

## **Authoritarianism without Dominant Ideology: Political Manifestations of Authoritarian Attitudes in Hungary**

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*Since the publication of Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford's (1950) classic study, considerable debate has developed concerning the political and ideological correlates of authoritarianism. This paper examines relationships between authoritarianism, on the one hand, and self-identification with ideological labels, attitudes toward political extremists, and party preferences, on the other hand. The survey data have been collected in Hungary between 1994 and 2002. Findings indicate that it is the center-right ideology and political orientation that attracts most authoritarians, yet authoritarian extreme-left also survives. The findings also show that liberal orientation and center-left identification constitute the political counter-pole of authoritarianism. Extreme-right supporters are found to be attracted only to particular aspects of authoritarianism.*

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The concept of an authoritarian personality emerged “as a link between psychological disposition and political leanings” (Horkheimer, in Adorno et al., 1950, p. xi). *The Authoritarian Personality* (TAP) proposed a simple thesis, namely that “an individual is most receptive to those ideologies which afford the fullest expression to his over-all personality structure” (Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1947, p. 536). While both the political and the psychological components of authoritarianism deserve scrutiny, a symmetric approach is not warranted. The psychological elements of the authoritarian syndrome should be relatively invariable, at least as long as the concept is designed to be universally applicable. The

political connotations, on the other hand, must depend to a large extent on cultural-historical contexts. The relevant question to be asked is, therefore, what are the political and ideological manifestations of authoritarianism in a particular society.

The benchmark for the intercultural comparisons has been provided by TAP itself. Ethnocentrism was presented as the most important attribute of the authoritarian character and ethnocentric views were both hypothesized and shown to be strongly associated with the left–right continuum. The *PEC* [Political–Economic Conservatism] scale, measuring negative attitudes towards “progressive” reforms, correlated positively with the authoritarianism scale. Adorno and his colleagues emphasized that high F scorers were also found among leftist groups but the ethnocentrism of these people was tempered by their ideology. The existence of “rigid low scorers” in their samples indicated the relative autonomy of the ideological and the psychological spheres. The authors have even acknowledged, at one point, that the ideological pattern might be “accidental in terms of personality” (TAP, p. 772).

Notwithstanding these ambiguities, the fundamental message of TAP was that authoritarianism is more typically found among supporters of rightist ideologies. In spite of the immediate criticisms (e.g., Shils, 1954), most empirical studies conducted in the West have corroborated the validity of these findings (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988; Meloen, 1993; Stone, Lederer, & Christie, 1993). Occasionally, high authoritarianism was found on both ends of the left-right continuum (e.g., Eysenck, 1954; Eysenck & Wilson, 1978), but a completely symmetric picture, confirming the so-called “extremism model,” has almost never emerged (cf. Billig, 1978; Sidanius, 1985; Stone & Smith, 1993). Left-wing authoritarianism, when detected, did not reach the weight of right-wing authoritarianism (Stone, 1980; Stone & Smith, 1993).

This often found correlation between authoritarian attitudes and right-wing conservative orientation may have two distinct, though not mutually exclusive, sources. It may be based on the common intrinsic features of authoritarianism and right-wing ideologies, or it can simply follow from the fact that authoritarians tend to support *dominant* ideologies (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988). The correlation that was found between pro-communist orientation (the acceptance of Marxist-Leninist ideology) and authoritarianism in the former Soviet Union gives credence to the latter interpretation. The fact that this correlation declined after 1989 in the Soviet Union is also in line with this model (McFarland, Ageyev, & Abalakina-Paap, 1992; McFarland, Ageyev, & Djintcharadze, 1996).<sup>1</sup>

American, Western European, and Soviet studies share one commonality: in all these contexts a relatively well-defined dominant ideology existed. There had been pockets of dissidents in all these societies but they had to define themselves vis-à-vis a consensual value-structure. Not all societies or historical periods are,

<sup>1</sup> For example, the correlation between the RWA score and belief in “communism” was .69 in 1989, .45 in 1991, and only .38 in 1993 (McFarland et al., 1996).

however, characterized by consensus. Politically, deeply polarized countries, undergoing political transition, where one value system has just collapsed and a new one has yet to emerge, present a more open-ended venue for the study of authoritarianism.

Obviously, not all transitional democracies satisfy the above given criterion. Where the dictatorship was swept away by a large-scale mobilization of citizens who have all agreed on a new set of norms, the old value-system is simply replaced by a new one. But this is not what has happened in most Eastern European countries after 1989. Indeed, the communist regimes collapsed mainly due to international and economic reasons and the consensus among the citizens went hardly beyond the establishment of formal democracy.

Hungary is a particularly good example of the discussed ambiguity, since in this country the communist leadership has managed to maintain widespread social support. Until 1989, Soviet features characterized the political system, but in everyday life citizens were given considerable autonomy, and the private moral was characterized by individualism and consumerism. The fall of communism was accompanied by the introduction of a multiparty system and formal rules of democratic political competition, on the one hand, and economic hardship, growing unemployment, and the partial dismantling of the social safety net, on the other hand. Indeed, the two processes have become intrinsically linked in the eyes of many, contributing to a relatively positive view of the earlier regime in the population.

Present-day politics in Hungary is characterized by a regular alternation of power between left- and right-wing blocs of parties. That is, every fourth year, the incumbent parties are ousted from power and the opposition takes over.<sup>2</sup> The right-wing parties have a Christian-nationalist and anticommunist orientation, while the “left” is associated with the socialist-communist legacy and (at least within the social elite) with a libertarian-cosmopolitan orientation. The cultural issue dimension (nationalism, libertarianism, clericalism, etc.) is much more decisive from the point of view of party competition than economic issues (Enyedi, 2005; Markowski, 1997; Tóka, 2004).

The party system is highly polarized. The left regards the right as antidemocratic, nationalist, and, sometimes, even fascist. The right identifies the left with communism and regularly questions the loyalty of left-wing politicians to the nation. Observers often refer to the situation as a “cold civil war” between the left and the right (cf. Enyedi, 2006).

Thus, under these conditions it is difficult to speak about a “dominant ideology.” Instead, there is a strong competition of mutually exclusive ideologies. The present study attempts to discover the ways authoritarianism is linked to various political and ideological standpoints under these specific conditions, in order to contribute to a more elaborate theory of the relationship between authoritarianism

<sup>2</sup> The first government reelection since 1989 occurred in 2006.

and political ideology. Our assumption is that the lack of a dominant ideology creates room for the intrinsic qualities of ideologies and of political leadership to structure the political correlates of authoritarianism.

Following Altemeyer, we take as a point of departure that the core of the authoritarian disposition is composed by authoritarian aggressiveness, conventionalism, and authoritarian submissiveness. These different components may push one towards different ideological orientation. Authoritarian aggressiveness may trigger support for radical ideologies espousing prejudiced, ethnocentric views. Conventionalism and submissiveness, on the other hand, may push citizens towards parties that are popular in one's primary groups and/or were dominant in one's formative years. In the Hungarian case the first mechanisms should pull authoritarians towards extreme right parties, while the second rather towards orthodox leftist forces, since those who were socialized under the communist regime may still use communist ideology as a frame of reference. Yet if one's primary group consists of fellow church-goers, the result of the same mechanism can be a conservative, Christian-democratic orientation.

As a result we expect to find authoritarianism in both political camps. It is likely to be present among supporters of orthodox, unreformed communists, given their rejection of democratic change. But several features of the right (e.g., nationalism, clericalism, cultural intolerance, and prejudice), especially present on the extreme right, could also invoke strong authoritarian responses. Hence, the general conditions seem to be favorable for the extremism model. Given that psychological orientations may be rationalized in a large number of ways, the multiple mechanisms may even cancel out each other, and the ideological and political groups may not even differ significantly in terms of authoritarianism.

Keeping in mind the possibility for a large number of combinations, the analysis below will focus on the two most popular models: extremism and right-wing authoritarianism. The extremism hypothesis suggests high support for radical parties among authoritarians, while the right-wing authoritarianism model predicts an increase in the level of authoritarianism depending on the party's position on the left-right scale. Given that we have data from different time points, we can assess the fit of these models taking into account temporal changes as well. Knowing the size of the parties, we can also evaluate the thesis that large, dominant parties attract the bulk of the authoritarians.

## Method

### *Surveys and Samples*

The data used in the analyses are based on four surveys.<sup>3</sup> In the spring of 1994, 1000 Hungarian citizens aged 18 and over were interviewed. Hungarian

<sup>3</sup> The surveys were conducted in collaboration with Ferenc Erős, Zoltán Fábíán, and Zoltán Fleck.

settlements were grouped into clusters according to their size. From each stratum a proportionate number of locations were randomly selected. The respondents from the chosen settlements were selected according to a random route method.<sup>4</sup> In 1997, a random sample of 400 16–17-year-old college students of two Hungarian cities (Sopron and Salgotarján) and their parents (only one parent, in 77% of the cases the father; total  $N = 800$ ) formed the basis of the survey. An equal number of interviews were collected in both cities. The third dataset is from 2000, when 1,002 adult respondents were interviewed. They were selected from 120 Hungarian settlements according to quota sampling (based on gender, settlement type, region, and age) and random route method. The fourth survey was conducted in 2002. The number of respondents was 1,022 and, after the settlements were chosen as in 1994, the respondents were selected randomly. The 2002 data used a weight variable that made the sample representative for the nation in terms of age, gender, education, and level of urbanization. All four surveys utilized face-to-face interviews.

### *The Measurement of Authoritarianism*

The 1994 and the 1997 surveys employed a large battery (21 and 25, respectively) of items that were intended to measure authoritarianism, while the 2000 and the 2002 scales were shorter (nine and seven items). In selecting the particular items for the present analysis, we aimed at comparability with international studies, similarity across the four samples, and high consistency within the scales. This required shortening the 1994 and 1997 scales. This has been done without much loss of information: the Pearson correlations between the first principal component of the original scales and the summarized shortened versions were very high: .975 in 1994, .97 (parents), and .9 (children) in 1997.<sup>5</sup>

All items were presented in Likert format, with four degrees of disagreement (1: strongly disagree; 2: disagree; 3: agree; and 4: strongly agree), with the exception of the 2000 survey, where a 5-degree scale was employed.<sup>6</sup> In order to make the scales comparable, the 2000 scores were recoded as follows: 3 into 2.5, 4 into 3, and 5 into 4. No substantive relationship was affected by this transformation. The correlation between the original and the recoded authoritarianism scale was  $r = .996$ .

<sup>4</sup> The documentation of the survey (Erős et al., 1996) and the data are available in the Hungarian data archive of the Social Research Informatics Centre (TARKI). See the website at <http://www.tarki.hu>.

<sup>5</sup> Subsequent calculations have been also completed using scales that contained only items that are identical in all the surveys; results showed no significant difference from the ones reported here.

<sup>6</sup> Items applied in the 1997 survey used an explicit "Don't know" category. In order to increase the number of valid cases, these answers were coded into the middle or neutral value (the score 2.5). A detailed examination showed that this transformation increased the power of the statistical tests, but did not otherwise influence the relationship of authoritarianism with any of the other included variables.

All items used in the present analysis originate either from the F scale or from Altemeyer's RWA scale.<sup>7</sup> In selecting the items, we tried to include those that had the least obvious ideological bias in favor of the political right. All the included items were translated into Hungarian and then translated back to English by a different team of researchers. Table A shows the back-translated versions. The differences compared to the original formulations are minor, reflecting the differences in language conventions.

In the subsequent analyses, authoritarianism was operationalized as the averaged score of the included items. Cases with more than three missing values in authoritarianism items were coded as missing for the total scale scores. The reliability coefficients for the scales are high, with the only exception of the children sample in 1997 ( $\alpha = .61$ ).

Interestingly, the rank of the particular items, in terms of how much they are accepted by the public, has hardly changed between 1994 and 2002 (starting with the generally accepted item, "The most important virtues a child has to learn are obedience and respect for authority," and ending with the generally rejected item, "Most people are not aware that secret conspiracies influence a great part of their lives"). The comparison of scale means across the years indicates no clear trend. It seems that authoritarianism decreased somewhat between 1994 and 2000 but reached the 1994 level again in 2002.

### *The Measurement of Political-Ideological Orientation*

Ideological orientation has various manifestations. The following are examined in the present study: identification with ideological labels, party preferences, and attitudes towards political extremists.

*Self-identification with ideological labels.* All surveys included identical (10 point) left-right self-identification scales. The distribution of responses in the three national surveys is shown in Figure 1. Findings indicate that the distribution of the respondents has changed little during the years, with a large majority of the respondents choosing the middle options (5 and 6).

Next to the position of the left-right spectrum, we also constructed a variable that indicates one's radicalism in order to test the extremism model. Left-right extremism was defined as the squared distance between the respondent's left-right self-placement score and value 5 on the 10-point scale. Although the exact neutral position is 5.5, the respondents tended to interpret five as the

<sup>7</sup> One potential drawback of the scales used in our analyses is that they contain only protrait items. This may be problematic, but Meloen (1990) found that balanced authoritarianism scales do not behave fundamentally differently than the scales worded in one direction. After all, the submissive and conventional components of authoritarianism may also be behind acquiescence (Heaven, 1983). After all, submissiveness, conventionalism, and acquiescence (yeah-saying) are likely to be strongly related (Heaven, 1983). According to Knowles and Nathan's findings, "acquiescent responders are cognitively simple, rigid in their mental organization, and intolerant of alternatives" (1997, p. 299).

**Table A.** Authoritarianism scales—metric characteristics of scales and items

Authoritarianism items	Source	Item-total scale correlation				
		1994	1997 Parents	1997 Youth	2000	2002
The most important virtues a child has to learn are obedience and respect for authority.	F scale [1]	.58	.56	.33	.54	.63
All true patriots are obliged to take measures against those condemned by the leaders of the country.	RWA [14]	.57			.45	
Nowadays in our country most of the damage is done by those who do not respect our leaders and the order of the society.	RWA [16]	.61			.50	
Young people sometimes have rebellious thoughts, but as they grow up, they should condemn these and adapt.	F scale [7] RWA [19]	.56	.45	.36	.55	.61
Immoral conditions in our country are partly due to the fact that both teachers and parents forgot that physical punishment is still the best way of upbringing.	RWA [30]	.44	.35	.22	.35	
It would be better for everyone if the authorities would censor the newspapers and films so that rubbish be kept away from the youth.	RWA [5]*	.55			.47	
What our country needs is not so much laws and political programs, but, rather some brave, tireless and devoted leaders whom people can trust.	F scale [8]	.42	.51	.33		.65
Young people need strict regulations and determination to fight for their families and their country.	F scale [11]	.57	.51	.32	.39	.65
Most of our social problems would be solved if we get rid of the immoral and pervert persons.	F scale [15]	.64	.64	.44	.51	.62
People can be divided into two groups: the strong and the weak.	F scale [20]	.48	.45	.23	.40	.64
Most people are not aware that secret conspiracies influence a great part of their lives.	F scale [25]	.28	.45	.26		.54
Scale average <sup>a</sup>		2.80	2.63	2.67	2.44	2.78
Average inter-item correlation		.32	.31	.17	.28	.46
Alpha		.84	.79	.61	.78	.86

*Notes.* Empty cell means that the item was not included in a particular survey.

Item sources: F scale: Adorno et al. (1950); RWA scale: Altemeyer & Hunsberger (1992), except \*: Altemeyer (1981). Original item numbers in brackets.

<sup>a</sup>Scale averages adjusted to a 4-point scale.

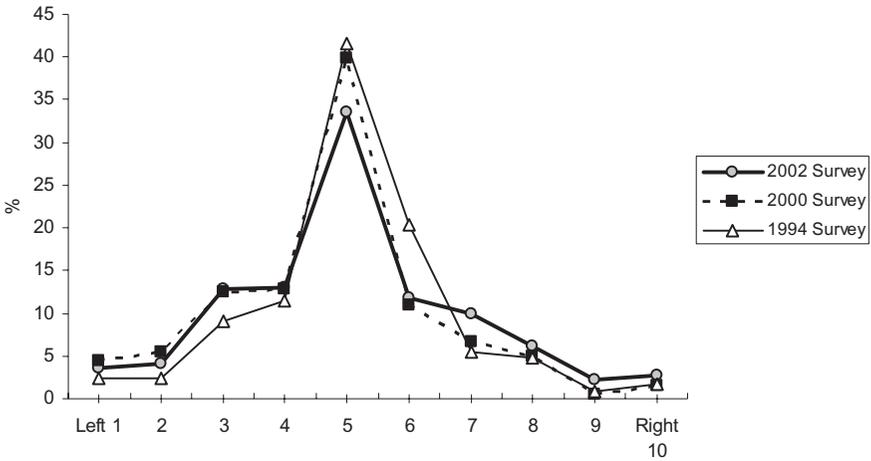


Figure 1. Mean left-right self-placement scores: 1994, 2000, 2002.

middle of the scale (see Figure 1). In order to create a fully symmetric variable, score 25 was recoded into 16 (because the right side of the scale has five points while the left has only four). Thus, the left-right extremism variable ranges from 0 indicating centrist position, to 16 indicating the most radical position (regardless whether left or right). Using score 5.5 as the middle point would bias the scale to the left, while not recoding score 25 into 16 would bias it towards the right.

In addition to left-right identification, some of the surveys asked for identification with other ideological labels. The 1994 survey asked for identification with nine labels: Conservative, Liberal, Socialist, Left-wing, Right-wing, Democrat, Christian, National, and Populist. Responses were given on a 3-point scale (1: "Identifies with"; 2: "Not chosen"; 3: "Rejects"). The 2000 and 2002 surveys included the Conservative, Liberal, and Socialist labels. In 2000, a 5-point scale was used (from 1, "Strongly antipathetic," to 5, "Completely identify") and in 2002, a 3-point scale (1: "Close to me"; 2: "Neutral"; 3: "Far from me"). In all subsequent analyses, identification items were recoded so that a higher score indicates endorsement of a particular label.

*Attitude towards political extremists.* Attitudes towards groups with clear ideological profile may serve as another useful indicator of ideological orientation. Moreover, attitudes towards extremists may reveal otherwise denied ideological leanings. The 1994 survey contained attitude questions concerning "extreme leftists," "extreme rightists," and "former members of the Communist Party." The answers were recoded on 5-point scales, from 1, "Very unattractive," to 5, "Very appealing." The parents and youth surveys from 1997 asked about one's feeling towards "extreme leftists" and "extreme rightists," using the same 5-point

response format. The 2000 survey included only one relatively comparable item that asked “Would you live in the neighborhood of a communist?”<sup>8</sup>

*Political party support.* Political party support was measured in the three national surveys with the help of a standard hypothetical vote choice question. Respondents were first asked whether they would vote if elections were held on the next weekend. Those who answered positively were then asked for the party they would vote for.

### Results

#### *Relationship between Ideological Identification and Authoritarianism*

Figure 2 demonstrates, graphically, the relationship between authoritarianism and left-right self-identification. The visual inspection of the figure indicates a nonlinear, close to curvilinear relationship, especially in 1994 and 2002. That is, in both cases, one finds a considerable amount of authoritarianism on the extreme left and on the extreme right. However, the least authoritarian segment in both cases is not the center but, rather, the center-left.

The first column of Table B presents the product-moment correlation coefficients between left-right self-placement and authoritarianism. All five coefficients are positive. They are low but statistically significant with the exception of the

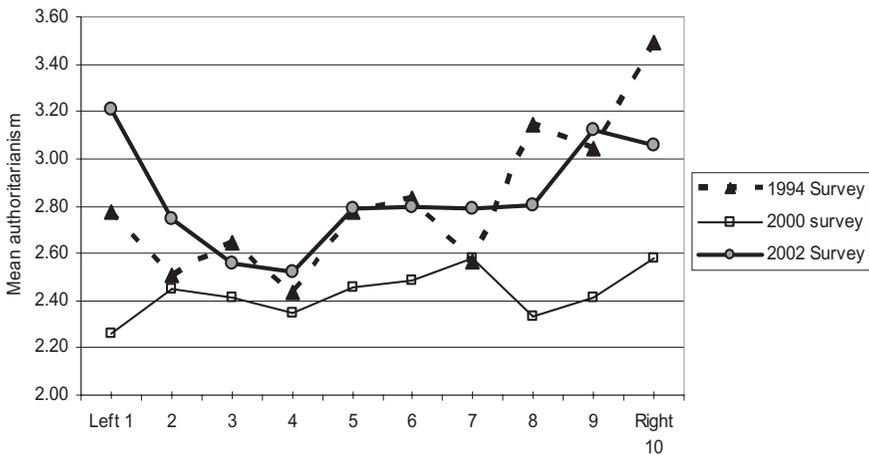


Figure 2. Mean authoritarianism scores by left-right self-placement: 1994, 2000, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> The item was part of a series of items that asked whether a respondent would be willing to allow members of various outgroups to live in her neighborhood.

**Table B.** Relationships between left-right scale, ideological extremism, and authoritarianism

Sample	Linear correlation		Regression <sup>b</sup>		
	Right (vs. left) self-placement	LR Extremism	R squared	Right (vs. left) self-placement	LR Extremism
National sample 1994	.18***	.10***	.040	.226 (.044)***	.078 (.031)**
Children 1997	.12 <sup>a</sup>	.15*	.024	.058 (.067)	.067 (.043)
Parents 1997	.04	-.01	.002	.053 (.070)	-.005 (.048)
National sample 2000	.07*	-.04	.005	.061 (.033)	-.022 (.023)
National sample 2002	.08*	.13***	.020	.068 (.039)	.099 (.029)***

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . <sup>a</sup> $p = .058$ . <sup>b</sup>Entries are b coefficients, standard errors in parentheses. Variables are recoded to the range from 0 to 1.

**Table C.** Left-right scale, extremism, and authoritarianism—controlling for education

Sample	R squared	Right (vs. left) self-placement	Left-Right Extremism	Education
National sample 1994	.31	.156 (.038)***	.061 (.026)*	-.489 (.027)***
National sample 2000	.08	.088 (.032)**	-.009 (.022)	-.266 (.030)***
National sample 2002	.18	.092 (.036)*	.087 (.026)**	-.439 (.034)***

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Note: Entries are b coefficients, standard errors in parentheses. Variables recoded to the range from 0 to 1.

1997 Parents sample (the youth sample from 1997 is on the border of statistical significance). Extremism (found in the second column) has a very similar relationship to authoritarianism. In two cases, rightism, in the other two samples, extremism seems to be somewhat more related to authoritarianism.

By entering both variables into the same regression, it was possible to separate the linear (left-right self-placement) and nonlinear effects (extremism).<sup>9</sup> After controlling for extremism, only in the 1994 sample did the relationship between rightism and authoritarianism preserve its statistical significance. Radicals, on the other hand, are more authoritarian than moderates in two of the five samples, even after controlling for the left-right position.

Given that ideological way of thinking (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960) and authoritarianism (Farnen & Meloen, 2000) are both known to depend on education and “sophistication,” in the next step we filtered the impact of the latter out. Table C shows that differences in education level, in fact, suppress the linear effect of rightist identification. Controlling for education, rightist orientation becomes, again, associated with higher authoritarianism even when extremism is controlled for. That is, right-wingers are attracted to authoritarianism because of their relative radicalism but are pulled back from extreme authoritarian positions due to their relatively high level of education. Radicals, on the other

<sup>9</sup> In other words, extremism is zero-centered, squared original left-right placement variable.

**Table D.** Correlation of authoritarianism scale with ideological identification

	Left-wing	Socialist	Liberal	Democrat	Conservative	Populist	Christian	National	Right-wing
1994 Survey <sup>a</sup>	-.16**	-.11**	-.35**	-.20**	.05	.16**	.31**	.14**	.16**
2000 Survey		-.04	-.15**		.13**				
2002 Survey <sup>a</sup>		-.02	-.20**		.04				

\*\*p < .01 (two-tailed). Notes: Ideological labels are roughly ordered from left to right. Entries are Pearson product moment coefficients. The results are virtually identical if Spearman product-moment coefficients were used.

<sup>a</sup>1994 and 2002 survey items are reversed because originally higher score meant rejection of an ideological label.

hand, are high on authoritarianism regardless of their particular level of education.<sup>10</sup>

Self-identification with ideological labels other than the left-right scale shows considerably stronger linear associations with authoritarianism. According to the results presented in Table D, eight out of nine ideological labels examined in the 1994 survey were associated with authoritarianism. “National,” “populist,” “right-wing,” and especially “Christian” identifications (correlation for the latter is  $r = .31, p < .01$ ) were positively related to authoritarianism. Identification with “left-wing,” “democrat,” “socialist,” and, especially, “liberal” labels was associated with low authoritarianism. These findings, therefore, provide much clearer support for the general right-wing authoritarianism model. Yet, it must be emphasized, on the least authoritarian end, one finds (again) not some clearly left-wing identification, but commitment to liberalism.

Two labels, “socialist” and “conservative,” show unstable associations with authoritarianism. Conservative orientation was positively associated with authoritarianism in 2000 ( $r = .13, p < .01$ ), but not in 1994 or in 2002. Socialist identification had a statistically significant (negative) correlation with authoritarianism only in 1994 ( $-.11$ ).

In sum, the only evidence of the existence of the left-wing authoritarianism came from the analysis of the left-right self-identification scale. Most of the other findings in this section highlighted the low authoritarianism in the moderate left-liberal part of the spectrum and increased authoritarianism on the right.

<sup>10</sup> We also examined the effect of adding additional demographic control variables, such as age, gender, family income, and level of urbanization (age and less urban environments typically increase authoritarianism, while income has the opposite effect; the effect of gender proved small and inconsistent. Further details not reported here.). While the total explained variance increased, due to significant relationships between authoritarianism and basically all the listed variables, the effect of ideological variables remained essentially unaffected. The reason is that the ideological variables are not related with the control variables.

**Table E.** Correlation of authoritarianism scale with attitude towards political extremists

	Extreme left-wing people	Extreme right-wing people	Former members of the Communist party
1994 Survey <sup>a</sup>	.08*	.22**	-.12**
1997 Parents <sup>a</sup>	.09	.21**	
1997 Children <sup>a</sup>	.02	.21**	
2000 Survey <sup>b</sup>			-.16**

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed). Notes: Entries are Pearson product moment coefficients. The results are virtually identical if Spearman product-moment coefficients were used.

<sup>a</sup>Higher score means more favorable attitude towards a group.

<sup>b</sup>Original item "Would you live in the neighborhood of a Communist?" was reversed so that higher score means affirmative response.

### *Attitude towards Political Extremists*

Table E shows that, in the 1994 sample, individuals high on authoritarianism had above average sympathies for extremists on the right ( $r = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as well as, albeit to a much smaller extent, for those on the left ( $r = .08$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Positive attitudes towards former communists were, however, associated with *lower* levels of authoritarianism.

Coefficients obtained in the 1997 parents and youth samples were very close to those obtained in the 1994 national sample. There was a moderate and significant association with a positive attitude towards right-wing extremists ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .01$  in both samples). The association between authoritarianism and the attitude towards left-wing extremists, however, remained below statistical significance.<sup>11</sup>

If former members of the communist party are treated as an extreme left-wing reference group, evidence shows that authoritarianism was associated with the *rejection* of this kind of left extremism, not only in 1994 but also in 2000. The hard-core anticommunists, therefore, appear to be more authoritarian than those with less negative attitudes towards the former communists. The explanation may be that at the time of the surveys right wing governments were in office, and anti-authoritarians regarded communists not so much as representatives of dictatorship but as a group under threat.

The examined relationship could also be curvilinear: those with strong opinions about an extremist group, regardless whether positive or negative, may differ in their authoritarianism from those holding more neutral opinions. To examine this possibility, analogously to our ideological extremism variable above, a variable indicating the radicalism of the attitude about extremist groups was

<sup>11</sup> Note that this is so despite the fact that there is a strong correlation between likings of the attitudes towards the two opposed extremist groups ( $r = .61$  among parents, and  $r = .45$  among children;  $p < .001$  in both cases).

**Table F.** Authoritarianism and the attitude towards political extremists, National sample 1994

Dependent variable: Authoritarianism	R squared	Liking of extremists	The radicalism of the attitude <sup>a</sup>
Attitude towards extreme left-wing people	.008	.033 (.055)	-.033 (.031)
Attitude towards extreme right-wing people	.046	.228 (.058)***	.011 (.033)
Attitude towards the former members of the Communist party	.024	-.060 (.038)	.073 (.024)**

p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001. Note: Entries are b coefficients, standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup>Strength of opinion is defined as squared difference between the response and neutral attitude (score 3 on 5-point scale). Variables recoded to the range from 0 to 1.

constructed. Radicalism of opinion was defined as the squared difference between a response and the neutral position (score 3 on 5-point scale).

Table F shows the explained variance and the regression coefficients for the raw attitude towards extremist groups and for the radicalism (intensity) of that attitude, in 1994. The attitude towards extreme leftists appears unrelated to authoritarianism. Attitude towards extreme rightists becomes more favorable as the level of authoritarianism increases, but the intensity of this attitude does not predict authoritarianism. Liking the former communists, per se, is not associated with authoritarianism. However, authoritarianism increases with the strength of one’s feeling for communists—both those who dislike them and those who like them tend to be more authoritarian than those who have neutral feelings about this particular group. Perhaps this was so because the adherents of the former dictatorship and those who wish for revenge equally subscribe to nondemocratic, violent solutions. Thus, the data provide evidence for both the right-wing authoritarianism and the extremism models, but contains stronger proof for the former model.

*The Relationship between Authoritarianism and Party Preferences*

Eight relevant parties populate the political spectrum in Hungary: Workers Party (MP, extreme left), Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP, center-left), Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ, liberal), Fidesz (until 1995 liberal, then conservative), Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF, conservative), Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP, conservative), Independent Smallholders (FKGP, populist conservative), and Hungarian Justice and Life (MIÉP, extreme-right). The left-right self-identification of the voters in our samples (Figure 3) accurately illustrates the ideological changes Hungarian parties have gone through during the years between 1994 and 2002. Fidesz and MIÉP moved approximately one unit to the right, while SZDSZ moved more than one unit to the left. In 1994 Fidesz and

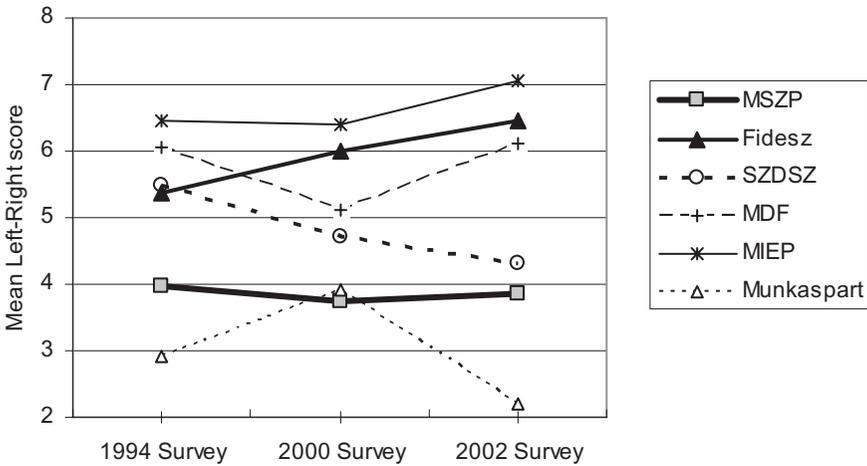
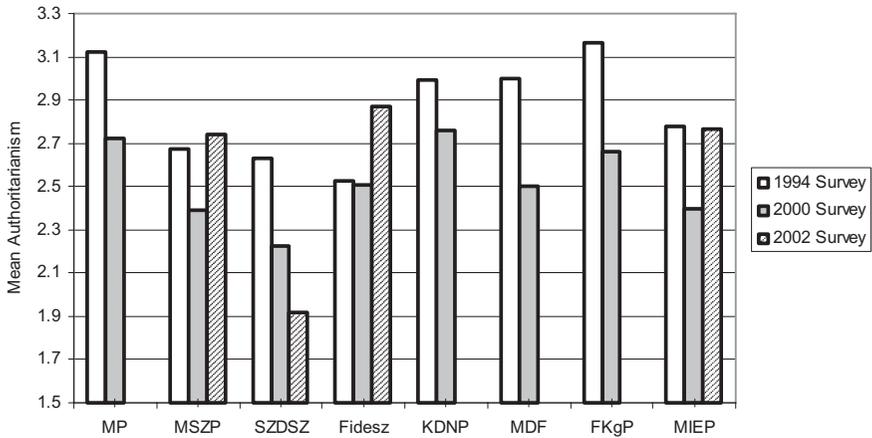


Figure 3. Mean Left-Right scores of Hungarian voters.

SZDSZ were both liberal parties, almost indistinguishable from each other, yet in 2002 they found themselves in the opposite camps, with Fidesz being the leading party on the right and SZDSZ being the junior partner of the Socialists. Since the split of the liberal center, two political blocs exist in Hungary—the left (MP, MSZP, SZDSZ) and the right (MDF, KDNP, FKGP, Fidesz, MIÉP)—despite the efforts of the SZDSZ to create an independent liberal pole. As far as size is concerned, in 1994 MSZP was the only large party (close to 40% strong), while, in subsequent years, Fidesz also managed to receive above 30% of the votes.

If the extremism hypothesis holds, then the voters of the Workers Party (left) and MIÉP (right) must be the most authoritarian. In contrast, for the right-wing authoritarianism model to be true, we should find the Workers Party and MSZP the least and MDF and MIÉP the most authoritarian, while the authoritarianism of the Fidesz voters should increase and the authoritarianism of SZDSZ voters should decrease during the examined years. If authoritarians, due to their conventionalism, tend to support large parties, then most of them must be found in the constituency of Fidesz and MSZP, the extreme left and the extreme right should appear as anti-authoritarian, and SZDSZ and MDF, the two declining parties, should gradually lose support among authoritarian voters.

According to the 1994 data (Figure 4), MSZP and SZDSZ, the moderate left and the liberals had the least authoritarian constituencies while the electorate of the traditional right and the radical left were the most authoritarian. However, the supporters of the MIÉP (the extreme right party) did not exhibit high levels of authoritarianism. The 2000 data present a similar picture—the center-left was less authoritarian than either the extreme left or the moderate right. The supporters of MIÉP displayed lower levels of authoritarianism than some of the more moderate



**Figure 4.** Average authoritarianism scores by party preference.  
 Note: Parties ordered according to mean left-right self-placement scores in 1994.

rightist parties and the Workers' Party. The main difference, however, concerns the relative position of Fidesz voters. Although Fidesz supporters were not different from the national mean in 2000, they were already significantly more authoritarian than the SZDSZ supporters. From being the party with the least authoritarian voters, Fidesz became indistinguishable from the other moderate right-wing parties.

By 2002, only four parties remained with measurable public support: the socialist MSZP, the liberal SZDSZ, the conservative Fidesz, and the extreme-right MIÉP. According to ANOVA tests, the differences among the major parties, in terms of authoritarianism, were again significant. According to the post hoc analysis (LSD,  $p < .05$ ; details not presented), SZDSZ voters were significantly less authoritarian than all other parties. MSZP was less authoritarian than Fidesz, but more than SZDSZ. The extreme-right MIÉP's authoritarianism score was around the national average. This party's electorate differed significantly only from SZDSZ supporters.

The findings indicate that, in spite of the changes in the party system, the basic relationship between authoritarianism and the party preferences remained unaltered. Authoritarianism reached high levels among the electorate of the center-right, it was less present among the extreme-right voters, and remained very low among the liberals. By 2002, a gap had grown between the Socialists and the liberals (SZDSZ), with the latter party becoming markedly less authoritarian. The shape of authoritarianism between MSZP, SZDSZ, and Fidesz is close to curvilinearity, yet this cannot be treated as evidence for the extremism model since neither MSZP nor Fidesz can be regarded as an extremist party.

The characteristics of Fidesz and SZDSZ changed according to the logic of the rightist authoritarianism model; the former became more, the latter less

authoritarian. The surprisingly low authoritarianism of MIÉP supporters may be due partly to the fact that conventional voters are discouraged by its extremist, pariah status. The fact that the increasing popularity of Fidesz was accompanied by its shift towards the authoritarian pole also indicates that authoritarians prefer strong parties. At the same time the high level of authoritarianism among the Workers' Party supporters clearly shows that marginalized position does not in itself scare authoritarians away. The latter case also highlights the fact that a group of leftist authoritarians continued to exist during the first decade after the regime change.

The hypothesis that specific ideological blocs have stable characteristics in terms of authoritarianism is especially well illustrated by the evidence of the changing level of authoritarianism following changes in position on the left-right scale. That is, when a party changes its ideological position on the left-right dimension, then, as Fidesz's and SZDSZ's examples attest, the authoritarianism of its voters will change accordingly.

### *Solving Two Puzzles*

The electorate of MIÉP and of Fidesz turned out to be somewhat different than expected: Fidesz more authoritarian, and MIÉP less authoritarian. As far as Fidesz is concerned, the relatively young age of its electorate seemed to warrant a relatively nonauthoritarian orientation; yet, in 2002, this party occupied the authoritarian pole of the party system. One step in disentangling the puzzle is to examine which authoritarianism items were particularly supported by the party's voters. The item where the largest difference exists between the national average and Fidesz was "*What our country needs is not so much laws and political programs, but, rather some brave, tireless and devoted leaders whom people can trust.*" Fidesz has a highly personalistic leadership: it is led by a young, dynamic and charismatic politician, worshiped by all voters of the party. Many voters support the party because of him. Young people seem to be especially ready to embrace this particular element of authoritarianism. Admiration for strong leaders appears as the politically most dynamic element of authoritarianism.

An even more serious puzzle is presented by the relatively low scores of the extreme-right MIÉP supporters. Specifically, our findings are at odds with Meloen's review of literally thousands of studies dealing with authoritarianism (e.g., Meloen, 1993, pp. 48, 67). His meta-analysis showed that across countries and across a 30-year period, authoritarianism consistently proved to be related with antidemocratic and fascist tendencies.

A closer look at the popularity of particular items among MIÉP supporters helps to solve this puzzle. MIÉP voters tended to *reject* authoritarianism items such as: "*All true patriots are obliged to take measures against those condemned by the leaders of the country.*"; "*Nowadays in our country most of the damage is done by those who do not respect our leaders and the order of the society.*";

*“It would be better for everyone if the authorities would censor the newspapers and films so that rubbish be kept away from the youth.”; “Young people sometimes have rebellious thoughts, but as they grow up, they should condemn them and adapt.”; and “The most important virtues a child has to learn are obedience and respect for authority.”* At the same time, they tended to accept that *“What our country needs is not so much laws and political programs, but, rather some brave, tireless and devoted leaders whom people can trust.”; “Most people are not aware that secret conspiracies influence a great part of their lives.”; and “Young people need strict regulations and determination to fight for their families and their country.”*

These findings seem to be well interpretable. The voters of the radical right-wing party mainly rejected those items that referred to public authorities. This is in line with the anti-establishment rhetoric of MIÉP. This party has been in permanent opposition and its leaders vehemently attack the social and political *status quo*. Hence, the sentiments of MIÉP supporters can hardly be characterized as “conventional.” Given the fact that conventionalism is supposed to be a central element of the authoritarianism syndrome, it is not surprising that MIÉP voters do not have particularly high authoritarianism scores. Those authoritarians who perceive the establishment to be promiscuity and cosmopolitan are forced to abandon their deference.

The low level of authoritarianism among the extreme-right supporters has, therefore, both methodological and substantive roots. The authoritarianism scales, as originally intended, measure conventional and conservative orientation. But extremism inevitably involves some degree of nonconventionalism, both in ideological content and methods of political action, thus making these parties less attractive to the authoritarians as defined by the commonly used scales. This becomes particularly obvious in a context where right-wing norms are not sufficiently well established.

Karen Stenner (2005) has recently suggested purging the conceptualization and the operationalization of authoritarianism from elements of conservatism and conventionalism. The merit of her approach is that it produces a nonequivocal, one-dimensional notion. But it also leads to a radical simplification of the original complex and political concept of authoritarianism. Whether one follows this direction or not, it is clear that the extreme-right relies, to a certain extent, on attitudes that are different from classical authoritarianism. Billig’s “man of violence” (who is ready to perpetrate aggression against outgroups but questions the existing authorities and shows a considerable amount of tolerance) or Altemeyer’s “wildcard authoritarian” (who is high on both left- and right-wing authoritarianism scales) or *The Authoritarian Personality*’s “rebel” (who is hostile, at least initially, to the existing authorities) may provide useful starting points for the construction of this distinct disposition.

But the low-scoring, extreme-right supporters can be also interpreted from the point of view of the Adorno et al.’s theory as individuals who are ready to respect “ingroup authorities,” but do not regard many of the traditional social authorities

as “their” authorities. In the rhetoric of the extreme right, the establishment often appears as left-wing, ethnically different (e.g., Jewish), and controlled by foreign centers of power, and, therefore, not a legitimate part of the ingroup. This calls for understanding authoritarianism in the context of group identity (Duckitt, 1993) and not simply as a set of attitudes related to individual traits.

### General Discussion and Conclusions

The present study investigated the relationship between authoritarianism and political orientation in Hungary. When ideological position was measured by left-right self-placement, we found evidence for both of our principal models: the right-wing authoritarianism model and the extremism model. The extremism model seemed to be slightly better supported initially. However, introducing the statistical control for education revealed that right-wingers would have been significantly more authoritarian than the left-wingers had there not been a difference between the education level of the two groups.

The right-wing authoritarianism model was even more clearly corroborated by the analysis of self-identification with such labels as “conservative,” “right-wing,” “national,” and “Christian.” Authoritarianism was also associated with the linear increase in positive attitude towards extreme-right political extremists.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the supporters of moderate/conservative right-wing parties consistently revealed higher degrees of authoritarianism.

We also found, although less consistently, evidence for the existence of left-wing authoritarianism. Self-identification with the most extreme left position on the left-right scale was associated with a higher level of authoritarianism in the 1994 and 2002 surveys. Party-wise, the old hard-core communists of the Workers Party have consistently been high on authoritarianism, until this party effectively disappeared from the political landscape in 2002. The center-left MSZP supporters tend to be average (2002) or below average (1994, 2000) in authoritarianism. The sympathizers with the leftist extremists were particularly authoritarian only in 1994. Even more interestingly, those who liked former communists were low in authoritarianism in both 1994 and 2000. In fact the radical anticommunists turned out to be high on authoritarianism. Identification with labels such as “socialist” or “left-wing” was either negatively or not associated with authoritarianism, additionally weakening the left-wing authoritarianism hypothesis. A low level of authoritarianism was typical of the moderate left (in terms of self-identification; scores 2, 3, and 4). There was a virtual lack of authoritarianism associated with the identification of “liberal.” The same applies to the preference for the left-

<sup>12</sup> Extreme right supporters were not particularly authoritarian, but the sympathy for extreme right-wingers correlated significantly with authoritarianism. The explanation for this contradiction is that the sympathy scale shows in fact a difference between complete and not-so-complete rejection of extreme right as an outgroup. Those who received high scores on this scale most likely find the “fascist threat” exaggerated. This opinion is widespread well beyond the extreme-right circles.

liberal SZDSZ. To conclude, leftist authoritarians exist, but they are few, they have recently lost “their” party (the Workers’ Party), and their presence is overshadowed by the authoritarianism of the anticommunist right.

The extremism hypothesis also received some, though weaker, support. The tendency towards left-right extremism was, at least before being controlled for education, more strongly related to authoritarianism than left-right position. In terms of party support, the conservative right and the extreme left have been found to be more authoritarian than the (liberal) center. But the extremism hypothesis was contradicted by several findings, like the low authoritarianism of those who identified with leftist ideological labels, the low authoritarianism among those who expressed support towards left-wing extremists and ex-communists, and the average authoritarianism of MIÉP supporters. Although the shape of the relationship between authoritarianism and the parties’ left-right position would seem to support the extremism hypothesis (especially in the 2002 survey), it would be difficult to interpret either the moderately leftist MSZP or the conservative Fidesz as extremist parties as they are the two largest mainstream Hungarian parties. SZDSZ, the party with the lowest authoritarianism score is in fact radical (extremist) in its support of ethnic tolerance and libertarian moral values. But this “extremity” of the party is not well captured by the left-right scales traditionally used in Europe.

Taking all findings into account, the pattern of the interrelations between ideological orientation and authoritarianism proved to be more complex than any of the models discussed in the literature. The close to linear relationship found in many Western countries did not materialize due to the authoritarianism of the radical left and the anti-establishment character of the radical right. The left, in general, stands between the anti-authoritarian liberals and the more authoritarian nationalist-conservatives. The nonauthoritarianism pole was neither on the radical left nor in the metric centre of the left-right scale, but on the center-left range.

The complexity of the detected Hungarian pattern is likely to be due to or at least facilitated by the lack of a homogenous value system and a dominant ideology. In such situations, a number of alternative logics may guide the combination of sociopsychological orientations and political positions. Some authoritarians will choose to support principles that were dominant in their formative years (in this case, communism). Others will go with the mainstream, supporting large, powerful parties. Others will take the cues from their primary reference groups. For instance, older, church-attending authoritarians will support center-right parties.

And yet, even in this open-ended, fluid situation, most of the analyzed information pointed towards the high authoritarianism of the conservative right. It seems that this political orientation has a number of elements, like nationalism, social conservatism, and clericalism (Enyedi & Todosijević, 2003) that have a powerful appeal for those with authoritarian dispositions.

Even societies without an official dominant ideology may have ideologically homogenous pockets and/or citizens whose formative years were spent under the rule of a well-defined set of political norms. Therefore, conformism can be a major

factor behind authoritarianism also in transitional societies. Yet in these cases only a careful examination of the organization of the political forces, their rhetoric and leadership structure, and the sociological, cultural, and psychological profile of their electorate will help in predicting whom the authoritarians will support. Nevertheless, it is also clear that some ideologies have intrinsic affiliations with authoritarianism. Our data suggested that the moderate and liberal left tends to be hostile, while the conservative right, and, in the early postcommunist context, the radical left, tends to be accommodative to authoritarianism. The extremism model is more likely to appear in situations when mainstream politics is challenged by antidemocratic forces on both sides of the spectrum, as it was the case right after the regime change in Eastern Europe. Conservative preferences seem to retain their authoritarian dimensions across various contexts.

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