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CHANGING PATTERNS IN ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR: ELECTORAL VOLATILITY IN HUNGARY AND SLOVAKIA

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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to update knowledge about voting patterns and electoral behaviour in Hungary and Slovakia based on data from the last elections in 2018 and 2020. Political studies of electoral behaviour across Central and Eastern Europe with new democracies established shortly after fall of authoritarian regimes have found several findings, unique for this area. One of them is a specific type of electoral volatility, typical for political systems which follow longer periods of authoritarian regime. This electoral volatility correlates with high party system instability with new parties emerging every electoral term and old political parties vanishing from political competition. While political scientists studied relationship between electoral volatility and increasing number of political parties, party switching presents considerable threat to stability of party system in CEE. Therefore, this paper studies socioeconomic, demographic, and value factors that determine a specific type of electoral behaviour. This study shows that certain voters' characteristics increase the likelihood of voters' behaviour and confirms their relevance in eradicating electoral volatility. The results of this article prove that while voters' volatility is "natural" for Hungary and Slovakia, age, and education correlate with specific types of behaviour. Additionally, the main reason for abstaining from voting is minimal trust towards democratic principles.

***Keywords**: Electoral volatility, Hungary, Slovakia, Party switching, Party system instability, Electoral behaviour.*

INTRODUCTION

After 30 years of democratic transition and consolidation, post-authoritarian democracies of countries in Central and Eastern Europe are far from stable democracies to which they were expected to develop. Political institutions do not perform well in the trust (political trust tends to be a volatile and may be reaction to short-term institutional performance: Kołczyńska, 2020), elections are ranging in mid-to-low turnout (especially to European Parliament, but to state institutions as well) and political

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parties are losing their voters more often than attracting and stabilising them. Some authors (Haughton, Deegan-Krause, 2015) claim that lower levels of partisanship towards parties have created "hurricane season". However, analysis of voting support of political parties actively participating in democratic systems proves that some political parties yield higher stability than others (Tavits, 2005; Gherghina, 2009). As general patterns of electoral behaviour (high volatility of voters and short life expectancy of political parties, resulting in system instability) can be found over many political systems of countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Haughton, Deegan-Krause, 2015; Powell, Tucker, 2014; Tavits, 2008), the subject of this article is analysis of only two representatives, Hungary and Slovakia. These two countries were selected based on time and data requirements, as the electoral study results from these two countries are the most recent and structure of the data allows a more detailed approach to electoral volatility. The aim is to test what characteristics of individual voters may contribute to voting instability. In this sense, article analyses relationship of voters towards electoral volatility, rather than of political parties. Furthermore, the characteristics of the respective political parties, the detailed evolution of party system, and their contribution to electoral volatility are not the main focus of this article; therefore, although they are not omitted, they are not elaborated in detail.

The purpose of this article is to provide additional information about factors influencing specific types of electoral volatility (new voter, former voter, stable voter, stable non-voter, and volatile voter), determining the direction and strength of these relationships, and formulating general conclusions that can be used as main issue points that need to be addressed if party systems are to be stabilised. The general research question analysed in this article is:

- *RQ: Are there factors that increase any likelihood of voters being volatile?*

Forming a more specific hypothesis:

- *H: There are specific social, demographic, economic, and value variables that determine a specific type of electoral volatility.*

The answer to these questions is supported by analysis based on individual data coming from Comparative Study of Electoral Systems interviews (CSES, Module 5). In this regard, individual data coming from this project are much more accurate than exit polls, as CSES data come from post-electoral study. For the article to be most recent and the results to be

most relevant, electoral studies from Hungary and Slovakia were selected, as the data from these countries are the most recent.

Political scientists and sociologists, in many ways, have revised theories of social cleavages and their impact on electoral behaviour. However, erosion of traditional relationship between voters and their party started to erode in Western democracies in the 70s of 20th century (Crewe, 1977; Crewe, Denver, 1985; Dalton, Wattenberg, 2000; Franklin, Mackie, Valen, 1992; Maguire, 1983; Pedersen, 1979; Dalton, 1984; Mair, 1997). The phenomenon of erosion of party-voter linkage and erosion of traditional support of political parties remain two of the main reasons of increasing system instability in political systems Central and Eastern Europe (Hawes, 2021; Mattinson, 2020; Gherghina, 2009; Haughton, Deegan-Krause 2015; Powell, Tucker 2014; Tavits, 2008). Later, this process became known as dealignment, and turned out to have the biggest share in erosion of party support among voters. In studies around the world, only a small number of studies was devoted to countries of Central and Eastern Europe – western democracies remain to be the main focus of scientists. The studies devoted to relationship between voters and party systems in CEE have found some distinguishing features of party systems in this area. First, there is a very low identification rate with political parties (Tavits, 2008). Second, election volatility in direction to new political parties (contrary to Western Europe, where voters go back to established political parties: Powell, Tucker, 2014). Third, there is evidence that old and established parties lose their support to new "uncorrupted" (both by political experience and economic ties) new parties and these new parties, again, quickly lose their relatively rapid gains in electoral support in favour to even newer political parties (Haughton, Deegan-Krause, 2015). This turbulent change of party system is perceived as laboratory for understanding trends in instability of party systems emerging in Western Europe and globally (Haughton, Deegan-Krause, 2015, p. 61).

Although not being the main purpose of this article, few remarks on partisanship should be noted. Recent study (Fleming, 2021) shows that political systems with higher level of electoral volatility also score high in personalized electoral voting, in comparison to ideological and party-oriented voting. This is closely connected to weak or extremely weak voters' loyalties towards political parties—resulting, among others, in change of politicians' behaviour, which adjust their political campaigning for more personal-vote gain. Not only does this change further stimulate personalised campaign and personalized electoral behaviour, but this shift also finally

results in legislative behaviour when politicians value their popularity and personal reputation (which are gained by altering parliamentary activity to favour voters' demand) above the party interests and ideological perspectives.

The article is divided into separate chapters structured in logical order: (I) previous research and current knowledge about electoral volatility in CEE countries with focus to Slovakia and Hungary, as these two cases are analysed further; (II) methodological approach, data and statistical methods used for testing hypothesis and research question; (III) results of analysis, with conclusion and discussion in the last chapter of the article.

1 ELECTORAL VOLATILITY IN NEW DEMOCRACIES OF HUNGARY AND SLOVAKIA (IN BACKGROUND OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE)

Current knowledge of electoral behaviour (and electoral volatility) comes from two basic social and political concepts of the twentieth century. Both phenomena appeared in western democracies and with some delay also in political systems of the post-Eastern Bloc from 1947 to 1991, however, in different depth and with different consequences in the latter case. First phenomenon, theory of social cleavages devoted to basic mechanism of origin of political parties in Western democracies, and dealignment as second phenomenon helps to explain erosion of political support launched in 1970s. Both of these concepts are essential for partisanship (inclination of voter towards a political party) with sharp dependency to electoral behaviour.

Partisanship (from aspect of political parties) is closely connected to Lipset and Rokkan´s theory of social cleavages. This theory concludes that the shape of current political parties' system results from historically formed cleavages in society. Political parties then emerged as representatives of segments of society, defending their interests (Lipset, Rokkan, 1967). In CEE democratic systems, different political cleavages and levels of electoral volatility have extensively developed (for more details about political cleavages and volatility in general see: Sartori, 1976; Duverger, 1972; Kriesi et al., 2008; Van Hooren, 2017; Inglehart, 1977; Dalton, 1984; Dalton, Wattenberg, 2000; Schmitt, 2014). Furthermore, voters' volatility appears a result of not only low partisanship, but a variety of other factors (increasing support to political parties: Tavits, 2005; different evolution of party and democratic system: Powell, Tucker, 2014). This idea is supported by higher personal vote-seeking strategies (in Hungary: Papp, Burtejin, 2016).

Party systems in CEE countries, based on authoritarian past, fulfil a role different than in Western democracies. As Enyedi sums up, the role of western political parties was not only as a democratic institution, but it also helped developing mass societies and build modern states (Enyedi, 2003). After the breakdown of authoritarian regimes and during the consequent democratic transitions in CEE countries, citizens were already *"incorporated, mobilised, activated, and politicised*" (Mair, 1997, p. 180), and the unified political market was given at the arrival of electoral competition. In this environment, political parties have played only a marginal role (Tóka, 1997). In addition, the regional diversity and instability of politics and society made development of political structures difficult and the general evaluation of the development even more complicated (Enyedi, Deegan-Krause 2010). In political systems of Hungary and Slovakia (and area of CEE in general), political cleavages do not seem to be a dividing force *per se*, but instead it serves more like short-term subjects for electoral support (Wang, 2020).

The development of the Hungarian party system from 2010s onwards yields signs of high electoral volatility, as the second most successful political party in 2022 general elections did not even exist 4 years before the elections were held. The party system, however, can be characterized as one-party dominant system, with Fidesz in power since 2010. Electoral behaviour in Hungary is shaped by various socio-demographic, economic and value characteristics, however, the relationship between these variables and electoral volatility is not always linear (Bertus, Kovács, 2022). Voters in smaller settlements or in cities yield higher volatility than middle-sized towns (although villages tend to follow the opinion of unstable local politicians, larger cities are more open to new political movements, parties, and ideas). The same dichotomy applies to education, when higher volatility appears with both high and low level of education. This dichotomy is explained by cities (higher percentage of higher-educated people) and small settlements (higher percentage of low-educated people). Relating to the previous point, small- settlements voters in higher age are more unstable in their electoral choice. Additionally, volatility is prevalent in settlements with higher unemployment rate and higher proportion of Roma inhabitants (Bertus, Kovács, 2022). The change in voter´s choice between two elections in 2014 and 2018 correlates with geographical, social, demographic, and economic variables. These results, however, come from analysis on settlement level—and does not come from individual data analysis. Economic growth has proven to be a determinant of illiberal party support (Fidesz: Scoggins 2020). Kitschelt et al. (1999) describe two main political blocs in Hungary which

shape electoral behaviour as follows: Christian, nationalistic, and cultural-populist against secular, liberal, and cosmopolitan (Kitschelt et al., 1999, p. 235). Nationality and national questions comprise also a stable predictor of electoral behaviour, as ethnic groups are not adequately represented neither in parliament nor in government, which results in instability of ethnic votes (Bertus, Kovács, 2022).

The party development in Slovakia after 2020 general election confirms the system of moderate volatility (Smolecová, Šárovec, 2021), with governing populist party OĽaNO and ĽSNS in opposition, which represents far-right extremist party (Kluknavská, 2015). The 2020 parliamentary election only confirmed long-lasting periods of volatility (out of 8 political parties that entered parliament in 2016, 3 are not represented in the current parliament) and turbulent political change in recent years due to corruption scandals. The 2016 election scored second highest in volatility (up to 2016 general election), and the Slovak party system has struggled with long-term volatility (Gyarfášová, Bahna, Slosiarik, 2017). Similarly to national minority behaviour in Hungary, electoral behaviour in Slovakia is also shaped by ethnic minorities (mainly Hungarian and Roma minorities). Not only ethnic minorities vote differently (often choosing party striving for equal rights), but majoritarian population might incline to "fast and strict solutions" offered by extremist parties (Gurňák, Mikuš, 2012). The Hungarian minority in Slovakia produces stable electoral behaviour different from the majoritarian population. However, in the current electoral term (from 2020 onwards), none "Hungarian" political party is represented in Parliament. Electoral behaviour is also different from the gender aspect: in the past HZDS party was elected mainly by men, and SMER-SD by women. Subsequently, SDKÚ and SaS were preffered by men, KDH by women. Young voters were stronghold of SaS, the elderly voters preferred KDH (Sociologický ústav Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2009). Finally, in the past undemocratic beliefs and tendencies prevailed among supporters of SMER-SD and SNS (Kabinet výskumu sociálnej a biologickej komunikácie SAV, 2008).

Electoral volatility, as studied by Haughton and Deegan-Krause (2015), suggests the idea that analysing electoral instability in the CEE political systems is vital, as party systems in new democracies may be treated like a laboratory for understanding electoral volatility (Haughton, Deegan-Krause 2015, p. 61). Idea by Tavits (2008) opens a discussion on whether voters' volatility reacts to or creates higher number of political parties.

For studying the electoral volatility the Pedersen index is most generally used (Pedersen, 1979). Although this calculation provides basic information

about the stability of political system, more developed method of electoral volatility by Powell and Tucker (2014) distinguishes between the volatility among old parties (Volatility B) and between old and new political parties (Volatility A). This article analyses data coming from individual interviews with respondents to study their electoral behaviour in detail, further developed in following methodological part.

2 METHODOLOGY

All available data on electoral behaviour used in this article come from a free database "Comparative Study of Electoral Systems" (referred to as CSES) containing individual data of voters in numerous countries around the world. In-depth individual interview with a representative sample of respondents from respective state after general election allows more detailed analysis than exit poll opinion surveys. Respondents in the CSES interview are asked multiple questions about their political activity, electoral choices, attitudes, and values, in addition to social, demographic, economic, and value characteristics. Election studies were conducted in separate modules (one module every 5 years, starting from 1996) which include all elections in given time period for each respective country. From CSES Module 5, data for Hungary (election year 2018) and Slovakia (election year 2020) were used for subsequent analysis of electoral volatility in this article.

The following variables of the data set help to distinguish multiple types of electoral behaviour, as in Question 1 and 2 of Module 5, respondent may give answer of *Yes* or *No*, which refers whether the voter abstained from the election or voted (answers *Did not respond*, *Did not remember*, *Did not know* or *missing* were discarded as missing values). For questions 3 and 4, a party list was provided, so structure of the data allows distinguishing stable voters of one party and volatile voters (again, answers *Did not respond*, *Did not remember*, *Did not know* or *missing* were discarded as missing values). The questions were structured as follows:

1. Current lower house election - did the respondent cast a ballot?
2. Previous lower house election – did respondent cast a ballot?
3. Current lower house election – vote choice from party list;
4. Previous lower house election – vote choice from party list;

Finally, all the module was categorized into 5 groups, based on voters´ electoral behaviour:

Table 1: *Types of Electoral Behaviour comparing Two Subsequent Elections (year, year); author categories*

Electoral behaviour in t-1	Electoral behaviour in t	Category of electoral behaviour
Political party A	Political party A	loyal voter
Abstained from vote	Abstained from vote	stable non-voter
Abstained from vote	Voted (any political party)	new voter
Voted (any political party)	Abstained from vote	former voter
Political party A	Political party B	volatile voter

Source: Author.
Note: t-1 = previous election in time of election study; t = current election in time of election study

Further explained, firstly, loyal voter (in Table 1 as electoral behaviour 1) represents a respondent, who voted for specific party in both time frames, therefore is non-volatile voter providing stable support for respective political party. Second, a stable non-voter (electoral behaviour 2) categorised the respondent that abstained from the electoral process in both electoral terms. Thirdly, analysis of a "new voter" (electoral behaviour 3) category is beneficial for identifying the factors which led the voter to vote again, therefore what distinguishes electoral behaviour2 respondent from electoral behaviour 3 respondent. Fourthly, former voter (electoral behaviour 4) as category represents the respondent, who did vote in t-1 time frame, but abstained from voting in current elections (year). The factors, which led the respondent to quit voting are a little harder to analyse, as socio-democratic variables ask about at that time current characteristics, while previous electoral choice happened (if no early elections occur) 4 years ago. Lastly, but most interestingly, volatile voter (electoral behaviour 5) represents a voter who switched from one party to another between two elections. This process, as one may expect, may correlate with like/dislike of political party - however, this analysis is rather much more demanding. Nevertheless, basic socio-demographic and economic variables were used to analyse this type due to two main reasons: first, basic socio-demographic and economic variables are almost always used in regression models concerning electoral behaviour (Tavits 2008) at least as control variables, even if no effect is expected. Second, in this type of analysis, the choice of

variables is carefully evaluated by previous descriptive statistics. In this case, variables were chosen, as they yield significant or medium-to-high correlation coefficient in correlation analysis. In addition, independent variable of self-right placement was not added to the CSES models, as models of volatility cover right-wing, left-wing, and middle voters into one category, and results would have been distorted.

Although different types of electoral behaviour represent dependent variables in the following models, independent variables which potential impact on electoral behaviour were identified as:

1. Socio-demographic variables: age of respondent, gender, education, marital status, current employment status, and main occupation;
2. Economic variables: socio-economic status, employment type (public or private), household income and rural or urban residence;
3. Value variables: attendance at religious services (masses and other meetings), ethnicity and answer to questions 'Who in power can make a difference' and "Who people vote for to make a difference' as consent with democratic ideas.

The statistical method used in this article was negative binominal regression (which is used in cases where observations are biased toward zero, as in this case), as most suitable for the data distribution. Dependent variables, in this case, were different models of electoral volatility, and social, demographic, economical and value variables as independent variables. For both countries studied here, 5 models were calculated for each type of volatility. The same analytical structure with the same independent variables was applied for both countries, even though statistics was not able to calculate certain variables for missing data. This is mainly for comparative purposes since one would not be able to compare models from different countries if they do not come from the same models. The resulting correlation coefficients were calculated in the non-logarithmic way for better interpretation of the results. All statistical models are calculated by the author on CSES data in R software.

3 RESULTS

The following results present the output of the negative binomial regression of independent variables (sociodemographic, economic, and value variables) against dependent variable (electoral behaviour): correlation coefficients, standard error, and statistical significance in 5

different models (in columns, one for every type of electoral behaviour as stated in Table 1). In the following regression tables, the R2 indicators part is to be found. This indicator identifies how much of a variance in dependent variable can be explained by dependent variable.

In case of Hungary, gender and education variables yield statistical and moderate results in Electoral behaviour 2 and 3 (more educated men tend to be new voters or abstain from voting). Union membership and improved socio-economic status appears a good predictor of new voters, and stable non-voters usually have less people living with them in their household. According to expectations (Dalton, Wattenberg 2000), stable non-voters do not consent with democratic principles.

Table 1: *Negative Binomial Regression Model for Hungary (Dependent Variable – Volatility)*

Variable name	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	2.23(0.28)**	85.27(0.93)***	0.01(1.91)*	0.09(1.23)*	0.02(0.66)***
Age	1(0)	0.99(0.01)*	0.99(0.01)	0.98(0.01).	1(0)
Gender	0.96(0.05)	0.73(0.16)*	1.73(0.37)	1.02(0.21)	1.1(0.11)
Education	0.94(0.02)**	0.72(0.08)***	1.28(0.13).	1(0.09)	1.11(0.04)*
Marital status	0.96(0.02)*	1.02(0.07)	1.02(0.16)	1(0.1)	1.11(0.05)*
Union membership	0.87(0.16)	0.45(0.88)	2.5(0.77)	0.96(0.7)	1.18(0.29)
Current employment status	0.98(0.01).	0.99(0.03)	1.1(0.05).	1.05(0.04)	1.04(0.02).
Socioeconomic status	0.91(0.04)*	0.7(0.14)*	1.52(0.25).	0.99(0.17)	1.2(0.08)*
Employment type public or private	1.03(0.05)	0.97(0.17)	0.84(0.34)	1.2(0.23)	0.92(0.12)
Household income	0.93(0.02)**	1.07(0.07)	0.78(0.16)	0.98(0.1)	1.18(0.05)**
Number of people in household	1.01(0.02)	0.74(0.09)***	1.16(0.14)	1.06(0.09)	0.99(0.06)
Religious service attendance	1(0.01)	0.98(0.04)	0.83(0.1).	0.99(0.06)	0.99(0.03)
Ethnicity	0.98(0.05)	1.07(0.15)	1.6(0.21)*	1.33(0.17).	1.04(0.12)
Rural or urban residence	0.98(0.02)	0.84(0.08)*	0.83(0.18)	1.06(0.1)	1.05(0.05)
Who is in power makes difference	0.98(0.02)	0.79(0.06)***	0.93(0.14)	1.02(0.09)	1.05(0.05)
Who people vote for makes a difference	0.96(0.02).	0.68(0.06)***	1.04(0.15)	1(0.1)	1.11(0.06).
Signif. codes:					
0,001	***				

0,01	**				
0,05	*				
0,1	.				
Pseudo R indicators (R2 indicators):					
G2	11.59	128.24	24.58	10.26	26.20
McFadden	0.01	0.16	0.08	0.02	0.02
r2ML	0.01	0.14	0.03	0.01	0.03
r2CU	0.02	0.23	0.09	0.02	0.04
Number of observations:	1208	1208	1208	1208	1208

Source: author, based on data from Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, Module 5 (Hungary, filtered elections in 2018 filtered)

Gender and education are proved relevant predictors of electoral behaviour in Slovakia as well: men are mostly stable voters and stable non-voters, women are new voters and volatile voters, low-educated population tends to become new voters, who are also unlikely to be in a union, and have higher socio-economic status. Surprisingly, people from minority ethnics tend to be stable non-voters or switch parties between elections (valid not only for Hungarian minority, but also for Roma and other minorities/ethnic groups as well). Confirming results from Hungary, stable non-voters do not fare high in democratic beliefs.

Table 2: *Negative Binomial Regression Model for Slovakia (Dependent Variable – Volatility)*

Variable name	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	1.31(0.47)	4.81(0.87).	0.05(1.19)*	1.58(1.39)	0.21(0. S44)***
Age	1(0)	0.98(0.01)*	1.01(0.01)	0.97(0.01)*	1(0)
Gender	0.88(0.1)	0.89(0.2)	2.04(0.31)*	0.94(0.31)	1.15(0.11)
Education	0.97(0.02)	0.93(0.05)	0.76(0.09)**	1.01(0.07)	1.04(0.02)
Marital status	1.01(0.05)	1.04(0.09)	1.3(0.12)*	0.93(0.13)	0.97(0.05)
Union membership	0.62(0.24)*	0.13(1.01)*	0.3(1.02)	1.04(0.61)	1.49(0.18)*
Current employment status	0.98(0.02)	1.02(0.03)	0.98(0.05)	1.01(0.05)	1.02(0.02)
Socioeconomic status	0.97(0.05)	0.97(0.11)	1.31(0.13)*	0.74(0.2)	1.04(0.06)
Employment type public or private	-	-	-	-	-

Household income	-	-	-	-	-
Number of people in household	0.91(0.04)*	0.76(0.1)**	1.13(0.05)*	1.09(0.1)	1.08(0.03)*
Religious service attendance	1.01(0.03)	0.95(0.05)	0.94(0.08)	0.77(0.09)**	0.98(0.03)
Ethnicity	0.82(0.15)	1.36(0.2)	0.58(0.52)	0.55(0.61)	1.17(0.11)
Rural or urban residence	0.98(0.05)	1.1(0.09)	0.95(0.14)	0.84(0.15)	1.02(0.05)
Who is in power makes difference	0.97(0.05)	0.84(0.09).	1.04(0.14)	0.98(0.16)	1.03(0.06)
Who people vote for makes a difference	0.99(0.05)	0.66(0.09)***	0.84(0.12)	1.02(0.14)	1.02(0.05)
Signif. codes:					
0,001	***				
0,01	**				
0,05	*				
0,1	.				
Pseudo R indicators(R2 indicators):					
G2	24,00	108,73	35,69	25,76	23,70
McFadden	0,02	0,16	0,08	0,07	0,02
r2ML	0,03	0,12	0,04	0,03	0,03
r2CU	0,03	0,22	0,10	0,08	0,03
Number of observations:	1003	1003	1003	1003	1003

Source: author, based on data from Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, Module 5 (Slovakia, parliamentary election in 2020 filtered)

While many models yield interesting results, there are a few most significant to be pointed out. First, no generalising conclusions about variables in models applicable for all types of volatility are identifiable. According to the models, there is no variable significant across all the models; nor a variable that would not be significant in any of the models could be found. This implies that while the characteristics may be shared among voters in certain models of electoral behaviour, such characteristic is not found across all models of electoral behaviour in general. By results, there is no variable that is statistically significant and correlates with electoral behaviour in all cases. Second, results of comparison of voting behaviour in two electoral systems on national models do not bring satisfactory results or generalising models either (apart from minor confirmations), as results compared between the two countries often brings contradictory results;

there is no common pattern of electoral behaviour shared in both systems. Thirdly, the amount of variation explained by independent variables remains very low (except for the second model, stable non-voter). R2 indicators in output tables indicate how much of the actual change in electoral behaviour can be described by the model. These indicators suggest that there is a large part of variance (electoral volatility) that needs to be explained by other variables. This fact means that study of political parties, their politics, and performance (the reverse direction than previous research) might be better predictor of system instability. Fourth, few generalisations can be made from the models. In most models, both in Hungary and Slovakia, analysis of gender, education, and number of people in households yields statistical significance and satisfactory correlation coefficients. Lastly, belief into democratic principles, such as "who in power makes a difference" and "who people vote for making a difference" negatively correlate with the second type of volatility (stable non-voter). All of these findings allow formulation of a careful recommendation for both voters and political actors to improve stability of party systems. While there are variables that correlate with types of electoral behaviour, the results confirming the Hypothesis are not valid enough for developing some general patterns of voting.

CONCLUSION

As the analysis above pointed out, different types of volatility prove, indeed, different variables, which explain their occurrence among voters. However, these are not shared outside their category, so they are not valid enough to formulate general patterns of electoral behaviour among voters in Hungary and Slovakia. The main conclusion of this article is that voters' socio-demographic, economic and value characteristics correlate with different types of electoral behaviour. Confirming the Hypothesis, in close time period (2014-2018 for Hungary and 2016-2020 for Slovakia), different models of volatility are explained by different independent variables. Education, socioeconomic status, and possibly number of people in household are proved the most relevant in most models. Additionally, in the second model of electoral behaviour (stable non-voter), identified that stable non-voters share "low" to "no trust" towards democratic principles, as expected.

This article contributes to the general state of knowledge of electoral volatility in CEE. As many authors label these systems *unstable, volatile,* and hurricane season (Haughton, Deegan-Krause 2015; Powell, Tucker,

2014, Tavits, 2008), some general conclusions can be made. However, it is possible that the main driving force of volatility comes from political parties, and electorate only reacts to these changes, rather than voters' choices generating electoral volatility and political parties reacting to them. This idea is suggested by low R2 indicators in output tables of models (see R2 part of Table 1 and Table 2; confirming conclusions by Tavits, 2008). The low explanatory power of some models suggests that electoral behaviour, in fact, depends on different factors than on the factor analysed in this research and this gap could be reflected by party politics and performance of political parties. As electoral volatility (perceived a threat for Western democracies) is on its rise in recent years, rather huge amount of literature and studies devoted to these issues are widely available offering details for studying the party instability. However, studies based on data coming from individual interviews with respondent that allow cross-national comparison are not obvious in political science, eventually because (as in previous analysis) volatility of the political system often does not share similar characteristics comparable with other systems applied in variety of countries.

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