as separating the left from the right, the conservative from the liberal, tradition from progression, the secular from the Christian, the rural from the urban, and the national from the European. The opposition to Janos Kis forms a significant importance to democracy. They provide us with rare example of political dignity, wisdom and resourcefulness, which has literal to create a civic society. He rightly emphasised that the rebuilding of civil society in Hungary in line to make society of active citizen can be traced from the legacies of 1956 Hungarian Revolution (Kis, 1989: 75). So, after the political transformation oppositions were always being elected in to the next successive elections. The Parliament election of 2006 is of different mark where Hungarian ruling Socialist has won a second term of elections.

The 1990 Hungarian general election was the first free election to be held in the country since 1945. The conservative, nationalist Hungarian Democratic Forum or MDF
beat the liberal and more internationalists Alliance of Free Democrats, which had spearheaded opposition to Communist rule in preceding years, to become the largest party in parliament. In this Parliament the Socialist stayed as the opposition to the Jozsef Antall’s Right wing/conservative coalition. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) is the most visible and the only socialist-Left opposition present in Parliament of 1990. The MSZP is considered as the best organised left force, led by an experienced and politically sophisticated leadership. This is the reason they return back to parliament as party in power after 1994 election (Racz, 1993: 647).

The election of 1998 was a significant defeat for the governing Socialist Party (Left) and their coalition allies. The successful breakthrough into Parliament by the Extreme Right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party was a major shock to the socialist opposition. After the election, FIDESZ formed a coalition government of the Independent Smallholder Party and Hungarian Democratic Forum, headed by the Victor Orban. In the Parliamentary Elections of 2002 indicates that, a Socialist-liberal coalition has replaced the Right-wing government in the parliamentary elections. The elections marked the high degree of bi-polarisation around two large parties, one left and one right. The campaign was the most intense and polarised in the post-communist era, with an unprecedented degree of public engagement in the party battle. The result was close, leaving the new government with only a small majority. The far Right was excluded from parliament. All four remaining parties are strongly committed to European Union membership.

In the year 2006 Parliamentary election the Hungarian ruling Socialist have won a second term in office with 98 per cent of vote counted. The governing coalition has taken 210 of the 386 parliamentary seats. Viktor Orban, leader of the main opposition party, FIDESZ. It is the first time a government has been re-elected since democracy was restored in Hungary in 1990. So, to conclude it’s clear that Hungarian parties are manifesting serious standard of polarised political value with in citizen. In the same time they are also nurturing ideological inhibitions within the electorates through propaganda, use of mass media. During the election of 2002 parties tried to manipulate mass media and indulge in ‘populism’ of different kind. They appealed people in the name of nation
and their identity. Despite being in economic crisis the parties have forgotten the practical necessity of their electorate. So, opposition in Hungary must nurture a habit of constructive criticism and create an environment of co-operation. They should refrain from allegation and counter allegations or any form of 'populism'.

To summarise the discussion on the existing trends of Hungarian political process, Hungarian politics like other post-communist democracies revolves round distinct political cleavages and polarisation. The eminent political analyst Zsolt Enyedi (2005) has argued that cleavages are often products of political agency, and can be culturally formed. The isolation between the groups comes into existence because the socio-structural categories (denominations, classes etc.), collective identities, political attitudes and political leadership, strengthening each other, draw a wall between the groups. Hungarian political parties are not following cleavage lines, rather they creating their own.

The dominant political frontier creates a point of identification and confrontation in the political system, where consensus is only found within the political camps themselves. Polarization is reproduced in all political and social contexts with an intensity that distinguishes it from mere two-party politics. In Hungarian case it's vary true in that sense during 1990,1994 and 1998 all the political parties revolve round reform communism( Left) and liberal view point (Right) of politics. The politics of post 2000 creates a different discourse in Hungry by polarization on liberal (Right) and conservative Right (neo-Rights) basis.

In polarisation Left and Right have strongly announced significations: ‘Left’ refers to the Socialist Party (MSZP), which fosters liberal economic policies (as social democrats in most European countries), and to the value (e.g. human rights) and economically liberal Free Democrats (SZDSZ). ‘Right’ refers to the moderate and radical nationalist and ‘conservative’ parties, conservative in terms of traditional values of religion, morality and ethno-nationalism (the Hungarian Democratic Forum, MDF; FIDESZ; and the radical nationalist MÉP and Jobbik).
During the 2006 electoral campaigns the main centre-Right party, FIDESZ, had most nationalist economic policies, whereas MDF and the liberals supported neoliberals. Instead of conventional notions, the Left and Rights are ‘based primarily on attitudes towards Hungarian nation’ rather in a pre-communist fashion. The Hungarian ‘right’ argued to be defending the nation and national values, the extreme Right being anti-Western and isolationist, and the ‘left’ is seen as socialist, internationalist, cosmopolitan, anti-nation, at best civic in its outlook regarding the nation. The discursive divide provided at least an illusion of ideological substance and a claim to differentiation, as each accused the other side of being too national or too cosmopolitan.

The party positions in Hungary reflect a triangulation that allows for multiple coalitions. At the libertarian and more economically populist pole, we find the post-communist MSZP. In the libertarian and economically market liberal camp, there are the Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and the Young Democrats (FIDESZ). The Christian national camp is obviously in the authoritarian, religions, anti-communist, and nationalist sector of the dominant competitive space, but it takes intermediate positions on the economic divide, with the largest party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) coming closest to a pro-market position, whereas the Christian (KDNP), nationalist (MIEP) and peasant parties (FKGP) endorse more populist positions (Markowski, 1997: 242). If we will examine the alliance making patterns in previous parliamentary elections then Hungarian party system is not stable. The coalition of parties are given stable governments but time to time created unexpected equations (FIDESZ+FKGP+MIEP) alliance in 1998.

The communist successor parties like Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) identified by has shown its success in the political discourse after 1994 election. Unlike many of the post-communist party formations, it had already established itself as a political party by the time of the first election. As Attila Agh described, the Hungarian Socialist Party was unique in the communist world in that it emerged ‘before the collapse of State Socialism and not after it, unlike all the other renamed and afterwards reformed’ itself (1995:492). This was what referred by Herbert Kitschelt (1995) ‘as the national
consensus communist system which existed in Hungary (special in case of Hungary). The type of system could be characterised by some degree of elite-consensus and there was a degree of bureaucratic professionalism in its organisational structure.

In essence, the communist elites allowed for a measure of contestation and interest articulation in exchange for compliance with the basic features of the existing system. Such systems tend to produce communist successor parties which are the most organisationally capable of adapting to electoral circumstances (Ishiyama, 1997). For Agh (1995), the national consensus system in Hungary prior to the collapse of state socialism gave rise to the emergence of a large, europeanised reform intelligentsia, as well as a mass base within the old Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (HSWP). As a result, the successor MSZP found itself well-stocked with individual leaders, both at the national level and in the regions, who were endowed with organisational skills and political expertise (Ishiyama & Shafqat, 2000: 444; Oltay, 1994).

After the defeat of MSZP in 1998 elections it’s clear that the party suffered only a relative defeat. Because it still received the largest popular support both on the party list and in the single member individual districts, but became second in the number of seats due to the idiosyncrasies of the Hungarian electoral system. Yet, this relative defeat indicated some serious problems in the social-democratization of the MSZP that were closely connected with the ‘Third Way’ issue (Agh, 2000a). Seemingly, a turning point was reached right after the 1998 elections with a leadership change and new party statute. By November 2000 the new status inconsistency and/or the cognitive dissonance of the Hungarian voters represent a temporary paradox in Hungarian politics.

It comes from two sources. First, the ‘national’ discourse of FIDESZ has been rather successful in attracting the less educated rural strata. Second, the MSZP was to a great extent a pragmatic technocratic party that performed a role in socio-economic transformations usually played by the parties on the Right and it has only recently made a major correction towards ‘social systemic change’. If we take the ‘Third Way’ as a middle way between the ‘Old Left’ and the ‘New Right’, then the MSZP has proven with
its strong support for privatization and its radical economic crisis management in 1995
(Horn's government/the austerity measures), which has also gone beyond the New Right.
The MSZP has to demonstrate that it is able to domesticate the European social model as
well. Again, if we take the 'Third Way' as between the state and the market, then the
MSZP has been far enough as a market enthusiast, and now it must elaborate its strategy
as a service state in the spirit of the 'Third Way'. Principally, it must do so in the field of
education- the Hungarian educational system has been traditionally very strong but the
social systemic change has dealt a fatal blow to it (Agh, 2002: 272).

The defeat of MSZP in 1998, created a new trend of coalition-making. The
government of the Right-wing (FIDEZ + MPP) coalition began indulging in politics of
populism by injecting cultural/conservative value to it. Populism is a kind of anti-
establishment movement coming from opposition, which employs antagonistic tactics, an
authoritarian persona, and addresses the people with different manner. In political science
lexicon concept populism is always debated issue. It is some time described as
phenomena of post-socialist countries in their way towards capitalism or pathology to
stable democracy. The party head Victor Orban now trying to appease voters in the name
of nation, national welfare or in the name of religion. However, the politics of Hungary is
now heading towards a very conservative course.

The tendency towards populism in Hungary is deep rooted in their evolution and
unification as Hungarian nation-building. But now it has taken a different course by
including rightist identity politics, welfarism and national glorifications of personality.
For example, the political language that has been shaped under the office of the moderate
Right-wing FIDESZ—the Hungarian Civic Party—in coalition with the Christian
Democrats (1998–2002) created a separation between institutional values and programs
proposed. In this manner both party in power and opposition appeal to 'people' and their
welfare. The government headed by FIDESZ has started indulging in 'identity' politics to
in the name of historical unification of Hungarian state. The involvement of mass media
became new phenomena in post communist Hungary. For example FIDESZ sponsored,
the Sacra Corona (2001, Gabor Kotay), a historical film by Cultural ministry. There was
also another movie on the Hungarian Great hero named Istavan Szechenyi and his life history named The Bridgeman (a hidermber in Hungarian)

The 2006 electoral campaign was caught up in endless back-and-forth accusations and a sharp antagonism was sustained in which parties enacted symbolic martyrdom by publicly exposing attacks committed against their members. Allegation and counter-allegation remarks became a part of party politics. To sum up, political moves of the Left have been constructed to counter those of the Right, and vice versa. Both parties started building upon potential reference chains, empty or ambiguous meaning, which shows qualities of a populist discourse present in Hungarian political sphere. (Rajacic, 2007: 639–660).

However the Hungarian political process remains caught in a highly polarised alliance making tendency. Parties are ideologically revolving round three camps (Left/Right or liberal/conservative or center/conservative). The centre-right parties formed their coalition government in 1990 and 1998 where as centre-left remain in power in 1994, 2002 and 2006 parliamentary elections. However they make stable coalitions despite timeless accusation to each other. Subsequently, Hungarian party system is now heading towards an extreme polarisation. It is developing a ‘quasi-two-party system with two big (MSZP, FIDESZ) and two small (SZDSZ, MDF)’ The system now is characterised by the combination of decreasing fragmentation, high polarisation, bi-polar party system and lack of new entry. All these features are giving indications that; the culture of Hungarian polity is adopting various democratic and liberal features of stable democracy like Western Europe, England and America.