



The Hungarian Voter: Left–Right Dimension as a Clue to Policy Preferences

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ABSTRACT. The left–right (L–R) ideological dimension has been regarded as a useful cognitive device for orientation in the political realm. Thanks to its absorptive nature it is able to represent a party’s stands on various issues simultaneously. This article specifies a number of conditions that its use ought to satisfy in order to function as a “rational” clue for parties’ positions on issues. The perceived position of parties on the L–R dimension should correspond to the parties’ actual issue positions, and the public should be aware of which policies are represented by particular positions on the L–R dimension. The present article addresses this problem, and provides an empirical test on the basis of survey data on political preferences of a random sample of Hungarian voters ($N = 1453$) and of members of the Hungarian national Parliament. The evidence generally supports the plausibility of the examined model, and shows that members of the Hungarian public are reasonably successful in matching their and their representatives’ issue preferences via the familiar left–right ideological code.

Keywords: • Cognitive shortcut • Hungary • Left–right ideology • Policy preferences

It is commonly assumed that democracy requires enlightened, politically sophisticated, interested, and involved citizens. Classical thinkers such as Mill, Locke, and Tocqueville believed that such citizenry is a *conditio sine qua non* of a democratic polity. Empirical political science has also relied on this assumption (for example, Almond and Verba, 1963). However, a closer look at citizens’ political beliefs has revealed “the stunning contrast ... between the classic image of the democratic citizen and the actual nature of the electorate” (Dalton and Wattenberg, 1993: 194). Campbell et al. (1960: 543) concluded that the American electorate “is almost completely unable to judge the rationality of government

action; knowing little of the particular policies and what has led to them, the mass electorate is not able either to appraise its goals or the appropriateness of the means chosen to secure these goals.”

In light of unsophisticated electorates, a distinctively important question is what determines voting behavior and how one assesses its “rationality.” According to Dalton and Wattenberg (1993: 196), there are three approaches to the study of how individuals “make reasonable political decisions at modest cost and without perfect information”: sociological, psychological, and economic. In the sociological model, the focus is on the role of primary groups as determinants of voting, whether through common group interests (Berelson et al., 1954) or as a reflection of social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Here, rationality of voting refers to the degree to which a chosen party or candidate supports the interests of the voter’s relevant social category.

According to the social-psychological model of the “Michigan school” (Campbell et al., 1960), social groups, among other factors, play a role in determining *party identification*, which then exercises its own influence on political decisions. Party identification helps when orienting oneself in the complex political world through simplification, and through, in particular, simplification of the voting choice process. In their “funnel of causality,” opinions about issues and images of candidates are factors directly influencing the voting decision, besides party identification. However, in this model, opinions about issues are partly determined by party identification, that is, they are not based solely on calculations of individual self-interest. Hence, the “rational voters” are only some of those whose voting decision is related to their issue opinions. Campbell et al. (1960) found that less than a third of all voters were “issue voters” in the proper sense. For this reason, they argued that election results are weakly related to the policy preferences of the public.

In the economic approach to voting, as exemplified by Downs (1957), it is *assumed* that policy preferences are the main determinants of voting. According to this perspective, voters are active and rational decision-makers, driven by the expected utility of an election outcome. Voters evaluate options with reference to their self-interest, according to, for example, party promises and the government’s past performance (for example, Fiorina, 1981). An interesting outcome of the Downsian approach has been a view of disinterested and uninvolved citizens as basically rational agents, contrary to the normative image. Given the cost-benefit ratio of gathering political information, and the practical contribution to and benefit of a single vote, politically involved citizens appeared as a puzzle that required an explanation. This apparent paradox pointed out the role of various information shortcuts and other cognitive tools that help orientation in the political realm.

Among various possible cognitive devices, the role of the left–right (L–R) ideological dimension has received particular attention. This is not surprising, given the pervasiveness of L–R semantics in European politics for more than two centuries. According to Knutsen (1995: 63), “the use of the [L–R] schema is an efficient way to summarize the programs of political parties and groups, and to label important political issues of a given era.” A particular advantage of the L–R schema is its ability to represent party stands on many issues simultaneously (cf. Dalton and Wattenberg, 1993; Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990; Knutsen, 1995). According to Downs (1957: 132) “each party takes stands on many issues, and each stand can be assigned a position on our left-right scale.” Moreover, this approach is

able to absorb geographical and temporal variations. Knutsen's comparative and longitudinal study concludes that "the left-right semantics have been associated with pre-industrial conflicts ... they remain highly correlated with the dominant industrial value orientations (left-right materialist values), and are also increasingly associated with the new set of materialist/post-materialist value orientations" (1995: 87).

The L–R dimension is certainly a plausible cognitive shortcut for policy preferences, yet there is little discussion of what specific conditions the schema has to satisfy in order to perform the orientation and communication functions. The simplest is to say that the parties' perceived positions on the L–R continuum should correspond to the parties' actual positions, and that the public should be aware of which policies are represented by particular positions on the L–R continuum. Pappi (1996) offered two somewhat vague criteria along these lines. One states that "in order for them [L–R labels] to function as orientation shortcuts at all, members of the public have to attach those labels to political parties ... even unsophisticated voters should be able to apply the left-right schema as a mere orientation device" (Pappi, 1996: 265). The other condition requires that "the respondents are able to use the same orientation device about themselves as about parties, which is to say, they also perceive their own policy preferences in general left-right terms" (Pappi, 1996: 265).

The present article argues that the problem is more complex, and that a more elaborate set of conditions should be satisfied if the L–R schema is to be seen as an efficient communication and orientation device. The five specific conditions are as follows.

1. The elite's coherent use of the L–R dimension. (1a) There should be agreement among the elite about the position of different parties on the L–R scale. (1b) If there is correlation between the elite's L–R party placement and their policy preferences, the L–R continuum can be used meaningfully as a clue for their policy intentions.¹
2. Coherent use of the L–R continuum among the masses. (2a) The electorate should perceive the positions of parties on the L–R continuum accurately. (2b) Correlation between voters' policy preferences and their L–R self-placement can be used as evidence that voters meaningfully use this dimension.
3. Congruent use of the L–R continuum among the elite and electorate. If both the masses and elite use the L–R continuum coherently, and in the same way (that is, they attach the same policy preferences to various positions on the L–R scale), then the schema can be used as an effective cognitive tool for selecting the desired policies.
4. Relevance of the L–R continuum for voting. Even if the first three conditions are satisfied, the L–R continuum could remain only a potentially useful cognitive device. It is important to see whether voters' L–R self-placement is related to their party preferences, and at the same time whether they prefer parties they both *perceive* to be and that *are* close to them on the L–R dimension.
5. Congruence between the policy preferences of the voters and those of the elites of the parties they choose. If Conditions 1–4 are satisfied, voters should as a result vote for parties that promote policies they themselves prefer. This is a crucial requirement.

These questions are addressed in this research on the basis of data on the

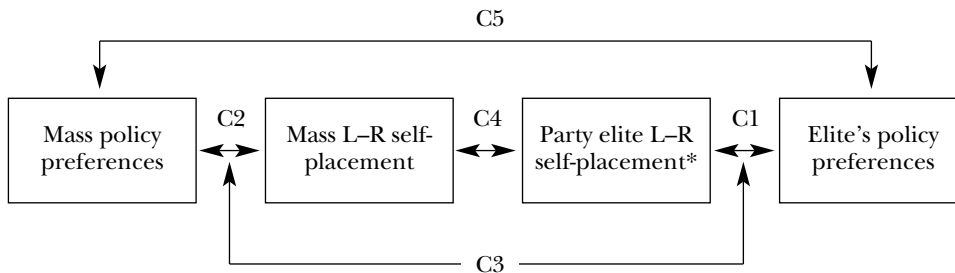
political preferences of a random sample of Hungarian voters and of members of the Hungarian national Parliament.

Model

It may be useful to present graphically the model that will be examined (see Figure 1). It is assumed that voters' policy preferences are related to their L-R self-placement (Condition 2) and that the elite's policy preferences are related to their L-R self-placement (Condition 1). Voters' L-R self-placement is related to the L-R position of a party they prefer (part of Condition 4). Condition 3 states that the relationship between mass policy preferences and their L-R self-placement should be congruent with the relationship between elite policy preferences and their L-R self-placement. Finally, as a result, voters' policy preferences should be correlated with the policy preferences of the elite of the party for which they vote (Condition 5).

Voting for parties that prefer the same policies as the voters do would indicate that the vote is rational, and that a polity functions (not only formally) democratically. However, even if all five conditions are satisfied, it does not prove that voting decisions (or party preferences in general) are made with the use of the L-R schema. Obviously, such an outcome could result from a variety of processes. For example, voters could make their decision, like ideal citizens, on the basis of a more direct knowledge of parties' policy preferences, without using any shortcut. The ultimate proof of the theory would require, but would not be limited to, introspective evidence of voters' decision-making processes. As an indirect operationalization of this problem, it could be hypothesized that if voters rely more on the L-R clue than on direct knowledge (presumably accurate), then there should be a greater resemblance between the masses' and the elite's L-R self-placements than between their policy preferences. This corollary hypothesis will also be examined.

This article examines whether and to what extent the Hungarian electorate and political elite satisfy the five conditions for the use of the L-R ideological scale as a clue for policy preferences. I will consider whether the available empirical evidence is *consistent* with the model, without completely ruling out possible alternative explanations. In addition, it should be emphasized that the arrows in Figure 1 are not intended to represent any *causal* relationships, nor that all



*Determined by their positioning of their own party on the L-R continuum.

FIGURE 1. *Hypothetical model of the use of the L-R dimension as a clue for preferred policies*

TABLE 1. *Distribution of MPs and voters according to party membership and voting preferences*

Party	MPs		Voters		Voters and potential voters		
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party	69	34.3	317	22.3	404	28.4
SZDSZ	Alliance of Free Democrats	17	8.5	85	6.0	92	6.5
Fidesz-MPP	Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party	69	34.3	278	19.5	408	28.7
MDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum	4	2.0	21	1.5	24	1.7
FKgP	Independent Smallholders Party	19	9.5	119	8.4	169	11.9
MIÉP	Party of Hungarian Justice and Life	8	4.0	34	2.4	39	2.7
Other/missing		15	7.5	568	39.9	286	20.1
Total		201	100.1	1422	100	1422	100

possible relationships are indicated. The present analysis should be seen as an exploratory study of the *plausibility* of the outlined model.

The Data

The analysis of popular political beliefs is based on the second wave of a panel study, the first wave of which interviewed a random, nationwide sample of voters in Hungary.² This survey was conducted in April 1998 between the two rounds of the election, and included reinterviewed respondents from the first wave in March of the same year, with an attrition rate of approximately 40 percent. The sample was weighted so that it represents the adult Hungarian population according to the major demographic variables ($N = 1453$ before weighting). The data on the elite's beliefs were derived from a questionnaire answered by 201 members of the Hungarian Parliament in October 1998, that is, in the first months of the new parliament.³ Table 1 shows the basic statistics concerning party membership and voting preferences among the elite and voters.

Partisanship among the masses was determined by combining two variables. The first is the party choice of the respondent in previous elections. The other variable is the party for which the respondents who did not vote would have voted if they had voted. In this way, the number of unusable cases was reduced from nearly 40 percent to about 20 percent, without damaging the validity of the measure. The subsequent analysis concentrates on the then six parliamentary parties: the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party (Fidesz-MPP), the Independent Smallholders Party (FKgP), the Party of Hungarian Justice and Life (MIÉP), and the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF).

Variables

Party Placement and Self-Placement on the Left–Right Continuum

This variable is operationalized by the standard item asking respondents to assign a place to themselves and to the six parties on a scale from zero (left) to 10 (right). MPs were asked to assign a place to each of the six examined parties, but not to themselves personally. Placement of one's own party was treated as self-placement.

A large majority of the respondents were willing to assign a L–R position to the parties (and themselves). Among the electorate, the percentage of missing values (including refusals of answers, “don't knows,” and so on) was largest in the case of MIÉP (27 percent), and smallest in the case of self-placement (21 percent). Among the MPs there are significantly fewer missing values. The smallest percentage appeared in the case of Fidesz-MPP (6.0 percent), and the largest in the cases of SZDSZ and FKgP (both 8.5 percent). There are two important consequences of these facts. First, it is obvious that MPs are more “at home” in using the L–R scale, which is natural for the part of the population most involved in politics (besides political scientists). Second, it is obvious that both the masses and elites attach a *certain* meaning to the L–R dimension and are willing to use it in connection with political parties. Hence, the most basic requirement for the L–R concept to serve as an ideological code is satisfied. This finding, however, hardly deserves particular emphasis, for it has been repeatedly obtained in a number of studies (for example, Markowski, 1997; Middendorp, 1989).

Policy Preferences

Policy preferences, or issue stands, were operationalized by eight items (see Table 2) in the same 11-point format as above (from 0–10). Two opposing statements represented each issue. The respondents assigned their own preferred position between the two extremes.

The eight issues will be presented below in an abbreviated form.⁴ By combining party membership (for MPs) or voting preference (for the electorate), it was

TABLE 2. *Eight policy-preference items*

1.	State enterprises must be privatized quickly, the nonprofitable ones closed down.
2.	The difference between the underdeveloped and rich areas must be diminished by state regulation.
3.	Religion and the churches must be kept away from politics.
4.	It is extremely harmful if the officeholders of the Kádár regime have a decisive influence in enterprises and institutions.
5.	The inflow of foreign capital must be regulated, since it subordinates the Hungarian economy to foreign interests.
6.	University studies must be gratis for students.
7.	Our foreign policy should strive to join NATO and the European Union as soon as possible.
8.	The proper family policy is that every family with children receives GYED, GYES, and family allowance.

Note: Statements attached to the lowest value (zero) are displayed. In the text, the eight issues are presented in abbreviated form; the complete wording of the items is given in the Appendix.

possible to estimate parties' positions on these issues as viewed by the voters and party elites.

The Analysis

Elite and Voter Perception of the Position of Parties on the Left–Right Continuum

The first part of the analysis examines the positions of the six Hungarian parliamentary political parties on the L–R continuum as assessed by the masses and the elite. In particular, I examine whether voters and representatives of a certain political party differ from nonmembers and voters for other parties in assigning a position to their party on the continuum. In other words, is there a consensus among the elite and among the masses about the positions of the parties on the L–R dimension?

Left–Right Continuum Among the Elite

There is a considerable degree of agreement among the MPs concerning the L–R placement of the parties, although there are also some telling differences. Table 3 displays the MPs' placement of the six parties on the L–R continuum. The column labeled "All" contains average placements for the entire sample of MPs. The column "All others" contains the placements of all the nonmembers for a certain party. For example, MPs that do not belong to MSZP on average assigned it a rather leftist position (1.36). The column headed "Partisans" in Table 3 presents party members' placements of their own party. For example, members of MSZP placed the party less extremely on the left than nonmembers (the average is 2.38). The other six columns, with party names as labels, contain the placements of each party by members of the six parties. For example, members of MIÉP perceive SZDSZ as an extremely left party (on average they assigned it a value of 0.60). Entries in the "Partisans" column correspond to the cells in which the rows and columns of the same party cross.

Since the particular *distribution* of the parties on the L–R dimension is not the focus of this article, only a few comments will be made *en passant*. First, it is obvious that virtually the entire range of the spectrum is represented by these six parties (column "All"). MSZP is on the left; SZDSZ occupies the center-left position;

TABLE 3. *Average position of parties on the L–R continuum as assessed by MPs*

	All (180)	All others ^a	Partisans	MSZP	SZDSZ	Fidesz-MPP	MDF	FKgP	MIÉP
MSZP	1.72	1.36	2.38	2.38	2.00	1.34	1.33	0.94	0.60
SZDSZ	3.49	3.34	4.76	4.61	4.76	2.57	2.33	2.06	0.60
Fidesz-MPP	6.93	7.30	6.28	7.61	7.81	6.28	6.33	6.33	6.40
MDF	7.38	7.35	8.00	8.09	8.06	6.92	8.00	5.83	6.00
FKgP	8.25	8.34	7.39	8.61	9.00	7.89	8.33	7.39	8.00
MIÉP	9.52	9.56	8.57	9.94	10.00	9.06	10.00	9.33	8.57

Note: Entries refer to an 11-point L–R scale.

^aWhen MP voters of a party are compared against *All others*, the latter category includes MPs and voters associated with all other parties, including those not belonging to the six parties listed.

Fidesz-MPP the center-right; MDF and FKgP the right; and MIÉP the extreme right. These findings are not surprising and correspond to previous findings and to the general perception of the Hungarian political space (for example, Markowski, 1997).

While the general order of the parties is similar in all columns, indicating basic agreement about the party positions, certain differences should be addressed. The nonmembers of a party generally tend to perceive other parties as being positioned more toward the extremes, whether left or right (column “All others”). Nonmembers placed each party at least a bit more toward the corresponding extreme (except that MDF was placed almost at the same position). For example, on average, Fidesz-MPP received a score of 6.93, while when Fidesz-MPP members are excluded, it was placed more toward the right, scoring 7.30. This effect is obviously due to a tendency of partisans to perceive their own party as being more centrist. Interestingly, the size of difference between partisans and nonpartisans is virtually constant, at around one point on the 11-point L–R scale. For example, members of MSZP on average placed their party at 2.38, while non-MSZP MPs placed it 1.02 points further to the left (at 1.36). The only exception is MDF, members of which placed their party only slightly more to the right than nonmembers (8.00 compared to 7.35).

It seems that the L–R spectrum is an important tool in the struggle for political-ideological identity among the Hungarian parties. On the one hand, members give their own party a more moderate position, perhaps in the desire to make it more acceptable to the wider political market. On the other hand, attributing a more extreme ideological position to opponents may be seen as an attempt to present them as less acceptable to the “average” member of the public.⁵ If this interpretation is plausible, then members of the opposing ideological camps should exhibit this tendency to a greater degree. In fact, members of SZDSZ and MSZP (leftist bloc) perceive the other four parties as more rightist than the latter perceive themselves (in the case of MDF the difference is minimal). At the same time, *within* the leftist bloc, hetero- and auto-perceptions are virtually equal (for example, MSZP placed SZDSZ at position 4.61, while the latter placed themselves at 4.76). Similarly, the rightist parties perceive parties on the left as more leftist than they would be happy with. For example, members of Fidesz-MPP placed SZDSZ at 2.57, two points further to the left than SZDSZ placed itself, at the position that MSZP voluntarily occupied. Moreover, parties further to the right within the rightist bloc, perceive the left parties as even more leftist than did the moderate rightists. For example, MIÉP placed both SZDSZ and MSZP on the extreme left (0.60), while FKgP was more tempered—in its view, MSZP was still extremely leftist (the score was 0.94), while SZDSZ was more moderate (the score was 2.06).

There is also some evidence of a within-bloc struggle among the parties on the right. It seems that MIÉP is perceived as an unwelcome member of the family. The other three parties of the right, similar to the parties on the left, perceive MIÉP as a rather extremist party. Obviously, parties of the moderate right want to differentiate themselves from the extreme-right party. MDF, on the other hand, is perceived as being more to the center compared to its auto-perception. This mild disagreement among parties of the right about each other’s place may be interpreted as a sign of competition for more favorable positions on the continuum.

This part of the analysis can be summarized in three basic findings: (1) there is

a high level of general agreement among MPs about the positions of the six parties on the L–R dimension, thus empirically substantiating Condition 1a; (2) members of a party tend to perceive their party as more moderate than nonmembers; (3) this tendency is particularly strong when parties from the opposite end of the spectrum are evaluated.

Left–Right Continuum Among the Masses

The questionnaire administered to the sample of the electorate contained a question concerning respondents’ self-placement on the L–R continuum. Hence, it was possible to differentiate self-placement proper and the respondent’s placement of the party for which he or she voted (see Table 4, columns “Partisans’ self-placement” and “Partisans,” respectively).

The electorate’s perception of the parties’ positions on the L–R dimension is rather *accurate*, in the sense that it corresponds to the MPs’ placement of the parties (see Table 4). Moreover, it is closer to the MPs’ placement of their own parties than to the average MPs’ placements or MPs’ placement of other parties (the column “All” among the electorate is closer to the column “Partisans” among the MPs than to the columns “All” and “All others”). In addition, it is interesting that differences between the voters of different parties in their attribution of L–R positions are negligible (compare columns “All others” and “Partisans”). The tendency to view parties on the opposing side of the ideological spectrum as being more extreme is not so obvious among voters as among MPs. Perhaps voters do not see any particular benefit in attributing extreme positions to the non-preferred parties. Sometimes even a contradictory tendency is displayed. For example, voters for FKgP attributed a more moderate position to MSZP than did the voters of MSZP themselves (3.38 and 2.99, respectively). Likewise, MSZP voters attributed a more centrist position to MIÉP than did voters of MIÉP to their own party (8.10 and 8.42, respectively).

That the electorate is able to differentiate the parties’ and their own position on the L–R scale is illustrated by the column “Partisans’ self-placement.” While voters accurately perceive parties’ positions on the spectrum, they on average express more centrist positions across all parties. One consequence of this centrist tendency is that voters sometimes do not vote for the party that is closest to their

TABLE 4. *Position of parties on the L–R continuum as assessed by the electorate*

	All		Partisans’ self-		Fidesz-					
	All	others	Partisans	placement	MSZP	SZDSZ	MPP	MDF	FKgP	MIÉP
MSZP	2.95	2.94	2.99	3.64	2.99	2.67	2.94	2.08	3.38	2.02
SZDSZ	4.01	4.00	4.10	4.19	4.02	4.10	4.05	3.72	3.89	2.76
Fidesz-										
MPP	6.50	6.60	6.36	5.57	6.60	6.64	6.36	7.11	6.40	6.51
MDF	6.20	6.21	6.96	6.72	6.59	7.19	5.77	6.96	5.76	5.68
FKgP	7.09	7.20	6.75	6.03	7.34	8.22	6.89	7.51	6.75	6.53
MIÉP	7.85	7.84	8.42	7.33	8.10	9.09	7.62	8.33	6.99	8.42
Self-										
placement	4.91									

Note: Entries refer to an 11-point L–R scale.

self-placement. For example, voters for Fidesz-MPP placed themselves (not the party) at 5.57, and placed Fidesz-MPP at 6.36, even though they perceived MDF as being closer to them (5.77). Obviously, *at the aggregate level*, L–R proximity does not seem to be the only factor influencing voting preferences.

At this point, it could be concluded that the electorate perceives the positions of the six Hungarian parties on the L–R spectrum rather accurately, in the sense of viewing them similarly to the way party elites do. The order is generally the same among different subsamples of the elite and the electorate. Moreover, numerical values assigned to the parties are generally similar among the elite and electorate. The electorate is generally more centrist in attributing L–R position to both the parties they vote for and to the other parties. Additionally, the electorate displays a much weaker partisanship bias in perceiving the competing parties than do the party leaders. These tendencies, however, might be a consequence of a fraction of respondents randomly assigning the L–R scores. The most important point is that Condition 2a is satisfied by the standard I have set: the electorate perceives party positions accurately.

Relationship Between Left–Right Party Placement Among the Elite and the Masses

The analysis thus far has shown that voters and MPs are both able to use the L–R scheme coherently. The higher requirement is that the scheme be used analogously at both levels.

The correlation between the average elite placement of the parties on the L–R dimension and voters' placement of the parties (the first columns in Tables 3 and 4) is .99. The correlation coefficients between the MPs' L–R placement of their own parties and voters' L–R placement of themselves and of the parties for which they voted is in both cases .97 (on the basis of the corresponding columns of Tables 3 and 4). Obviously, this strongly supports the plausibility of the theory that the L–R ideological code is used as a cognitive device for orientation in the political domain. The voters and MPs very closely agree about the positions of the parties on the continuum.

The obtained results suggest that Pappi's (1996) minimal requirement is well satisfied. Not only is the L–R scheme used coherently *within* the electorate and elite, but both use it in basically the same way. Thus, Conditions 1a and 2a seem to be satisfied. Thus far, this proves, for example, that if a voter wants to vote for the left-most party in the sample, she is able to recognize that this is the MSZP.

Elite and Voter Policy Preferences

In order for anything to serve as a clue to parties' policy preferences, the elites of those parties should differ in their actual policy preferences. In the same way, the electorate should be differentiated according to their policy preferences. Otherwise, they would not need any clues to the party elite's policy preferences. Therefore, the next step is to examine elite and electorate preferences. It should be noted that the eight issues included were widely debated in Hungarian politics at the time. In other words, these are not a random selection from a sample of possible issues, but presumably the most divisive ones.

Elite Policy-Preference Profiles

On average, MPs are mildly supportive of privatization, of reducing regional inequalities, of the separation of church and state, of excluding Kádár regime

TABLE 5. *Average positions of MPs on the eight policy issues*

Issue	All, mean	SD all	MSZP	SZDSZ	Fidesz-MPP	MDF	FKgP	MIÉP
Privatization	3.69	2.04	3.65	1.53	3.78	3.75	4.47	6.00
Regional inequalities	3.12	2.46	2.59	4.76	3.07	3.50	3.32	2.13
Church and state	3.44	3.32	0.97	0.82	4.81	7.00	6.79	7.50
Former communists	3.52	2.41	5.52	4.18	1.96	3.75	1.74	1.50
Foreign capital	7.42	2.40	8.65	9.24	6.90	4.50	5.74	1.63
Tuition fees	3.76	2.65	4.83	7.35	2.54	3.00	1.72	2.75
NATO and EU	2.03	2.38	1.20	1.12	2.15	2.75	3.21	7.37
Family policy	5.19	4.15	8.83	8.65	1.52	1.50	1.61	3.75

Note: entries refer to an 11-point scale.

officials, and of accepting foreign capital and free university education, are quite supportive of joining NATO, and are quite undecided about family policy (see Table 5). As the standard deviations show (Table 5, column “SD all”), the greatest variations concern issues around the relationship between church and state and on family policy.

Leftist party elites (that is, SZDSZ and MSZP MPs) are the strongest supporters of the separation of church and state, joining NATO, a family policy favorable to materially disadvantaged families, foreign investments, privatization, and the introduction of tuition fees for university studies. They are also more tolerant concerning former communist officials. Party elites on the right generally display opposing tendencies. While SZDSZ MPs seem to display preferences which fit its self-description as a liberal party, there seems to be a peculiar Hungarian redefinition of the L–R spectrum. Namely, party elites on the left are more in favor of classical neoliberal economic policies, such as rapid privatization, foreign investment, and tuition fees, while the rightist elites are more disposed toward protectionist policies (especially MIÉP). On the other hand, positions on issues regarding church and state, former communists, and family policy are distributed according to the standard left–right division.

Policy-Preference Profiles Among the Masses

The electorate on average tends to favor a middle position on most of the eight issues, except that it favors some welfare policies (for example, free university education) and the separation of church and state more than the elite (see Table 6). In addition, voters are less enthusiastic about privatization, foreign capital, and about NATO.

The voters of different parties are, in general, more similar to each other in their policy preferences than the elites of the different parties. While there are some similarities between the voters and the elites of the same party (for example, leftist parties’ voters support the separation of church and state and are more tolerant of former communists), differences are interesting as well. For example, SZDSZ and MSZP elites seem to have been at risk of alienating some of their voters by pursuing pro-privatization policies, for their voters were rather skeptical of the project, just as voters for the other parties were.

TABLE 6. Average positions of voters on the eight policy issues

Issue	All, mean	MSZP	SZDSZ	Fidesz-MPP	MDF	FKgP	MIÉP
Privatization	5.62	5.23	4.44	5.66	5.50	6.17	6.98
Regional inequalities	3.76	3.71	3.78	3.97	3.49	3.67	3.10
Church and state	2.97	2.39	1.90	3.34	3.17	3.27	3.70
Former communists	4.51	5.90	4.75	3.58	2.24	3.94	2.97
Foreign capital	5.03	5.61	5.92	5.01	4.25	4.56	2.40
Tuition fees	2.30	2.59	3.72	1.87	2.04	2.05	2.80
NATO and EU	3.58	2.75	2.34	3.55	3.53	4.74	6.24
Family policy	4.06	4.42	4.48	3.46	4.23	4.28	5.35

Note. entries refer to an 11-point scale.

Relationships Between Policy Preferences Among the Elite and Masses

Before examining the connection between the L–R dimension and policy preferences, I will first examine the last of the conditions stated above, referring to the correspondence between the policy preferences of the electorate and party elites (Condition 5). Only if a certain degree of correspondence exists is it worthwhile paying attention to the mechanism that enabled the voters to select parties using similar preferences.

The problem of the relationships between the policy preferences of the elite and masses could be examined in different ways. For each party-issue combination, the elite and voter averages could be quantitatively compared (for example, by using a t-test for the corresponding cells from Tables 5 and 6). In that way, one would obtain a set of paired comparisons, which although showing important aspects of the relationships, would be difficult to summarize. The same applies for graphical presentation. Comparison of mass and elite *policy profiles* would be a more condensed and theoretically meaningful way to proceed. This is an extension by analogy of Pappi's suggestion that "in multi party systems, voters' party preference profiles are the crucial link between the factors influencing reasoning about parties and the final voting decision" (1996: 256). Party-preference profiles are to a large extent influenced by "issue proximities," which is a concept closely related to what is here referred to as policy-preference profiles. Because single issues may not be decisive for party support, it is useful to compare sets of issues, or preference profiles, simultaneously.

Therefore, the really interesting information is the *degree* of relatedness of mass and elite preference profiles. The methodological solution offered here is to compute correlation coefficients between mass and elite preference profiles, where the variables would be party memberships and voting (columns in the above tables) and cases would be the eight policy issues.⁶ The resulting coefficients would represent a measure of profile similarity. An obvious difficulty with this approach is the small number of cases. However, to a certain extent this is compensated for by the fact that the variables represent averages of a relatively large number of cases, and therefore the outcome should be more reliable and stable. Hence, the emphasis should be not so much on statistical significance as on the relative size of the coefficients. Both Spearman's rank coefficient of correlation and Pearson's product moment coefficients could be used. However,

TABLE 7. *Correlation coefficients between MPs' policy-preference profiles*

	Elite all	Elite MDF	Elite SZDSZ	Elite FKgP	Elite MSZP	Elite Fidesz-MPP
Elite all	1.00					
Elite MDF	.02	1.00				
Elite SZDSZ	.77*	-.43	1.00			
Elite FKgP	.24	.84**	-.34	1.00		
Elite MSZP	.84**	-.43	.89**	-.30	1.00	
Elite Fidesz-MPP	.61	.67	.11	.86**	.11	1.00
Elite MIÉP	-.51	.29	-.76*	.42	-.66	-.03

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

in order to capture not only the differences in ranks, but also in the absolute size, the latter is used. In fact, both methods yield rather similar results.⁷

The results in Table 7 show the degree of similarity of the policy-preference profiles of different parties' representatives. It is interesting as a test of the validity of the adopted methodological approach. Two groups of high coefficients suggest the existence of two political groupings. One consists of SZDSZ and MSZP ($r = .89$), and the other of the rightwing bloc: Fidesz-MPP, MDF, and FKgP. Parties of these two blocs are negatively related or not related to each other (for example, for MDF and MSZP, $r = -.43$). A relative outlier is MIÉP, which is strongly negatively related to the leftist bloc, but not so positively with the rightist. Coefficients in the column "Elite all" of Table 7 (aggregated responses of the entire elite sample) primarily reflect the relative size of each political grouping. If the groups were of similar size, this column would have shown the closeness of each party to the average parliamentary policy profile (whatever that might be).

As Table 8 shows, voters of different parties show a pattern of preference profiles similar to that observed at the elite level. For example, SZDSZ and MSZP voters have similar preference profiles ($r = .87$), while those of SZDSZ and MIÉP differ considerably ($r = -.27$). However, there are fewer negative coefficients, and they are of a lower magnitude. This indicates that the voters of different parties have more similar policy preferences than their MPs. This resemblance is also indicated by high coefficients in the column "Mass all" of Table 8. Hence, it seems that there is some sense in speaking about the "general policy-preference profile"

TABLE 8. *Correlation coefficients between voters' policy preferences*

	Mass all	Mass MDF	Mass SZDSZ	Mass FKgP	MSZP	Mass Fidesz-MPP
Mass all	1.00					
Mass MDF	.73	1.00				
Mass SZDSZ	.66	.27	1.00			
Mass FKgP	.88**	.86**	.28	1.00		
Mass MSZP	.87**	.37	.87**	.56	1.00	
Mass Fidesz-MPP	.92**	.85**	.45	.89**	.65	1.00
Mass MIÉP	.33	.64	-.27	.71*	-.05	.37

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

TABLE 9. Correlations between elite and mass policy-preference profiles

	Elite all	Elite MDF	Elite SZDSZ	Elite FKgP	Elite MSZP	Elite Fidesz-MPP	Elite MIÉP
Mass all	.40	-.08	.02	.18	.37	.29	-.15
Mass MDF	.30	-.09	-.08	.38	.16	.33	.30
Mass SZDSZ	.77*	-.31	.71*	-.19	.85**	.26	-.77*
Mass FKgP	.10	-.13	-.29	.23	.07	.15	.29
Mass MSZP	.54	-.16	.33	-.09	.64	.18	-.55
Mass Fidesz-MPP	.33	.14	-.15	.48	.13	.50	.06
Mass MIÉP	-.38	-.32	-.50	-.04	-.25	-.33	.70

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

of the electorate. This weakened differentiation among voters could mean that they are less politically sophisticated, or that policy issues included in the survey are not able to differentiate voters of different parties as much as the elite. However, more detailed discussion of these interesting questions is beyond the scope of the present article.

What is important is that this initial test of the adopted method produces meaningful results. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these coefficients reflect a similarity in the *shape* of the preference profiles, not necessarily a similarity in the absolute size. They tend to reflect the *relative* position of parties on different issues vis-a-vis other issues rather than a numerical similarity of the parties' positions on the same issues. This can be seen as a disadvantage of the adopted strategy, but the positive aspect is that the notion of preference profiles emphasizes precisely the relative position of parties on different issues. In addition, if answers to the items are taken not as cardinal variables, but rather as representing a relative ordering of issue importance, then the correlation coefficients are again meaningful.⁸

After these preliminary analyses it is possible to address the most important question in this part of the inquiry: the correspondence between the elite and mass policy-preference profiles. Table 9 shows the correlation coefficients between the corresponding voters' and MPs' policy-preference profiles.

A number of conclusions could be drawn from these 49 coefficients. The first is that there is a relatively low correlation between the elite's and the masses' average preference profiles ($r = .40$). This could mean that there is a loose general agreement across parties and their supporters on the preferences concerning the eight issues examined. It is interesting that the voters of SZDSZ and MSZP display the preference profile closest to the average elite profile ($r = .77$ and $.54$, respectively).

The highest coefficients in Table 9 belong to SZDSZ and MSZP, whether between their respective elites and masses, between themselves (cross-party, masses-elite coefficients), or between these two parties and their ideological opponents (in a negative direction, of course; for example, for SZDSZ voters and the MIÉP elite, $r = -.77$). This means that there is correspondence between elite and voter policy-preference profiles among the leftist bloc. It is interesting that the elite of MSZP is closer to voters of SZDSZ ($r = .85$) than to their own (although the correspondence is still rather high at $r = .64$).

In the center-right bloc, the coefficients are lower, but generally sizable and in

the expected direction. For example, the correlation between the Fidesz-MPP elite and voters is .50. The FKgP elite's profile is closer to the Fidesz-MPP and MDF voters ($r = .48$ and $.38$, respectively) than to their own supporters ($r = .28$). An even more peculiar case is the MDF elite, whose profile is not strongly similar to that of any party's voters. Their own voters appear to be more similar to the FKgP, Fidesz-MPP, and MIÉP elites.

The case of the MIÉP elite and voters supports the theory of greater ideological awareness at the political extremes (Sidanius, 1985). First, there is a close correspondence between preference profiles of the MIÉP elite and voters ($r = .70$), and at both levels there is a consistent negative relationship with their ideological opponents. It is interesting that the MIÉP's elite is more different from the voters of SZDSZ and MSZP (the coefficients are $-.77$ and $-.55$, respectively), than MIÉP's voters are from the elite of SZDSZ and MSZP (the coefficients are $-.50$ and $-.25$, respectively). It seems that in extremist parties (here MIÉP), the elite are more extreme than their voters. Lastly, the first row in Table 9 shows that MSZP and Fidesz-MPP are the parties closest to the average voters' preference profile—an obvious outcome of their relative representation in the parliament.

The general conclusion to be derived from this part of the analysis is that there is a fair degree of correspondence between parties' elites and their voters in policy preferences. This applies primarily to the leftist parties (SZDSZ and MSZP) and to the extreme right (MIÉP). This could be a reflection of their sharper ideological profile, their greater political sophistication, their more democratic character (in the sense of elites representing the views of their electorate), or, most probably, a combination of these factors. Fidesz-MPP was at the time transforming itself into the major center-right party, while MDF and FKgP were simultaneously losing their ideological distinctiveness. Nevertheless, the evidence presented shows that Condition 5 is moderately satisfied: the policy preferences of voters and their parties are moderately correlated.⁹

The corollary hypothesis, namely, that the elite and masses are more similar in their positions on the L–R spectrum than in policy preferences, is also confirmed. This can be treated as indirect evidence that the L–R schema serves as a clue to political preferences: voters are better able to recognize correctly the signifier than the signified.

Relationships Between Policy Preferences and the Left–Right Dimension Among the Elite and Among Voters

The presented evidence shows that voters and elites agree on parties' positions on the L–R scale and that voters manage to identify parties that support their preferred policies. This section answers the question of whether the L–R schema is helpful in this regard.¹⁰

In order to assess to what degree L–R self-placement is related to policy preferences, correlation coefficients between these variables are calculated both for the electorate and the MPs (see Table 10). Among the elite, most of the policies are significantly and rather strongly related to their L–R positions. The leftist MPs prefer a family policy favorable to the disadvantaged, separation of church and state, a tolerant attitude toward former communist officials, foreign capital investment, the introduction of tuition fees, and joining NATO and the European Union (EU). They are mildly supportive of quick privatization and undifferentiated from the rightist MPs in their stand on the issue of regional

TABLE 10. Correlation coefficients between elite and mass L–R party placement and self-placement and policy preferences

Issue	Elite L–R self-placement	Voters L–R self-placement
Privatization	.18*	.09**
Regional inequalities	.14	.00
Church and state	.61**	.10**
Former communists	–.59**	–.26**
Foreign capital	–.49**	–.13**
Tuition fees	–.41**	–.06*
NATO and EU	.37**	.16**
Family policy	–.69**	–.03

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, two-tailed.

inequalities. Thus, position on the L–R scale is quite informative about the policy preferences of the MPs. It helps considerably in predicting their position on six out of eight issues; on one issue it is somewhat helpful; and about one issue it does not help at all. The strongest relationship concerns the issues of family policy, church and state, and former communists. This evidence strongly supports Condition 1b: there is a rather strong relationship between the elites' policy preferences and their L–R position.

Coefficients among the electorate are lower, though still statistically highly significant. Moreover, the direction of the relationships is in every case the same as among the elite. For example, leftist voters generally prefer the same policies as the leftist elite. The highest coefficient among the electorate concerns the issue of former communists ($r = -.26$), suggesting that for them the most important position on the L–R scale is attitude toward the former communists. Coefficients concerning economic issues are lower (for example, leftist voters prefer quick privatization, for which $r = .09$), or insignificant (in case of regional inequalities, just as among the MPs). Interestingly, while the issue of family policy was the strongest correlate of L–R position among the elite, among the mass electorate the coefficient is insignificant, suggesting that for them the L–R schema is much more loaded with symbolic meaning and less related to specific, practical political issues than for the elite. Hence, Condition 2b is rather modestly satisfied.

As a quantitative indicator of the similarity of the L–R scale policy correlates between the electorate and MPs, the correlation coefficient between the two columns of Table 10 can be calculated. The product moment coefficient is $r = .83$, while Spearman's rank coefficient is $Rho = .77$. This means that the *pattern* of relatedness of the elite's L–R self-placements and issue preferences is similar to the pattern among voters. In other words, the L–R ideological dimension *may* serve as a clue to policy stands, since interrelationships are similar among MPs and their voters. Of course, lower coefficients among the voters are obvious; for them, the L–R scale is a less certain correlate of policy preferences. However, it should be remembered that generally the same coefficients are significant (except for the family policy issue among the voters), and that they go in the same direction. Consequently, the evidence moderately supports Condition 3: the elites' and masses' issue stands and L–R positions are related in similar ways, but the connection is weaker among the electorate.

TABLE 11. *Correlations between L-R self-placement and feeling thermometer scores (electorate data)*

	Fidesz-MPP	FKgP	MDF	MIÉP	MSZP	SZDSZ
L-R self-placement	.32**	.34**	.27**	.37**	-.45**	-.37**

** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

Left-Right Self-Placement and Party Preferences

The results presented thus far have already shed some light on the relevance of the L-R schema for party preferences. Table 4 showed that, at the aggregate level, voters of different parties systematically differ in their average L-R scores. Additional examination of Condition 4 can be done in several ways. Table 11 presents the correlation between the L-R scale and general preferences for the parties (“feeling thermometer” scores were used instead of voting intentions in order to exclude distracting factors such as strategic voting). The associations obtained are significant and in the expected direction in all cases. Those who prefer leftist parties place themselves more to the left, while those who prefer parties of the right identify themselves as being rightists, thus supporting Condition 4. The respondents’ party preferences can be relatively correctly predicted on the basis of their L-R self-placement.

The coefficients are not particularly high, though they are highly statistically significant. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that there are multiple parties representing similar positions on the L-R scale. If, for example, the analysis is performed including only one leftwing and one rightwing party (for example, MSZP and MIÉP) the coefficients are higher (in the case of MIÉP, $R = .54$). A graphical presentation can help in clarifying this point (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 shows the average “thermometer” scores that the six parties received

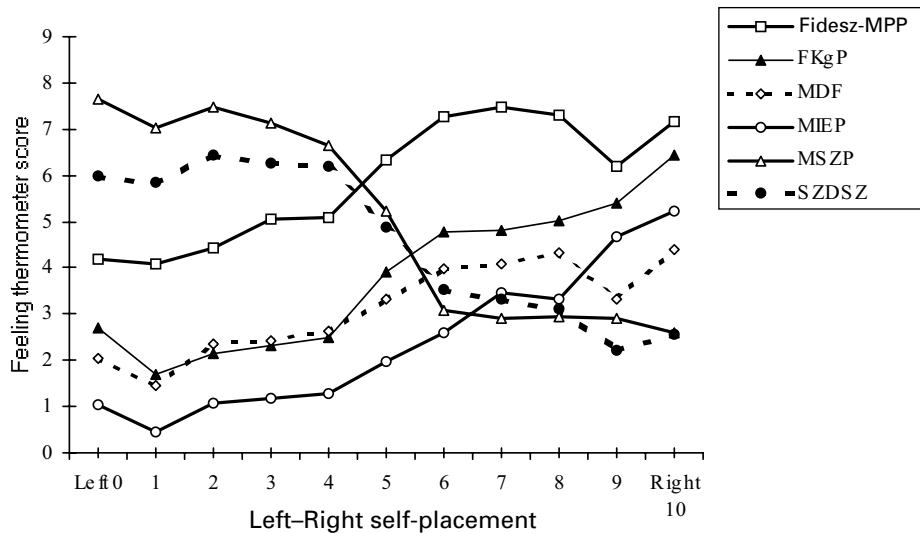


FIGURE 2. *Average feeling thermometer scores for the six parties depending on voter L-R self-placement*

TABLE 12. Proximity of individual voter's L-R self-placement to mean MPs' placement of their own parties

Voters	Proximity to MPs					
	MSZP	SZDSZ	Fidesz-MPP	MDF	FKgP	MIÉP
MSZP	5.78	5.43	11.13	23.16	18.22	28.45
SZDSZ	6.23	3.27	7.31	17.46	13.18	22.12
Fidesz-MPP	13.53	4.02	3.87	9.28	6.68	12.38
MDF	21.87	6.86	3.21	4.64	3.46	6.42
FKgP	17.58	5.86	4.30	8.11	6.08	10.68
MIÉP	29.79	11.89	6.39	5.74	5.29	6.83

Note: Proximity is defined as average squared Euclidean distance between the scores of individual voters and the average score of the party's MPs (see Achen, 1978: 483).

from voters identified with different positions on the L-R scale. Leftist voters, naturally, prefer MSZP and SZDSZ, while rightists prefer Fidesz-MPP, FKgP, MDF, and MIÉP. However, the lines are neither monotonic nor single peaked, indicating a relatively loose relationship between the variables. Similarly shaped lines represent parties of the same bloc, suggesting that the L/R position cannot be a perfect predictor of party preference. Nevertheless, it is still a rather strong predictor of preference for blocs of parties. Moreover, in a sense, it is even more important for the present purpose. Party elites of the same bloc tend to have similar policy preferences, and since the L-R scale can successfully predict the policy preferences of party blocs, it can serve as a general clue for selecting parties that pursue the policies preferred.

If the L-R dimension is relevant for voting, a strong relationship should also exist between voters' self-placement and their placement of the parties they vote for. Finding otherwise would indicate that they vote regardless of what they perceive to be the parties' L-R positions. This correlation is indeed strong ($r = .67$, $p < .001$), demonstrating a very powerful connection between L-R self-placement and preferred party placement on the level of individual voters—despite the voters' noted centrist tendency.¹¹

Lastly, Condition 4 can be approached from the angle of the *proximity* between voters' L-R self-placement and the parties' "real" positions (MPs' placement of their parties). Entries in Table 12 show the average proximity of individual voter's L-R self-placement to the average placement by MPs of their own parties. The columns in Table 12 show which voters are close to a particular party elite, while the rows show the proximity of particular voters to each party's MPs. Thus, for example, MSZP voters are close to MSZP and SZDSZ MPs, while the distance increases toward the rightwing extreme. Similarly, voters and MPs of the rightwing parties are close to each other and distant from their ideological opponents. The general pattern is clear: the lowest figures are around and on the main diagonal in Table 12 (shown in bold), reflecting the ideological proximity of the respective voters and MPs. The distances increase toward the upper-right and lower-left corners, where the political opponents meet.

As this exhaustive evidence shows, Condition 4 is fairly well satisfied. The L-R continuum is relevant for party preferences: voters tend to prefer parties they perceive to be close to themselves on this dimension, and they end up close to their representatives in the parliament and distant from their opponents.

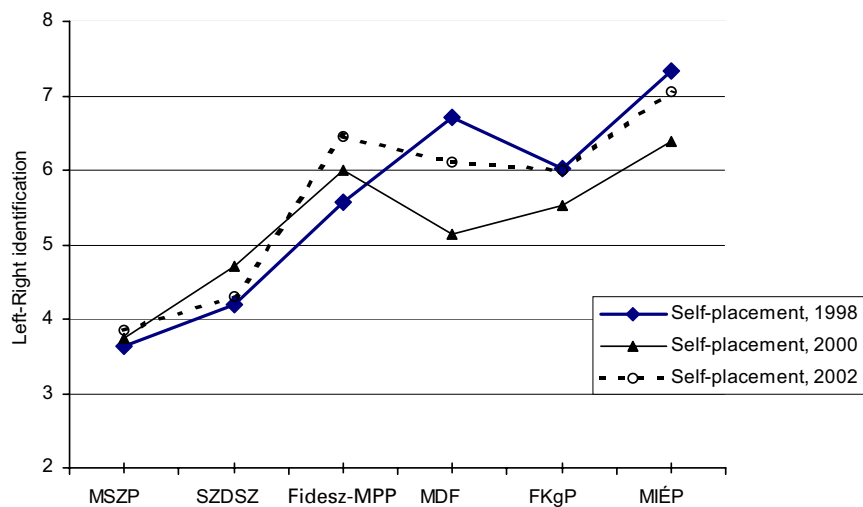


FIGURE 3. Voters' left-right self-placement scores in 1998, 2000, and 2002

The neatness of the picture obtained might, however, be a transitory phenomenon, since a later period witnessed a remarkable growth of the two major parties (MSZP and Fidesz-MPP) at the expense of the smaller parties. Hence, the L-R semantics might have transformed into a divide between the two blocs, rather than being a continuum representing different ideological shades. However, surveys from the later period still show a remarkably similar L-R distribution of voters (see Figure 3).¹² Consistent changes characterize only Fidesz-MPP voters—they show an increasing rightwing identification.

Conclusions

Scholars have argued that voters need various simplifying cognitive devices in order to orient themselves in a complex political world. The present article has examined the plausibility of the left-right dimension as a shortcut representing different parties' stands on a variety of policy issues. Compared to previous accounts (for example, Pappi, 1996), I advanced five more specific and elaborated conditions that should be met if the L-R dimension is to perform this function.

The presented analysis of Hungarian voters' and MPs' issue preferences and L-R placements supports this general claim. First, it has been shown that the elites and voters agree on the parties' positions on the L-R continuum (Conditions 1a and 2a). Hungarian voters and elite meet this requirement to a considerable degree. Voters' policy preferences proved to be related to their L-R self-identification, thus satisfying Condition 2b. Results showed that this condition is moderately satisfied: Hungarian voters' policy preferences are moderately, though statistically significantly, related to their L-R self-identification.

Even if both voters and MPs "use" the L-R shortcut, it would be a poor orientation device if they attach different policies to its extremes. The masses and elite should use the dimension in a comparable way. Hence, the extent to which the elite's policy preferences were related to its L-R position (Condition 1b) was

examined first, and the results revealed a strong relationship. Second, Condition 3 required that the L–R scale should be related to policy preferences in a similar way among both voters and the elite. The evidence showed a generally similar pattern, with somewhat weaker relationships among the masses. While the L–R dimension *can* therefore serve as a clue for guessing elite policy stands, the voters are only moderately successful in making use of this possibility.

Condition 4 specified that the L–R dimension should be related to the voters' actual political behavior, that is, to the parties they prefer and vote for. The results showed that the dimension is indeed related to party preferences, but perhaps more to preferences for party blocs than for specific parties. Moreover, there is a close correspondence between voters' self-placement and their placement of the parties they vote for. That this correspondence is not due to the assimilation effect or wishful thinking is proved by the fact that, even on the individual level, there is a close proximity between voters' self-placement and the "true" position of the parties (as assigned by the MPs).

Lastly, since Conditions 1–4 were satisfied, it was logical to expect a considerable congruence between the policy preferences of the elites and the voters of specific parties (Condition 5). Results have shown that this is indeed the case. While voters and the elite of a party tend to favor similar policies, the relationship is modest since some of the previous conditions were satisfied only to a moderate degree. Thus, the evidence presented generally supports the plausibility of the examined model of the use of the L–R ideological code as a clue to policy preferences.

It is important to add two qualifications. Hungarian voters are only moderately successful in selecting parties that support their own positions on key policy questions. Hungarian voters are much better at selecting parties whose elites have positions on the L–R scale similar to themselves than at selecting parties which support their preferred policies.

Application of this model to cases other than the Hungarian one would certainly be beneficial for comparative research. Disentangling the aggregate mass-elite correspondence in political preferences into its constituent elements seems necessary for a deeper understanding of variation across cases. The model presented allows for the generation of specific hypotheses about different factors that influence particular aspects of the general relationship.

Appendix

Policy-Preference Items

These problems can be treated in many ways. Below, two opposing solutions are offered. Obviously, this bipolar perception of the problems involves a great degree of simplification, but in politics this kind of simplification is often necessary and unavoidable. Please read the options carefully, and indicate where you would place your own opinion. For this purpose, use a scale where zero indicates that you accept completely the left-hand opinion, 10 the right-hand one, and five that the solution preferred by you is between the two offered.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. State enterprises must be privatized quickly and the non-profitable ones closed down. | State enterprises must be kept in the hands of the state and the non-profitable ones must be modernized with the help of the state budget. |
|--|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2. The difference between the underdeveloped and rich areas must be diminished by state regulation. | One must leave the enterprises to decide where to invest. Regional inequalities should not be artificially diminished. |
| 3. Religion and the churches must be kept away from politics. | The churches must fight for their right to implement their views and their justified demands in politics. |
| 4. It is extremely harmful if the officeholders of the Kádár regime have a decisive influence in enterprise and institutions. | There are exceptions, but usually the best leaders are those who gained experience in the Kádár regime. |
| 5. The inflow of foreign capital must be regulated, since it subordinates the Hungarian economy to foreign interests. | It does not matter whether the capital is Hungarian or foreign, the point is that it helps production and creates work places. |
| 6. University studies must be gratis for students. | One should introduce tuition fees which cover the costs of higher education. |
| 7. Our foreign policy should strive to join NATO and the European Union as soon as possible. | Our foreign policy should strive for political and economic independence. |
| 8. The proper family policy is that every family with children receives GYED, GYES, and family allowance. | It is not proper for rich families to receive the same support as others. |

Notes

1. This condition might seem unnecessary, since the mass–elite issue congruence could be achieved regardless of how the elite internally uses the L–R scheme, as long as the *perceived* party position remains a meaningful clue to its preferences. Nevertheless, if the elite use is incoherent or unrelated to the promoted policies, in the long run the L–R characterization of a party would serve a confusing rather than orienting role.
2. The data were derived from machine-readable data files of “The Development of Party Systems and Electoral Alignments in East Central Europe. The March–May 1998 Election Surveys in Hungary” at the Central European University’s Department of Political Science, Budapest. The polling agency was Median, Budapest. Access to the data files was generously provided by Gábor Tóka.
3. Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party (Fidesz-MPP), Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), and the Independent Smallholders Party (FKgP) formed the new government. The elite survey was mainly sponsored by the Strategic Researches Program of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, while the poll was conducted by Median, Budapest. This data set is generously provided by Professor Zsolt Enyedi, Central European University, Budapest.
4. Full item wording is given in the Appendix.
5. In other words, parties may wish to push their competitors outside of the “region of acceptability.” According to Listhaug et al. (1994: 144), “voters prefer parties that are on their side and responsible,” that is, not too extreme.
6. An alternative method would be to calculate the summarized distances between mass and elite issue stands. While this method has particular relevance due to its relatedness to the Downsian “proximity” theory of voting, one important problem is that such a measure is not standardized, and therefore comparisons are difficult.
7. One might object, for example, that a perfect correlation could be obtained if one variable is a linear transformation of the other, although the corresponding differences in values for each case could be quite large. However, the presented evidence shows that that is *not* the case (that is, that the absolute values are rather similar), so the coefficients *can* be meaningfully interpreted.

8. Another way of looking at the problem would be to calculate the distances between parties on different issues. For example, correlations between the preference profiles of all voters and the voters of Fidesz-MPP, SZDSZ, and MIÉP are .92, .66, and .33, respectively. If absolute distances between the average position of voters on each issue and the positions of the voters of the three parties on the respective issues are calculated and summarized, the outcome supports the use of correlation coefficients. In fact, the sum of distances for Fidesz-MPP voters is 2.07, for SZDSZ is 6.06, and for MIÉP is 10.81.
9. Restriction of range could have influenced the size of the coefficients. However, closer examination of the variances in preference profiles did not show large differences between the parties. In addition, regarding which particular policies the elites and masses are more similar or different is not examined, although comparing their averages, as presented in Tables 5 and 6, would permit this. The present focus is more on the abstract problem of the correspondence of mass and elite policy preferences.
10. The elite questionnaire did not include the MPs' self-placement on the L–R scale, only their assessment of each party's position. There were two options to obtain the required measure. One was to assign average placement by party members to each of the MPs from a given party. In that case, the variance would be rather restricted because the variable would contain only six values. The option adopted here was to treat each MP's estimate of her own party's place on the continuum as the first, best approximation of her self-placement. The assumption is that a party member's placement of her party reflects her own position on that scale. Averages of the variable constructed in this way exactly correspond to the third column of Table 3.
11. On the aggregate level, the corresponding correlation (between the third and fourth columns of Table 4, headed "Partisans" and "Partisans' self-placement") is $r = .96$.
12. The comparable data sets used for 2000 and 2002 were obtained from Zsolt Enyedi, Central European University, Budapest. Additional details are available from the author.

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