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**PhD Thesis Booklet**

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**Political and Ideological Preferences in the Context of Need for Closure,  
Authoritarianism, Anxiety and Value Preferences**

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**2014**

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The main research question in relation to our dissertation: political-ideological preferences (political-party preference, self-identification on ideological scales) that reveal correspondence with cognitive, emotional and value-preference factors as well as with attitude-objects, and how are these changes influenced by age? Beyond that we were trying to find an answer (through a pre-research and a main research) to the differences between those, who were raised in the political system before 1990 and were voteable after the change of the political system, and those who have turned voteable for a few years, respectively. As a consequence, we have set as an aim to compare the results of these two age groups. According to recent foreign studies, previously the strong relationship between political attitudes and social groups seems to lose strength (Garzia, 2013; Devine, 2012), simultaneously with this fact personal factors (such as decision-making) come into the front. This justifies the focus made on the personal factors and decision-making dispositions in this present study.

## **Introduction**

As far as the ideological dimensions are concerned we can highlight the fact that the basic labels remain unchanged (Jost és Amodio, 2012), on the other hand the determinative nature of a given political context is crucial (Pioro, Schwartz and Davidov, 2011). Ideology is, a set of notions and beliefs interwoven with each other and organized around a universal idea. Fundamentally, in the Western European countries this division is made on liberals and conservatives. These notions bear an influence on all the walk of life (Kerlinger, 1984).

Conservatism can be applied as a political-ideological category; accordingly some value-preferences are strongly accepted while others are rejected (Kiss, 1999). On ideological-political preferences and their relation there are a lot of foreign (e.g. Pioro and colleagues, 2011) as well as Hungarian recent studies (e.g. Jelenfi and colleagues, 2010) to be found. Liberalism and conservatism is primarily interpreted by the individual through socio-political context, on which great influence is imposed by religious values (Devine, 2012). Acceptance or just the rejection of the religious values in Hungary means an important differentiation from the aspect of ideological or political preferences (Fábián, 2008). Alongside religion the preference of the previous system (in concrete research the Kadar-era) proved to be an important confine (Hunyady, 2011).

In relation to party-preference, sociological researches predominantly indicate the following: fundamentally, voters cast their vote with a greater chance to the political party that supports their own social layer. According to the traditional sociological principle, the working class supported the left-wing, while the middle-class supported the right-wing. Later on, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this axiom gradually proved to be false and new phenomena took over its place, namely: the younger voters reveal greater level of independence from their group, and rather cast a vote based on their individual orientation and values (Piorko and colleagues, 2011). In connection with Italian elections a research can be also found, according to which results indicate a better understanding of political choice according to Schwartzian value-type classification rather than in case of demographic variables (Capara and colleagues, 2006). In the same way, in Western Europe as of the early seventies on the number of “class-vote” decreases (Fábián, 2005).

### ***Political preferences in connection with certain psychological indicators***

An important innovation of the research of the cognitive style, nowadays often researched theory in the English language literature that was developed by Arie W. Kruglanski and colleagues. The theory in relation to the previous ones puts the motivational basis in front. As Hunyady (2005) points out, loftiness of the theory consists in the fact that it combined the cognitive and motivational theories. The need for closure theory, not only does reckon with individual information handling, but also emphasizes the importance of the situational factors. The need for closure is a cognition attitude that stimulates a person to develop quick suppositions (Kruglanski, 2005).

We could find in several different countries researches that indicate the connection between the need for closure and right-wing political party preferences. Jost and colleagues (Jost, Kruglanski és Simon, 1999), found albeit small, but evincible correspondence between the need for closure original, English version and the liberal-conservative self-classification scale – the higher the conclusion demand is, the higher the conservative self-classification is. At this point we can associate with a research that was made based upon the deeper analysis of the original questionnaire, according to which the F-scale as well as the D-scale with medium intensity, but significantly accompanies individual need for closure, as the latter corresponds with the authoritarianism (Webster és Kruglanski, 1994). Traditional ideology can be associated with conservatism, beyond that individual values influence the need for closure and political conservatism (Zavala és Van Bergh, 2007).

Chirumbolo and Leone (2008) got results that overlap the above mentioned ones, just as in case of two Italian elections according to which there is a correlation between casting a vote to more conservative parties and the higher need for closure. Within Europe a significant differentiation has to be made between post-communist countries and Western-European countries. In connection with the comparison of the results of the Flemish and Polish researchers highlight the fact that in one hand the expected positive correspondence was to be visualized in case of economical conservatism and the higher need for closure, on the other hand based on the Polish sample just the opposite turned out to be true. However, if the economical conservatism was not analyzed, but only conservatism in general, then the both sample positively corresponded with the responders' need for closure (Kossowska és Van Hiel, 2003).

### **Conservatism and motivated cognition**

The best interpretation of conservatism is the fear of uncertainty according to Wilson's (1973) theory, who regards conservatism as a more general form of authoritarianism; the ideological commitment bears more functions. On the one hand, it is important from the fear of uncertainty's standpoint, on the other hand it increases existential security that decreases our fears arising from mortality (Jost és Amodio, 2012). (Similarly, the base of our fears arising from mortality are the "terror management – theories (TMT)" [Greenberg and colleagues, 1992]).

Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski and Sulloway (2003) after several decades of meta-analytical researches, according to which conservative preferences among others are fear of death, dogmatism, system justification, the need for order and organization, just as avoidance of uncertainty. Beyond that in the motives to be found in connection with conservatism is fear and anxiety. All of these phenomena are well based in the system justification theory (for details see: Jost, 2003), which proves that the individual is motivated to support the present social system and that corresponds to the conservative value-preferences. From their point of view, different ideologies are accepted by the people because they are based on strong motivational basis and so satisfying different psychological needs.

In their analysis only the very root of conservatism is explained, while the peripheral parts are believed to be influenced by the local contexts. They classify motives connected with political conservatism into three main groups: (1) epistemic motives (uncertainty avoidance, intolerance of ambiguity, dogmatism, order, need for structure and need for

closure); (2) existential motives (self-assessment, loss avoidance, handling fear); (3) ideological motives (rationalization of self-interest, group-based dominance, system justification) (Jost and colleagues 2003).

### **Influence of age**

From the perspective of need for closure there is one more important factor. Kossowska, Jaśko and Bar-Tal (2012) based on the Polish sample found that there is a difference between the elderly people and younger generations in relation to need for closure. According to their results the elderly people have a higher demand for need for closure. If we move along this rational, it is worth taking a short retrospective at Wilson (1973), who says that there is a positive linear correspondence between the age and conservatism. The authoritarianism and prejudices connected to it also indicate a correlation to age (Erős és Fábíán, 1999), while the linear correlation between the age and conservatism based on Hungarian sample Gaspar (2006) did not manage to reproduce.

### ***Correspondence between anxiety, feeling of threat, thinking style and political preferences***

Correspondence between the authoritarianism and feeling of threat has been proved in several researches from several different points of view. On the one hand, taking a closer look at personal-psychological aspect, persons leaning towards authoritarianism (to be perfectly precise: those who scored higher at the authoritarianism measuring scale) are prone to be more sensitive to threatening words compared with their counterparts scoring less. On the other hand, in menacing historical periods there is an increase in preference towards authoritarianism (Thórisdóttir and Jost, 2011) – this very idea appears in the work of Jost and colleagues (2003) by doing so connecting conservatism with fear. Beyond that we can start off from inner, general feeling of threat, namely from anxiety and in this manner we can examine its relation to the need for closure, with political preferences, respectively.

The feeling of threat, arising either from a situational factor or being a personal characteristic of a given person is accompanied by higher need for closure (Kruglanski, 2005). This goes hand in hand with lower cognitive capacity owing to this the person is motivated to favor safe answers. In this rate, traditionally right-wing value preferences go along with

higher degree of anxiety at examined subjects, just as the higher degree of feeling of threat (Thórisdóttir and Jost, 2011). Altemeyer (1998) confirms the above stated facts, according to Altemeyer's point of view the higher degree of feeling of threat is in positive correlation with the preferences of the right-wing authoritarianism.

## Research questions

Our question is the following, whether by Jost and colleagues (2003) discovered overall meta-analytical correlations can be applied to the Hungarian sample as far as the political conservatism and other political preferences are concerned. In their analysis only the very root of conservatism is explained, while the peripheral areas are believed to be influenced by the local contexts. Discovering the peripheral areas was one of the main aim of ours. Among the listed social cognitive motives by Jost and colleagues (2003) the following ones (later to be precisely detailed), were set out to be measured by the Hungarian translation of the gauge:

Epistemic motives:

1. Need for Closure Scale and sub-scales (Kruglanski, Webster and Klem, 1993) of it in Hungarian language (Csanádi, Harsányi and Szabó, 2009b)
2. Shortened version of Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale (Altemeyer, 1981; in Hungarian language: Fábíán, 1999).

Existential motives:

1. Concern measuring, individually compiled questionnaire
2. Anxiety measuring STAI (Spielberger, 1970) in Hungarian language (Sipos, Sipos and Spielberger 1988)
3. Mentioning mortal fear through research manipulation.

Ideological motives:

1. Measured by acceptance or dismissal of social inequity
2. Examination by using Schwartz (1992) value-type for disclosing relations (Hungarian language questionnaire, see Nguyen Luu and colleagues, 2003)

As we mentioned before, besides taking a closer look at dispositional connections, effect of a experimental manipulation was set as one of our aims, to which primarily the bases were taken from previous work of Thórisdóttir and Jost (2011) with a small modifications on it.

Our further aim was in connection with the examined questionnaires – that is Need For Closure Scale, the shortened version of the authoritarianism measuring RWA scale and the anxiety measuring STAI – to disclose the correlation between these primarily from personal-psychological point of view. Besides this, as the Need For Closure Scale Hungarian adaptation of translation can be regarded as rather volatile, just as the writer of the present lines participated in elaboration and development of it, the sifting statistical analysis of it regarding previous analysis was set as our aim.

Our hypothesis – in explorative cases – and research questions during pre-research phase were divided into one, while during the main research phase were divided into seven question groups. In the very focus of our pre-research are Schwartz's (1992) value-theory types, between these and ideological-political values were we trying to prove relations. In our main research in the first question group we were examining the relation between need for closure, authoritarianism and anxiety measuring scale. In the second, we were trying to prove relation between ideological preferences and political party support/preference. In the third set of questions, different ideological and political differences, just as psychological variables (need for closure, authoritarianism, anxiety) the connection between these was examined in way that the influence of the age received a special accent.

In the fourth group of questions, we were seeking answers to similar questions, but with a different methodology. At this point, we differentiated subjects into clusters according scores based on four ideology scales, and by doing so we have examined the relation and differences between these. In the fifth group the subjects – in opposition to the previous question groups – were not classified based on their own ideological views, but rather based on a list containing 16 notions. In the sixth group of questions, the political-ideological preferences defined by psychological variables were measured separately with the help of linear regressive model in case of different sub-groups.

The seventh group of questions, out of the ordinary way in comparison with the above listed methods, is inspired to examine an influence of an manipulation, in which the quest for an answer whether mentioning death can change left or right-wing self-classification or not. Results are discussed in the discussion part together with pre-research results.

The original aim of this dissertation was neither of the gauges to be tested. However, as recently published (Csanádi and colleagues, 2009b), translated into Hungarian, closely connected to the topic of the dissertation need for closure measuring questionnaire we had the possibility to have twice as much as the original sample, thereon results of the sample could

be subjected to different statistical analysis, consequently these analysis make a part of this very dissertation.

## **Results and discussion**

### *Pre-research*

In our pre-research 141 (103 women and 38 men) students took part, who are on teacher training track, age average 32,03 (SD=9,58) the youngest among them was 21, while the oldest 56 years old. Data was collected during March and April 2012, it was organized by the researches carrying out the research.

In our pre-research the connection between the political-ideological preferences and the Schwartzian value-theory was set to be our aim. Our results predominantly prove the classical definitions *raison d'être* in case of the ideological self-classification, as the value types correlate with the classical conservative/liberal values. These are very similar to the Calogero, Bardi and Sutton (2008) ones, just as they can be well-interpretable by motivated social cognition theory (Jost and colleagues, 2003), as well as with the Kruglanski's (1989) need for closure concept. The left-right self-classification is connected with the self-independence value-type (negatively), just as security (positively) in Schwartzian interpretation (1994), according to whom this can be associated with the classical liberal-conservative dimension. All this overlaps with the left-right scale and the classical liberal-conservative bipolar scale (just as the Jost, Federico and Napier [2009] refer to the American setting. For this very reason, there is a positive connection between conformity and authority-oriented value type (consequently rather right-wing) that was revealed in our research.

The conservative self-classification was in connection with the tradition; therefore this also confirms the relevance of classical definitions, values in case of conservative self-classification. One of our interesting results is that the socialist self-classification indicates a rather negative connection with the higher-order dimensions of conformity and security-oriented value-types. Thus, the preference for social order and social standards indicate a lower-lever. In case of radical right-wing self-classification there were three correspondences with the value-types. Unsurprisingly, it goes together with the security-oriented (just with the opposite sign, as in the case of the socialist self-classification, so with a positive sign) consequently denotes its preference towards order. Here it is has to be highlighted that there

is a strong correlation between this very value-type and Need For Closure Scale order and organization sub-scales that measure very similar constructs.

### ***Main research***

Data gathering took place from the beginning of October 2012 to the end of November in Csongrád county, predominantly in Szeged. The whole pattern consists of 660 persons, 441 women and 210 men (9 did not answer the question). Age average was 33,63 years (dispersion: 12,65, the youngest 18, the oldest was 63 years old). Data gathering was partly based on quotes and partly on amenities.

**In the first group of questions** the three most specified scales interrelating connections were examined. Positive relation between authoritarianism and the need for closure confirmed the already published results in the literature (e.g. Webster and Kruglanski, 1994; Jost and colleagues, 2003). Both of these gauges measure an epistemic motive, and according to our data they are not in connection with anxiety as an existential motive. In accordance with our premise, the above connection refers to personal dimensions that are independent of political context. The fact that anxiety neither correlates to the need for closure nor authoritarianism, can be interpreted as a local feature.

**The second group of questions** according to which left-wing-right-wing scale indicates a strong correlation with the all four ideological scales, but an interesting result based either on the pre-research or on the main research reveals that the radical right and the socialist (left-wing) indicate a much more stronger correlation, as in the case of conservative and liberal (0,6 correlating coefficient vis-à-vis 0,3 coefficient). The conservative and liberal somewhat weaker correlation, is in opposition with the American research results (Jost and colleagues, 2009), in which the left-wing right-wing scale is in accordance with the liberal-conservative notions, as the latter completely corresponds to sympathy of the desired President in the research of Amodio, Jost, Master and Yee (2007).

**The third group of questions** was oriented towards relation system between political and psychological variables. One of our most important result indicates the fact that among epistemic motives the need for closure was not followed by a higher conservative self-classification (in opposition to what Jost and colleagues 2003 signaled), however it was followed by the liberal one (in negative direction). In a similar way to data collected by Jost and colleagues (1999) in America, this sample indicates the same connection, from the perspective that the higher liberal self-classification goes along with the lower need for

closure, however as there bi-polar conservative-liberal scale was used, consequently correlation between conservative preferences was indicated, in our research this could not be observed. In accordance with our premise, this could be the explanation to the fact that the liberal self-classification is much more in connection with the younger age, which – revealed from the following data of ours – is in accordance with the lower level for need for closure.

The following data indicates that the older age is accompanied with the higher level of need for closure. This could be the explanation, why there is no connection between the conservative and radical left-wing ideologies, party preferences – take for example base voters and their age difference. The connection between age and the need for closure is published also in foreign literature, in a post-communist country too, namely on the apropos of a research done in Poland (Kossowska and colleagues, 2012). According to Hungarian data the correlation between age and authoritarianism has to be highlighted (Erős and Fábrián, 1999) because the authoritarianism indicated connection with the need for closure. The reason for the higher need for closure and age could be explained by the lower working memory capacity (see Csanádi, Harsányi and Németh, 2009a) and other changes in cognitive functions (Kossowska and colleagues, 2012). Beyond these we should not disregard the diverse political-socialization of the participants, which point is believed to be most crucial one.

Neither in case of authoritarianism, nor in case of anxiety did the result indicate difference in case of the two age groups. Consequently, our research could not confirm result by Erős and Fábrián (1999) in connection with age and authoritarianism, as it would not be proven to be case regarding Jobbik's young voting base (Sík, 2010) and the party's profile.

In relation to relatively high score for the need for closure in case of Jobbik's voters is not a surprise, while what was less expected that the MSZP voters scored by far the highest on average. We should take into consideration age when explaining this data, as the MSZP voters are older, based on previous representative state level research scores (Sík, 2010) and based on (Szeged Studies, 2012) and in the very same year data collection took place in Szeged (also representative). This was confirmed by our data, too, as the LMP voters and Jobbik voters were the youngest ones. Consequently, the high level for need for closure in case of MSZP voters and Jobbik voters could lay somewhere else. In case of previous ones, the older age can be emphasized, while in the case of the latter ones, the correlation between higher need for closure and authoritarianism could provide an explanation. As a matter of course, beyond these factors there are further aspects that can be of decisive influence, the above mentioned two factors on no account should stand in itself.

In relation to the need for closure the Fidesz-KDNP voters scored somewhat above average. This predominantly can be attributed to higher scores in decision-making and closed thinking sub-scales. To our surprise, Fidesz-KDNP supporters, did not score excessively high in the order and organization sub-scale, consequently the order and organization was not seen in the projected vision of Fidesz, (as Hunyady [2011] stated). Not to say that Jobbik voters scored high in comparison with the average – not surprisingly, let’s just take a look at the party’s often repetition of order word in its communication – however the MSZP sympathizers proved to prefer order and organization the most. In relation to the LMP the lower need for closure is in accordance with the expectations, in this respect sympathizers of the party can be characterized as the ones having the most open way of thinking.

As far as the authoritarianism is concerned party sympathizers responded accordingly to the expected. Jobbik and Fidesz-KDNP voters scored highest on average, surprisingly the latter ones score somewhat higher. On the other hand, there are the LMP voters, who as well in case of need for closure as in case of authoritarianism scored lowest, just as the MSZP sympathizers. Authoritarianism and left-wing preference connection is in accordance with the Fábíán (1999) scores.

All in all, we can say that among voters, LMP voters “stand out” due to their openness, while Jobbik voters do the same just because of their authoritarianism. Fidesz and MSZP voters are very similar to each other; however a significant differentiation should be made, as the MSZP voters are older, with higher need for closure and less authoritarianism leaning. We did not get any kind of correlation or difference in relation to anxiety as far as the party voters are concerned.

**In the fourth group of questions** predominantly subject clusters based on the four ideological scales differentiate from the other analysis. After analyzing the sample, the four-cluster resolution proved to be the best fitting one. Beside, the expected apolitical cluster, a strongly right-wing and a liberal-left-wing cluster, a fourth one an “interim” one; conservative-liberal cluster appeared, in which one third of the Fidesz-KDNP voters got into. Among these clusters no significant difference could be found as far as the need for closure and anxiety is concerned, however from the perspective of authoritarianism they showed significant differences. The above average score could be attributed to the radical-right-wing, while the lowest scored ones could be classified into liberal-left-wing group. In case of faithful voters we can differentiate only two clusters, in which based on the whole sample the difference is indicated by authoritarianism. A very similar tendency is that the anxiety and the need for closure is not differentiated.

In case we take a look at to the sub-samples of faithful voters within age groups, we receive a clearer picture and the tendencies are similar. Throughout the whole older as well as the younger sub-sample there is a political cluster, or one closely next to it that disappears as we examine the faithful voters within the sub-samples. By this time, de facto, there will be only two clusters to be differentiated. The expected tendency repeated itself that is the more conservative clusters scored higher in relation to authoritarianism, while in case of need for closure and anxiety there was no difference among the groups. All in all, as far as the epistemic motives are concerned in one case there was a difference to be seen, while in the case of the other one no difference is to be seen, whereas anxiety still is not a factor to be taken into account.

**In the fifth groups of questions**, factor analysis was made on a 16 notion containing list. In accordance with our expectation one especially conservative factor appeared accompanied by three others. Attitude based upon this factor is significantly higher in case of older age group. So we can see that there is correspondence between older age and conservative attitude – just as it happened in the case of the previous questions groups – however, the significant difference is that the subject's conservatism was measured by the answers given to the notions and not on self-assessment.

The traditional conservative factor was strongest among the Fidesz voters, and by doing so overtaking the Jobbik voters. All this proves once again that the parties classical left-right and conservative-left-wing division, respectively has a *raison d'être*, as their voters can be clearly differentiated along these factors. This very same is supported by the fact that on the other side of this factor MSZP and Democratic Coalition sympathizers can be found, while LMP voters have the most negative attitude in relation to this question. This factor goes together with authoritarianism, in a weaker correlation, but still detectable with need for closure. It is worth taking a short look back at the previously discussed results, according to which conservative self-classification does not necessarily go along with the results we received at the Need For Closure Questionnaire, however this is true in case of Hungarian version of RWA. This supports the Jost and colleagues (2003) on Hungarian sample. Anxiety as an existential motive still lacked to show correlation with the traditional conservative factor.

**In the sixth group of questions** we tried to set up models that explain conservatism. Independent variables were questionnaires measuring cognitive, emotional answers, party preference and 16 notion related results. According to these the authoritarianism and – not surprisingly – in most cases preference of Fidesz-KDNP goes along with the preference of

conservatism. Younger and older generations were examined separately in a way that the faithful voters were distinguished from the others within these sub-groups. For all the above reasons, two tendencies are to be noticed. Among the younger age group authoritarianism and Horthy-era proved to be a good predictor either in case of faithful voters or in case of the whole sub-sample of Fidesz, KDNP along with religion. Beyond the expected and similar tendencies in case of older age group (preference of Fidesz, KDNP, Horthy-era) sympathy with MSZP was to be seen. Consequently, in the age group of 39 year-older MSZP sympathy correlated to the conservative self-classification. This result is in accordance with the Piurko and colleagues (2011) results that found a correlation between preferences of the political left and previous system in Hungary. At this rate the conservatism – as we have already mentioned it among classical definitions – is partly connected to the previous system preference in case of members of the older age group, that is to say, those who lived in the previous system and in 1990 were able to cast a vote.

**In the seventh group of questions** mentioning fear of death and its possible effects were tested on the left-wing-right-wing political scale. On the basis of the results it can be stated that mentioning of fear left-right self-classification is not influenced – an exception to this are the LMP voters. We assume that in case of faithful voters self-classification is more fixed, while according to these data the LMP voters can be easily “tipped” in this matter. This data supports the so called “conservative shift” (Bonnano and Jost, 2006) in opposition to the supposed trends by the terror-management (Greenberg and colleagues, 1992). The results are similar to those of Thórisdóttír and Jost (2011), as in case of samples with no manipulation the voters were slightly self-classified left leaning, while after mentioning fear of death they scored an average (more precisely becoming slightly right leaning).

A possible explanation to this can be the fact that this is a younger party, not having as stable background in relation to the left-right scale, so situational factors can be of greater influence as far as the self-classification is concerned.

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