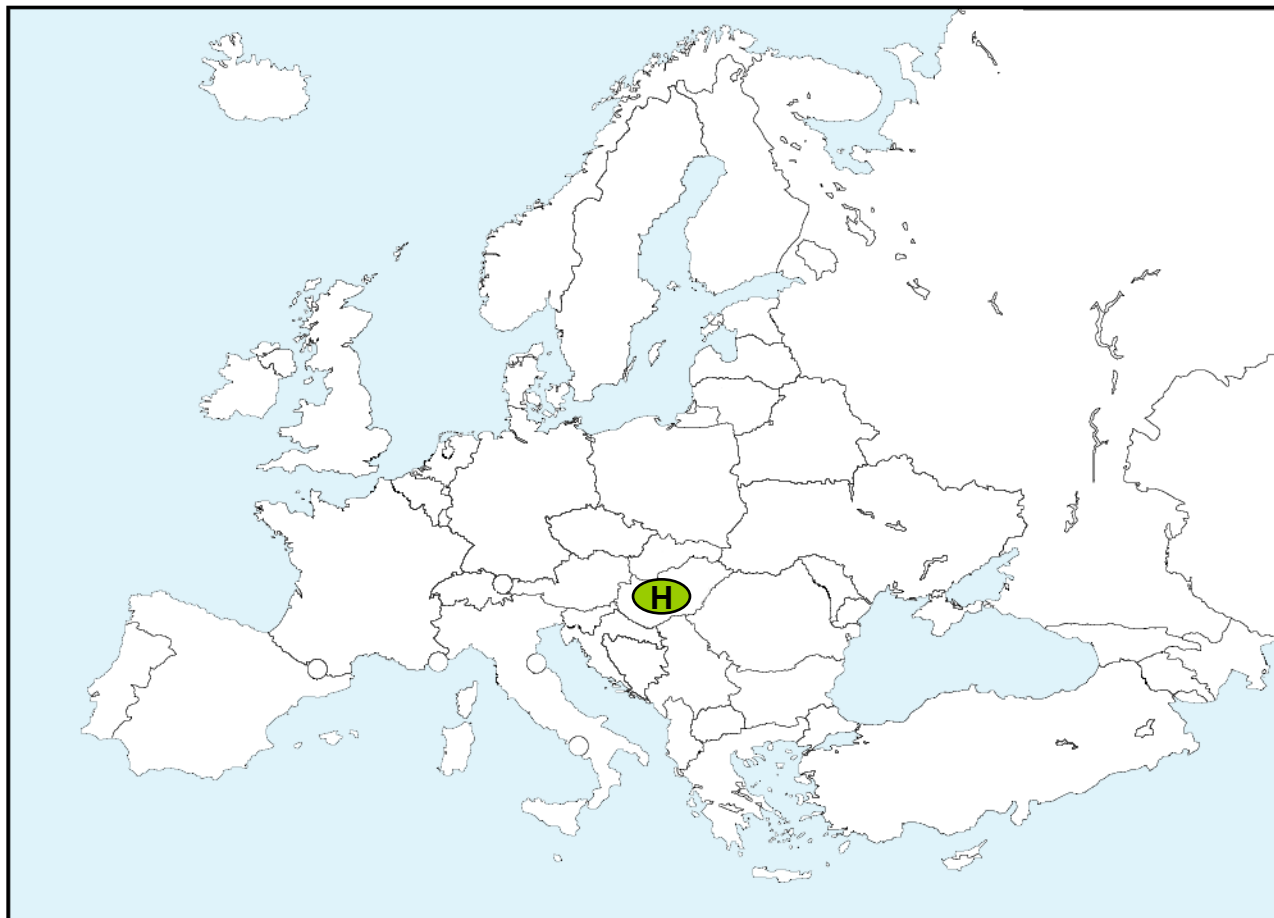


The Surveillance Project  
Queen's University, Kingston

*18 November 2006*

**Privacy in a new democracy:  
Changing attitudes  
in a changing society?**

Iván Székely  
[szekelyi@ceu.hu](mailto:szekelyi@ceu.hu)



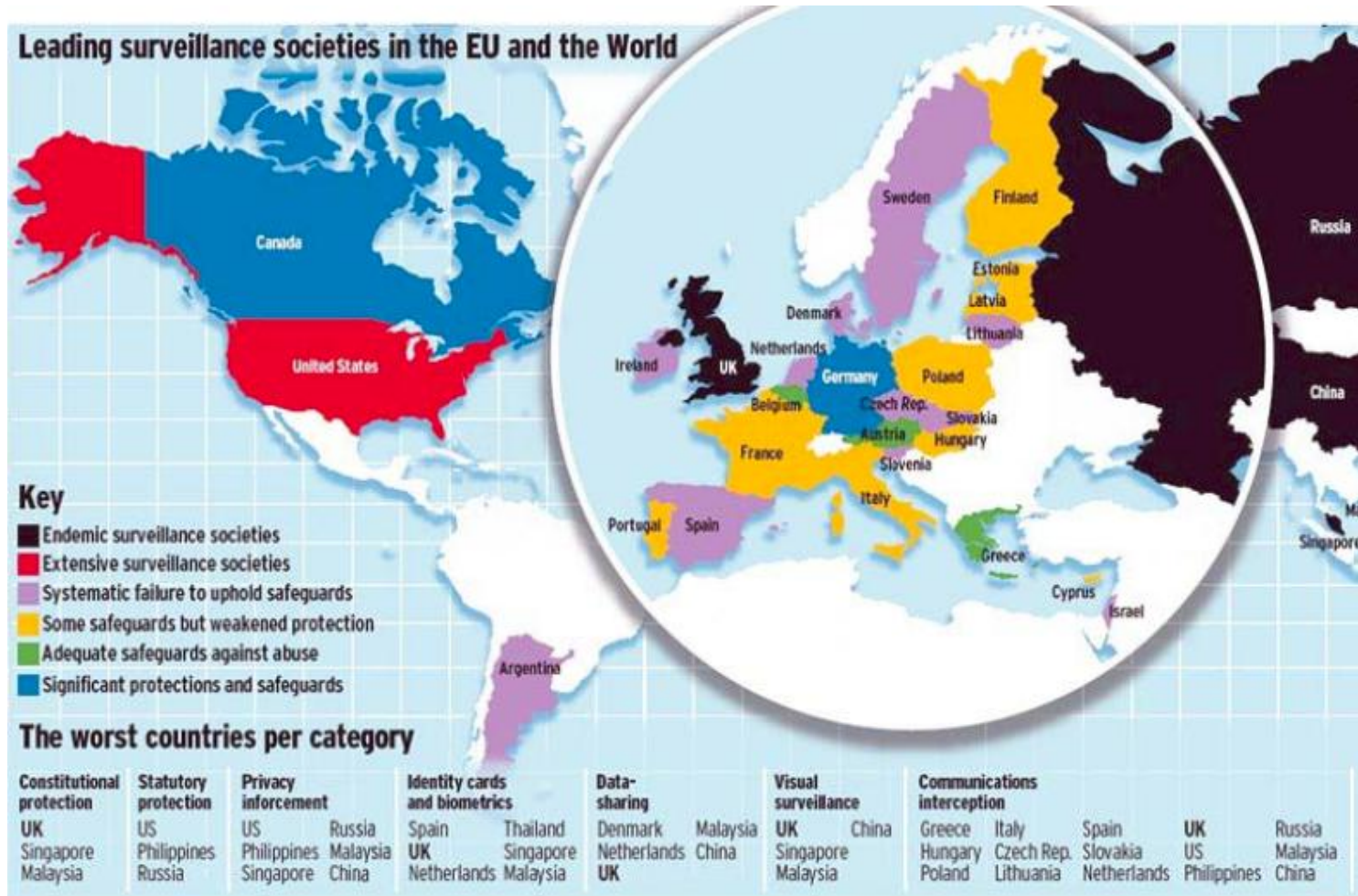
Hungary on the map of Europe



Hungary beyond the Iron Curtain



Hungary within the EU borders



Hungary with "Some safeguards but weakened protection"



## The first survey: 1989

- First in its area in Hungary and in the CEE region
- Data collection: October 1989 (personal interviews)
- Nation-wide sample: 1000 persons
- Representativity: sex, age groups, educational level, type of place of residence
- 153 interviewers, 15 instructors
- Preliminary in-depth interviews
- Test survey

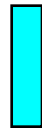


## Main findings: 1989

- Moderate awareness of potential uses and abuses of data
- Obedience in supplying data
- Considerable distrust towards government agencies, centralized and computerized data processing
- Privacy/data protection factor, trust/order factor
- Pro-computer and anti-computer attitudes
- Sensitivity scale of personal data, and of examples of invasion of privacy
- A “mysterious”, privacy-conscious social stratum (no correlation with demographics)



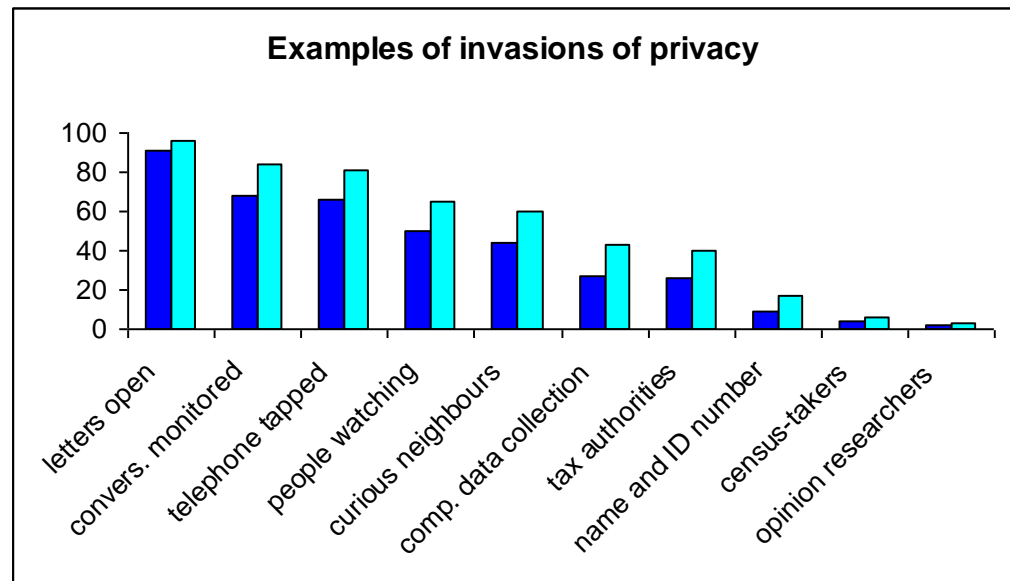
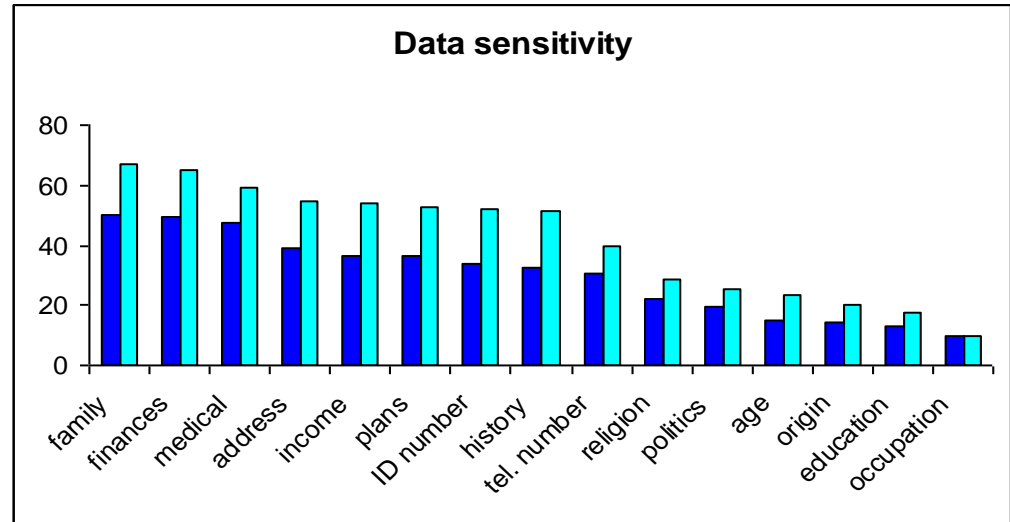
Privacy-conscious  
social stratum



Whole sample



(1989)







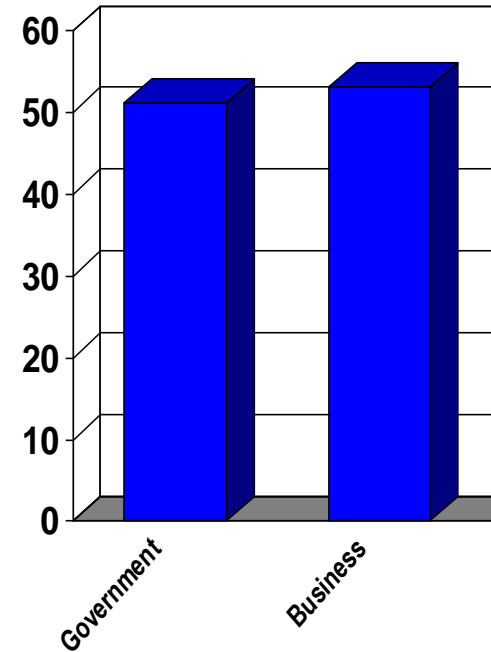
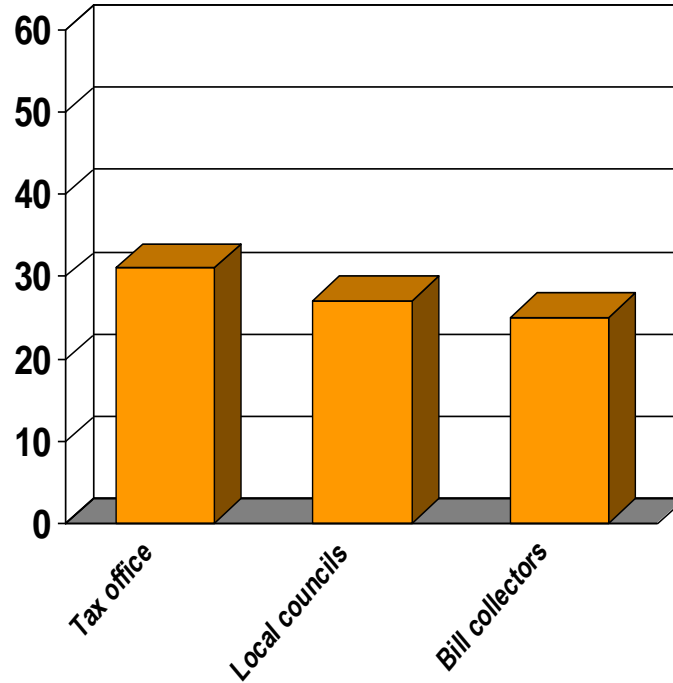
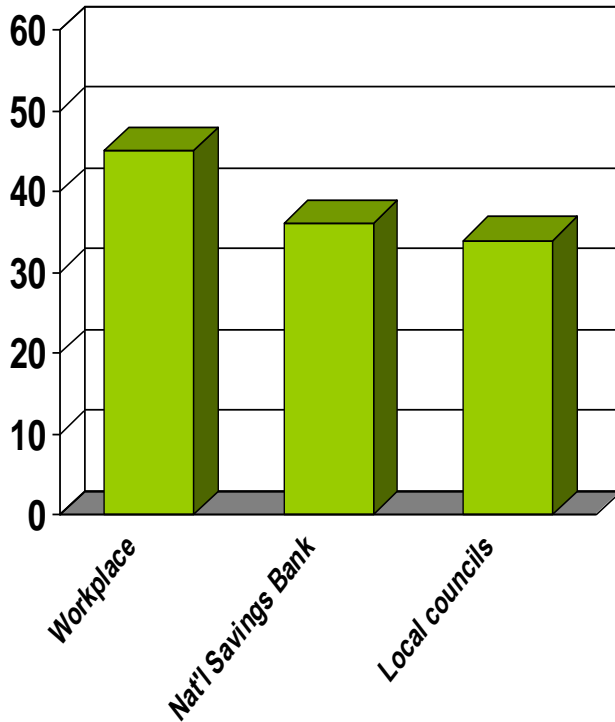
# Trust in data controllers

Fairest/least fair data controllers in 1989

Trust in 2006

*Fairest*

*Least Fair*

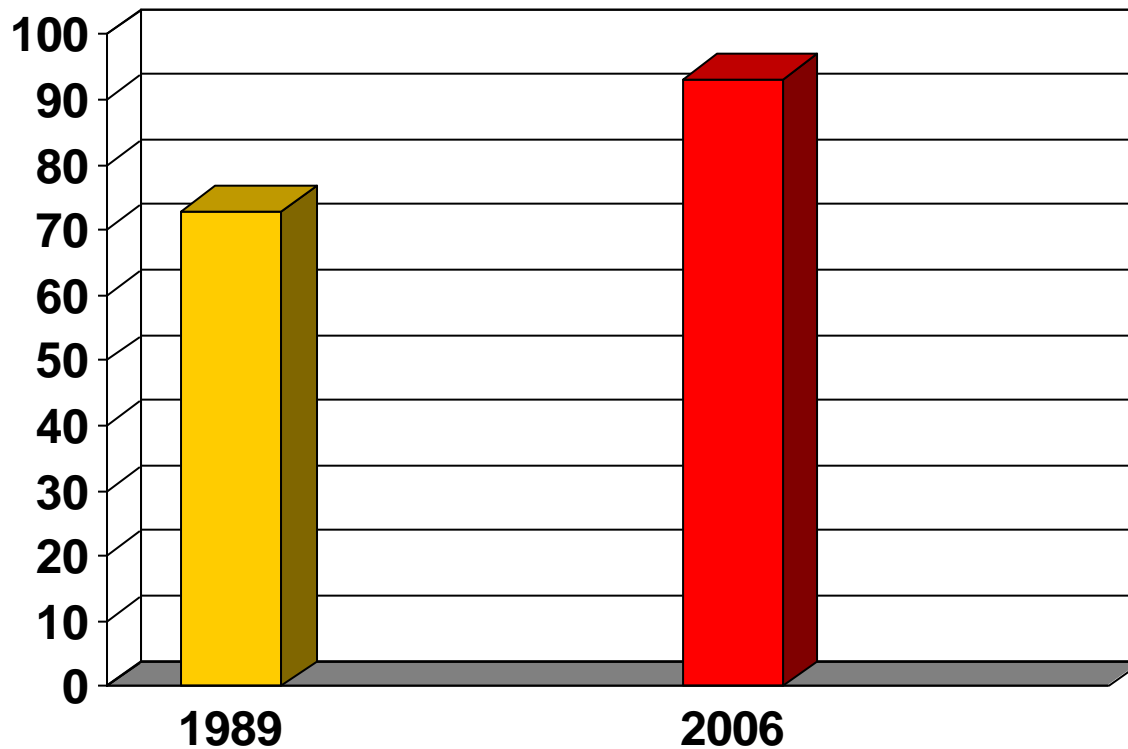




# Central registration/ID card

**1989:** Universal PIN (approve) **73%** (q.6)

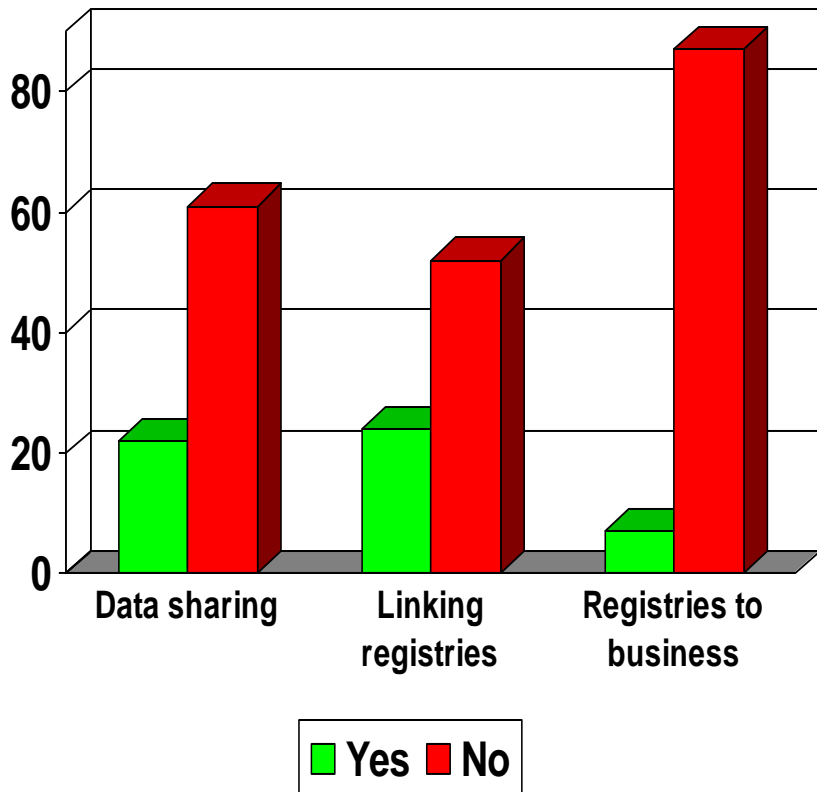
**2006:** National ID card (agree) **93%** (Q.9/b)



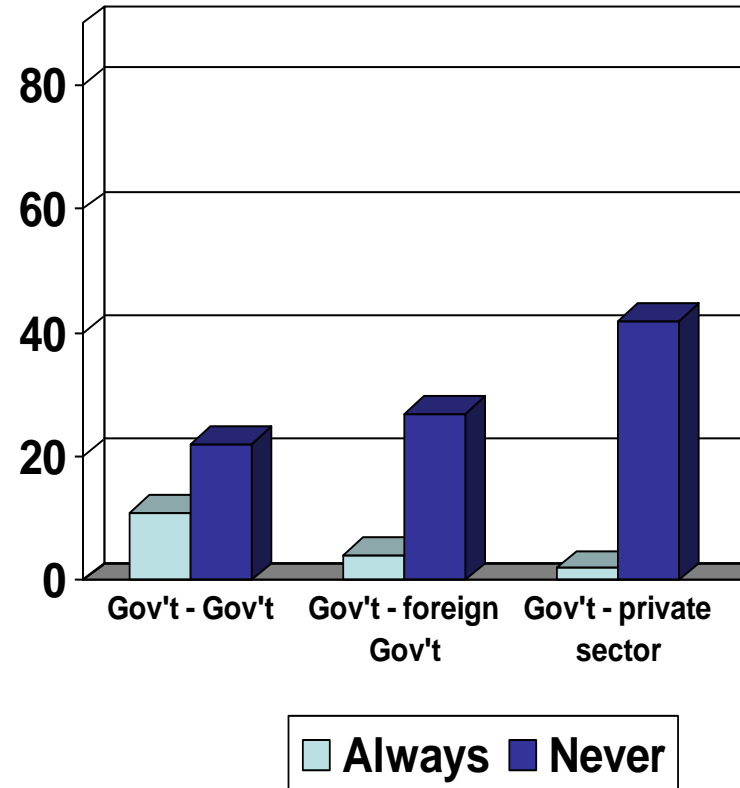


# Data sharing

1989



2006



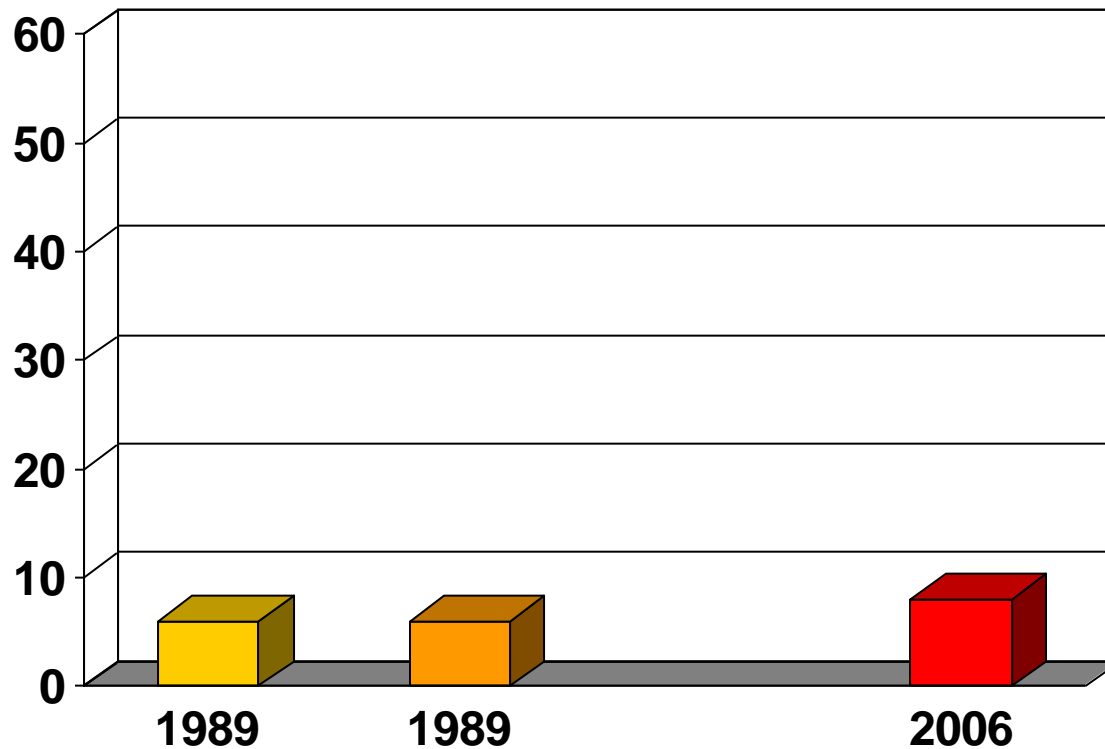


# Disobedience / Resistance

**1989:** At official places unwilling to give data about oneself: **6%** (q.10)

**1989:** Data should *not* be precise and complete: **6%** (q.20)

**2006:** Refused to give information to a government agency: **8%** (Q.7)

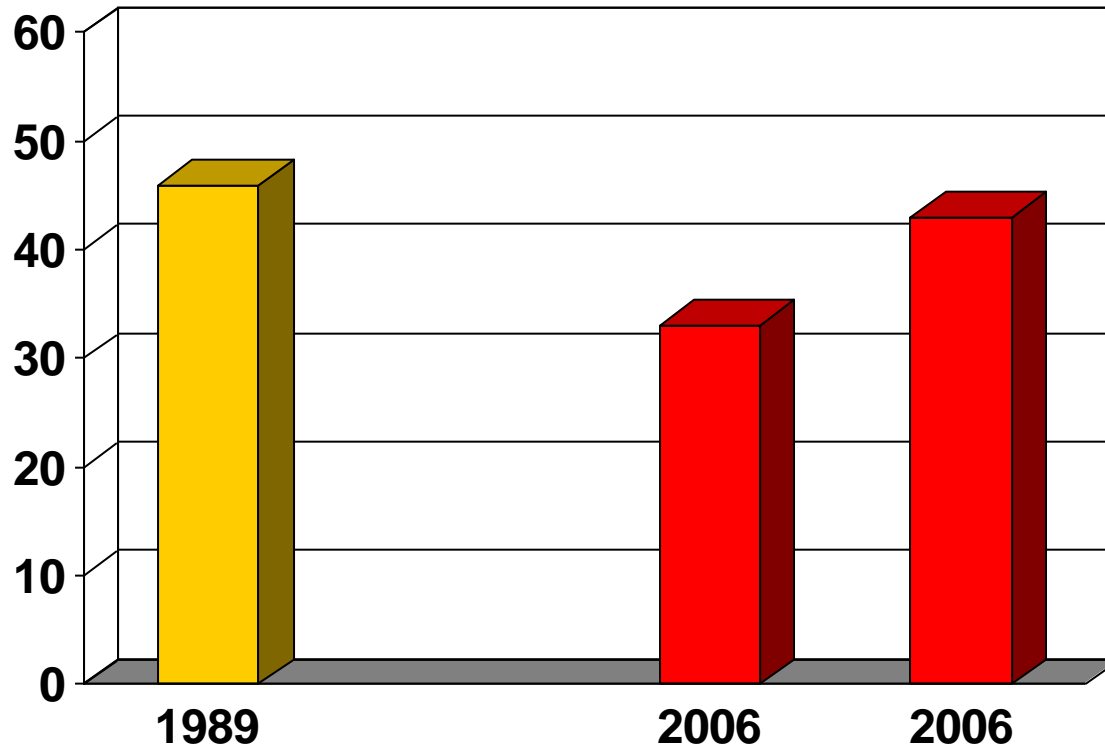




# Wrong-doing / fishing in troubled waters

**1989:** More data should be registered about people, so that certain people cannot “fish in troubled waters” **46%** (q.12/4)

**2006:** If suspected of wrong-doing: Gov’t agency – Gov’t agency **33%**  
Gov’t – foreign Gov’t **43%** (Q.18)





## (Extreme characteristics:) **Knowledge**

Knowledge of laws: **LOWEST** (18%)

seems inconsistent with:

- wide-spread legal and institutional system
- media coverage (see Background Report and focus groups)
- gov't and business complaints about high media coverage (see also 1990 press survey – number of news/articles)
- well-known, publicized landmark cases
- knowledge about the DP Commissioner in 1998: 43%

Knowledge of technologies: **AMONG THE LOWEST**

seems inconsistent with:

- moderate internet penetration
- very high mobile penetration

# Resistance

## Things done to protect personal information (Q.7)

against government data controllers: **LOWEST**

against business data controllers: **AMONG THE LOWEST**

## Privacy invasion experienced (Q.8)



At the workplace: **HIGHEST** (31%)



# Visible minorities

Privacy of minorities in the media (Q.16): **HIGHEST** (48%)

- probably the Roma



Extra airport checks to minorities (Q.26): **LOWEST ACCEPTANCE** (28%)

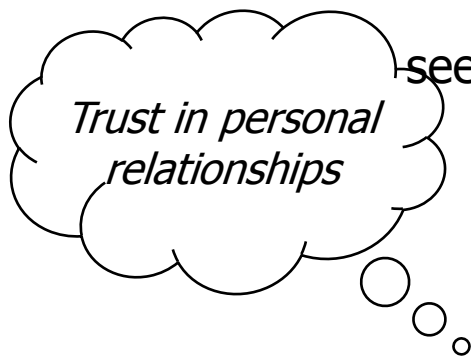
- Nationalism/anti-Americanism?
- Protection of Roma?
- East European tourists as “visible minorities”?



# Trust in data controllers

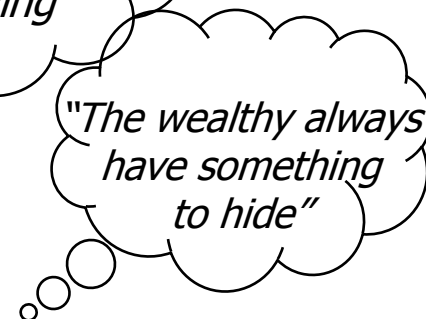
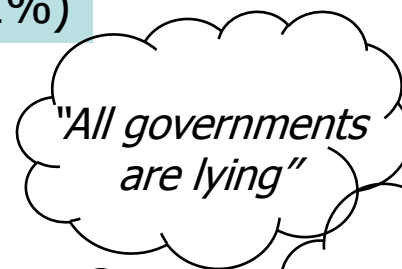
Governmental data controllers (Q.5): **HIGHEST** (51%)

Business data controllers (Q.6): **HIGHEST** (53%)



seems inconsistent with:

- traditional distrust towards government
- traditional distrust towards business
- the gap between "They" and "Us"
- supposedly moderate social capital
- focus group interviews and Background Report
- complaints from both government and business about low level of trust



# Internet and profiling

**Personal information on the internet (Q.11):**

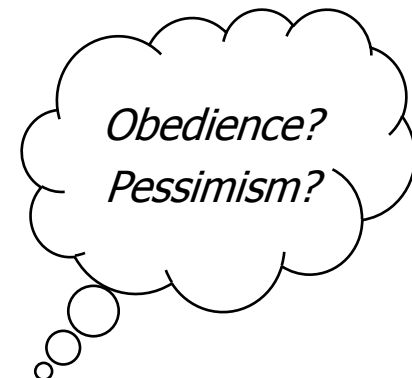
Extent of worry: **LOWEST** (45%)

Extent of worry (Internet users): **SECOND LOWEST** (51%)

**Acceptance of customer profiling (Q.28): BY FAR THE HIGHEST** (69%)

**Extent to say**

(Q.2): **LOWEST** (45%)





## Data sharing

*Hungary is one of the  
safest places*

Government to foreign government (Q.18): **AMONG THE HIGHEST** (67%)

- anti-terrorist measures?
- over-zeal of a “border-country”?

Employer to government (Q.22): **HIGHEST** (51%)

- submission to the Little Brothers?

# Surveillance *vs.* local and national security

Intrusiveness of national security laws (Q.17): **LOWEST** (40%)

Acceptance of national ID cards (Q.9b): **BY FAR THE HIGHEST** (93%)

- survival (and renewed legitimation) of centralized registration

Effectiveness of community CCTV (Q.20): **HIGHEST** (87%)

Effectiveness of in-store CCTV (Q.20): **SECOND HIGHEST** (86%)

- strong coalition of risk industry and politics
- media support



## Country profile (extremes)

### HIGH or HIGHEST

Privacy invasion at the workplace  
Trust in government data controllers  
Trust in business data controllers  
Acceptance of data sharing between the employer and the government  
Acceptance of CCTV  
Acceptance of national ID cards  
Acceptance of customer profiling

### LOW or LOWEST

Knowledge about privacy laws  
Worry about the internet  
Judgment of national security laws  
The feeling to have a say  
Activity to protect personal information

# Possible explanations

- Low tide of rights and liberties
- A „new capitalist” generation
- New techniques, unprepared population
- Foreign companies, discredited trade unions
- Over-politization – a *Morbus Hungaricus*
- Imbalanced values and attitudes
- Low level of NGO/civil activity



# A general observation: “Threshold of abstraction”

It is not the violation of privacy that counts – but its perceptibility

**The more abstract – the less important**  
(no matter how grave the violation is)



# Actors deserving further investigation: The IT professionals

- Invisible but essential actors
- Their indirect impact on transitional societies
- Hungary/CEE – the natural allies of information monopolies
- USA – iconic figures: modern Robin Hoods
- An unexplored group in privacy research





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