

# HOW DO WE THINK WE

# CHANGE

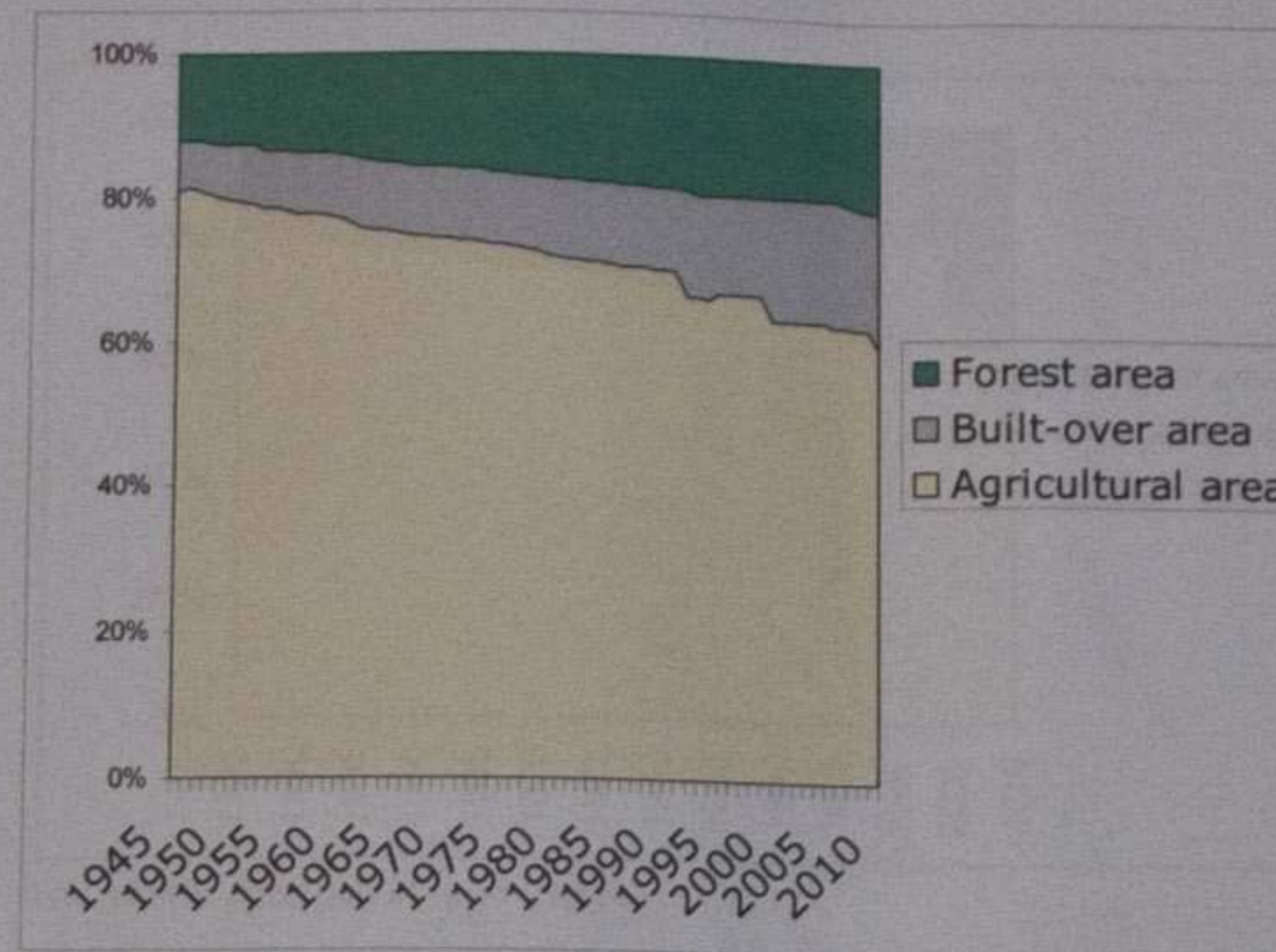
# OUR

# ENVIRONMENT

## in Hungary?

### HYPOTHESIS

The average person does not know about their country's affect on the environment. Despite of all the environmentalist campaigns calling our attention to our increasing pollution and destruction of the land, the average person still cannot accurately guess how our environment has been changing.



The yearly changes in land usage from 1945 to 2010

### METHOD

We first assumed that the proportion of the differently used areas (forests area, agricultural area, built-over area, protected area) will give a good approximation of how we alter our surroundings - for the better or for the worse. The reason we chose this, was because it is relatively easy to guess for the average person in Hungary. Our country is relatively small and so it is easier to have an awareness of changes in the surrounding country. In addition, the average Hungarian is well educated and so should be more aware. We chose two years for a data comparison, 1945 and 2010. We chose 1945 because from that year on there have been no territorial changes in Hungary. 1945 is not so long ago that the statistics could not be guessed at, but far enough in time to have observable differences compared to 2010 because of the rapid pace of post-war modernization.

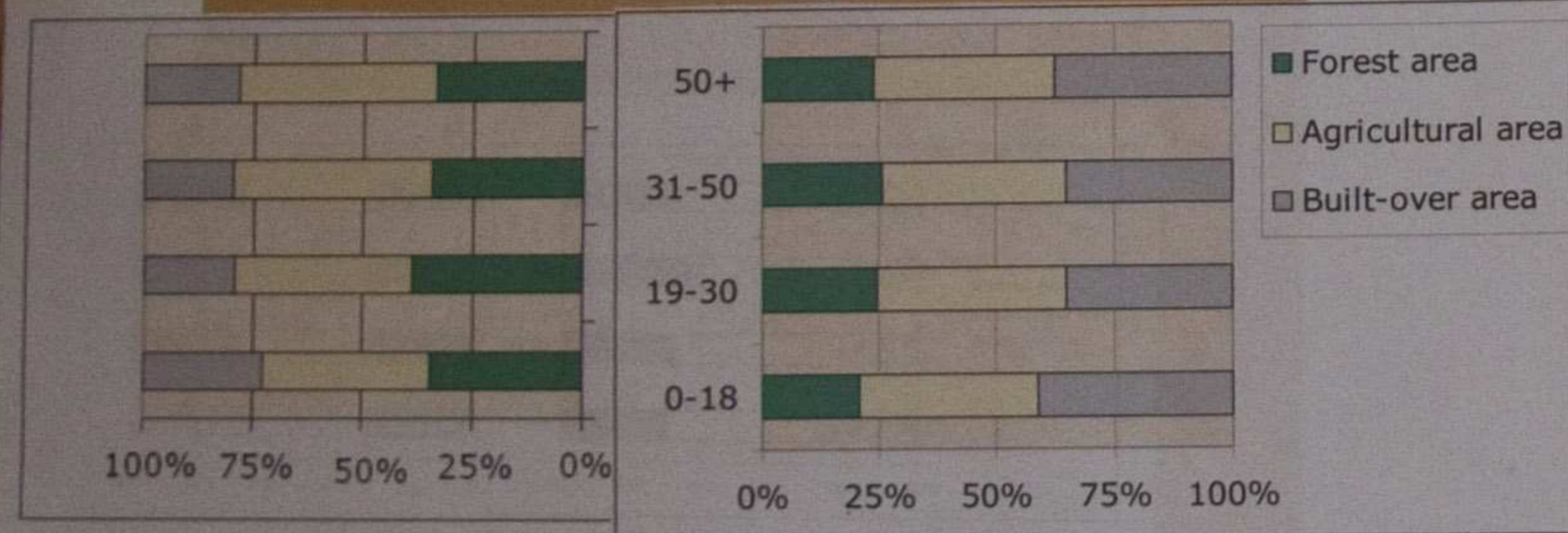
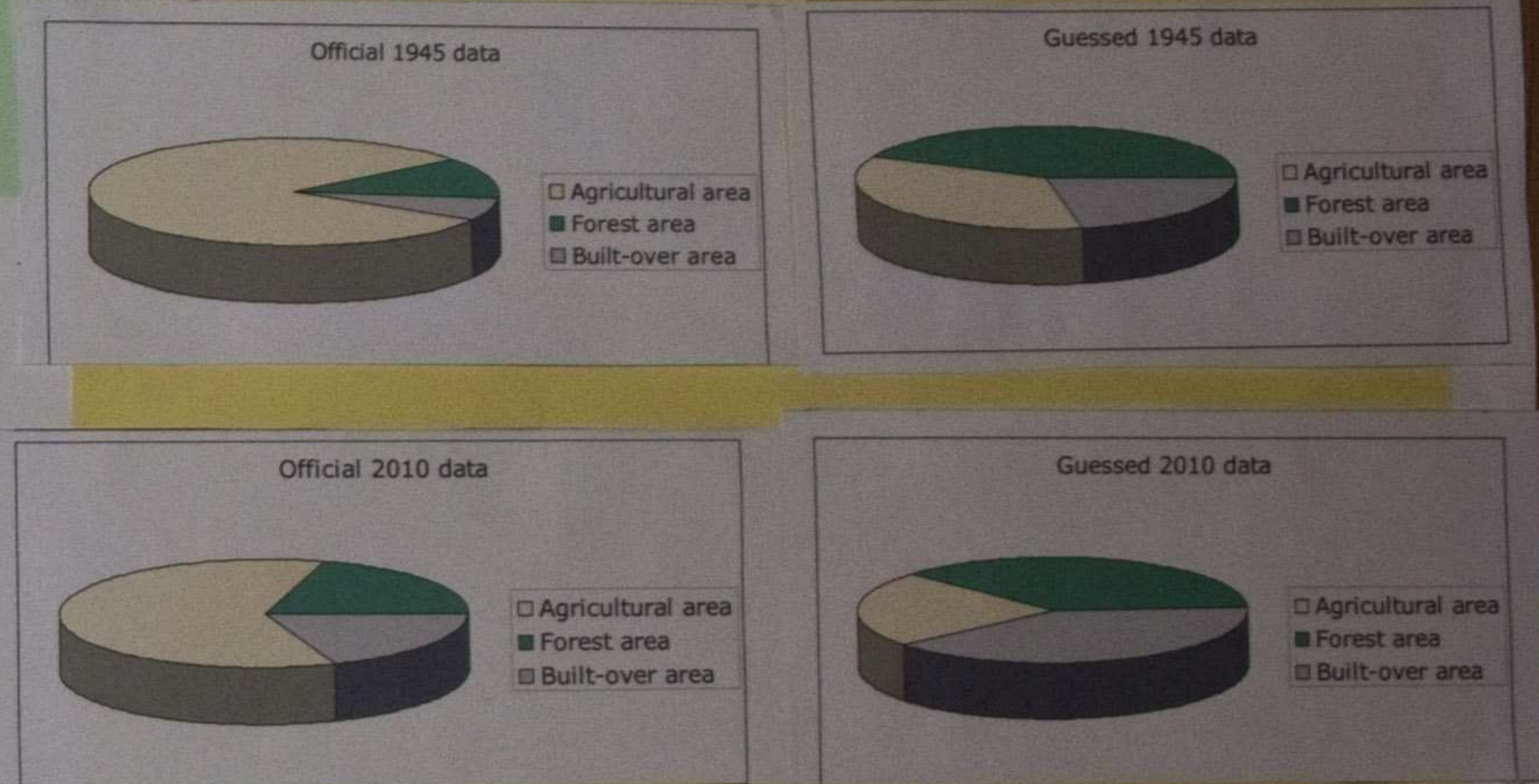
We put together a questionnaire in which we asked the respondents to give their sex, age, and to guess the percentage of forest, agricultural and built-up areas in 1945 and in 2010, and the protected areas in 2009. This way we acquired their direct guesses. This questionnaire was distributed among Facebook users and pages, university students, and other acquaintances.

### DATA VARIABILITY

Nearly half of those who answered our questionnaire were university students, so the overall average is weighted to university student's opinions, as compared to the rest of the population (although the results seem to indicate that may not have been a factor because the over 50 respondents showed what seems to be better awareness, regardless of education. The official data may not give the exact picture, as there might be a difference in how a built-on area "officially" is defined (one house on a hectare, or 5 buildings per hectare, etc. as an example). Only 296 people filled out the questionnaire, which is relatively few for a survey like this, and maybe not everybody took the survey seriously.

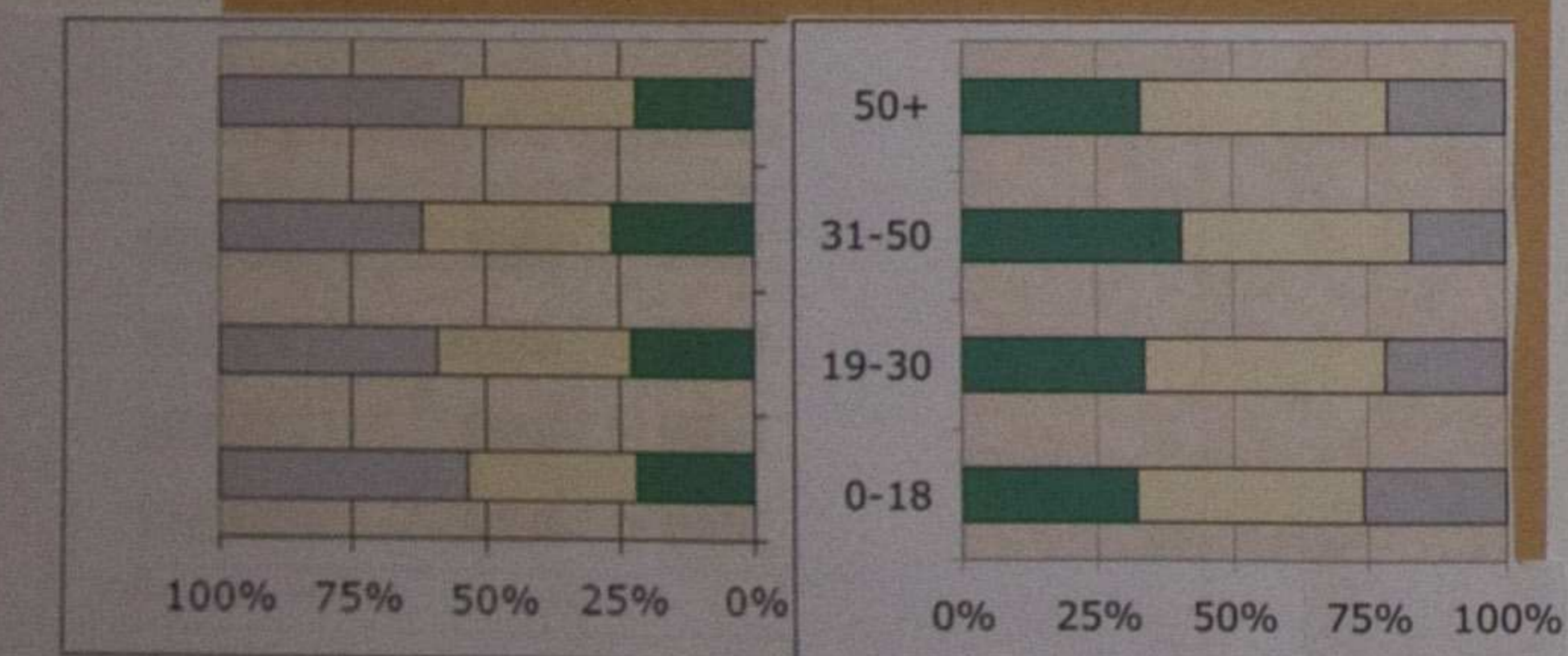
sex \ age	0-18	19-30	31-50	50+	total
woman	26	57	24	28	135
man	24	91	24	22	161
total	50	148	48	50	296

The number of respondents



1945 women's guesses

1945 men's guesses



2010 women's guesses

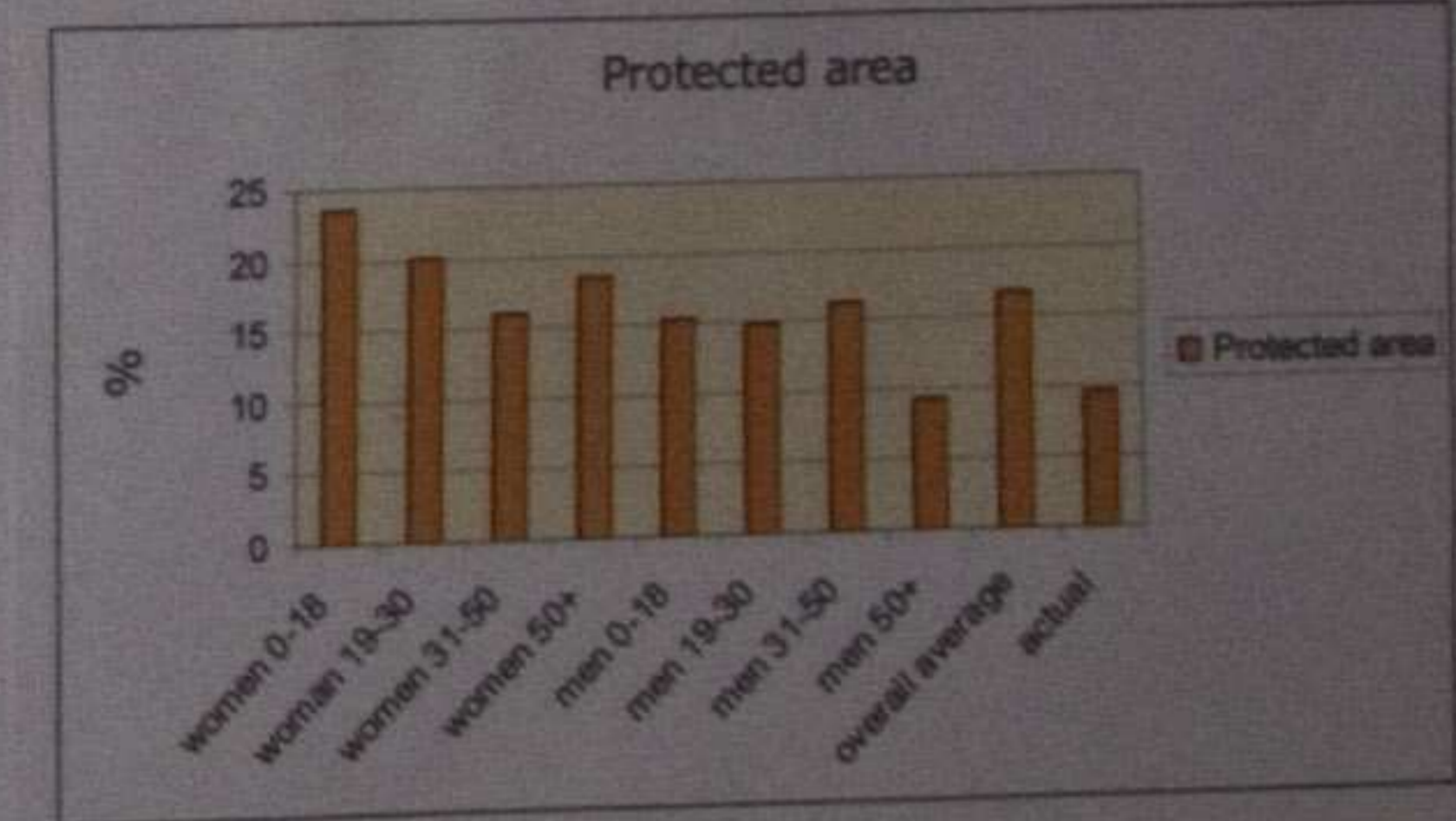
2010 men's guesses

### CONCLUSION

Our hypothesis was valid. Though the average guess got the forest area right for 2010, it was only because most everybody thought the forest areas had declined. But in reality, due to environmental programs, forested areas had grown. Awareness of the environmental programs is shown because on average, Hungarians also expect their country to have 1.5-2 times more protected areas than they actually have. On average, Hungarians imagine their country with half as much agricultural area as exists in reality. This fact may be due to the fact that most respondents were in the capital, and did not reside in rural areas. People over 50 got the figures more accurately, and understand the trends better because they were closer to accuracy, but even so, their guesses were far off.

The charts above compare the official land usage proportions with the average guessed proportions. The charts to the far left break up the guesses based on sex and age. The chart to the right compares the guessed size of protected areas to the official actual value.

Overall this shows that most Hungarians in general do not know how we change our environment. Assuming that our cross section is basically typical of a developed nation, in developed nations Humanity would seem to be aware of the environment, yet in actuality, the average person knows little about it. It could be assumed, subject to more definitive data in the future, that environmentalist campaigns may not be effective in educating the population, although they seem to be raising awareness.



### DATA SOURCES:

[http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/agraar/html/tabl1\\_3\\_1.html](http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/agraar/html/tabl1_3_1.html)  
[http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat\\_eves/L\\_ux002.html](http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/L_ux002.html)