

ISTVÁN GRAJ CZJÁR – ZSÓFIA NAGY – ANTAL ÖRKÉNY – JULIA HOFMANN<sup>1</sup>

ROUTES TO RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IN TIMES OF CRISIS

An Austrian-Hungarian comparison based on the SOCRIS survey<sup>2</sup>

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#### ABSTRACT

Right-wing extremism has been flourishing in many European countries since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, and the migration wave of 2015 intensified right-wing extremist attitudes even more in several countries in the region. In this paper we analyse two countries impacted very differently by the financial and the refugee crises with the help of the 2017 SOCRIS survey, which investigated different forms of inclusive and exclusive solidarity in Austria and Hungary. This paper wishes to contribute to a better understanding of the growing popularity of right-wing extremism (FPÖ, JOBBIK and FIDESZ) in these countries. Using step by step linear regression models and path-model analyses we found that the popularity of FPÖ is due to a strong social disruption in Austria, which is primarily conspicuous in the area of political and social values. In Hungary, however, right-wing extremism is more widespread, but caused by a broader range of factors, since Fidesz and Jobbik fight for right-wing voters. Our results indicate that while right-wing extremist thinking was typical of well definable minority groups in Austria in 2017, there was a wide permeation of right-wing extremism among different social strata in Hungary.

**Keywords:** multiple crises, right-wing extremism, SOCRIS project, path-models, comparative analysis in Austria and Hungary

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1 *István Grajczjár*, Milton Friedman University Budapest. *Zsófia Nagy*, Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Social Sciences. *Antal Örkény*, Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Social Sciences. *Julia Hofmann*, University of Vienna, Department of Sociology.

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## ROUTES TO RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IN TIMES OF CRISIS

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### An Austrian-Hungarian comparison based on the SOCRIS survey

#### INTRODUCTION

The recent economic crisis has severely affected citizens all over Europe, leading to high levels of insecurity, and declining trust in public institutions. Right-wing extremist parties successfully capitalize on people's anxieties by blaming scapegoats for society's problems, positioning those outside of the ethnic nation as an external threat to society. As recent European and national elections showed they are indeed becoming even more attractive to a significant part of the electorate, because reactions to the consequences of the crisis and to experiences of deprivation often lead to authoritarianism, nationalism and xenophobia.

Nevertheless, it would be short-sighted to interpret the rise of right-wing extremism only in the context of recent socio-economic crises. Already in 2004, Mudde warned of a "populist Zeitgeist" (2004: 542) and he has pointed to significant shifts in European politics starting in the 1960s that led to the breaking down of the post-war consensus and the weakening of centre-right and centre-left parties (Mudde 2016). While the "supply" side of right-wing extremism – media uses, strategies, discourses and activities of such political formations – has a considerable literature, in this paper our aim is to focus on the "demand" side, that is, the electorate's growing affinity towards right-wing extremist ideologies and political formations.

As a follow-up study to the earlier European research project SIREN,<sup>3</sup> this analysis will map the perceptions of, and reactions to, socio-economic change and will link these to political orientations of people in Austria and Hungary. In doing so, it will explore the impact of the crisis on democratic development. It will show to what extent these developments have fuelled exclusivist, nationalistic and xenophobic attitudes and increased the attraction to right-wing extremism. The paper draws on survey data (N=2000) from the ongoing SOCRIS research project<sup>4</sup> in Austria and Hungary to answer the following questions:

- What are the most important explanatory factors behind right-wing extremism in Austria and Hungary?
- How can we link social status and perceptions of socio-economic changes with affinity to right-wing extremism in two countries affected very differently by the crisis?
- How could the differences and similarities between the two countries regarding the routes to right-wing extremism be explained?

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3 The SIREN project (Socio-Economic Change, Individual Reactions and the Appeal of the Extreme Right) investigated connections between socio-economic changes on the labour market caused by neoliberal politics and the affinity to right-wing radicalism in eight European countries, among them in Austria and Hungary between 2001 and 2004. The project was funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Cultural Affairs.

4 More details at <https://www.socris-project.com>

The cross-country comparison is justified by parallel phenomena taking place in a roughly similar manner in the neighboring countries: the rise of right-wing extremism both in Hungary and in Austria. As we will argue, however, this apparent similarity also masks important potential differences, especially when we focus on the “demand” side for right-wing extremism.

The paper is structured in the following way. In the opening, theoretical section of the paper we provide a short overview regarding definitions of right-wing extremism and relevant “demand” side theories. Our point here is not to reiterate already-known formulations on the subject but to emphasize and problematize two recent developments that require scholarly attention. First, the move of Hungary’s largest right-wing party, Fidesz from a moderate to an extremist position, and second: the fact that both in Austria and Hungary, FPÖ and Fidesz respectively are governing powers at the moment. We believe that both of these novel developments necessitate a careful rereading and rethinking of already existing theoretical knowledge. Afterwards, we provide a short background of the relevant parties in the two countries, Fidesz and Jobbik in Hungary and FPÖ in Austria for a better understanding of the “supply-side” of right-wing extremism. In the next section of the paper we describe the research methods utilized and provide a detailed description of the operationalisation process we undertook. This is followed by the discussion of our empirical findings, introducing the stepwise regression models and the path-models of the research. Finally, concluding the article, we answer our research questions and discuss their relevance.

#### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

While terms such as the far right, extreme right, right-wing radicalism, extremism, and radical right are often interchangeably used, for the sake of the present research we focus on the phenomenon of right-wing extremism. Right-wing extremism, a famously difficult concept to define – with more than 26 definitions counted by Mudde (1995: 206) – has not become analytically easier to grasp in recent years with the blossoming of new political formulations.

When defining right-wing extremism, for instance, Betz emphasizes the following ideological elements: 1. nationalism, 2. militarism, 3. right-wing authoritarianism, 4. charismatic leadership (Betz 2001). We already find that issues of style, content and organization are all included in the definitions here. Holzer (1994) also provides an ideology-centric approach. According to him right-wing extremism can be described as follows: 1. the idea of national community – the living, eternal organism built on a hierarchic, patriarchal order that ensures the socio-economic status of the individual; 2. ethnocentrism and racism, a strong division of ‘us and them’ accompanied by the exclusion of strangers and looking down on them; 3. authoritarianism and anti-pluralism, the idea of a strong state and strong leader; 4. creating enemies, finding scapegoats; 5. the nationalistic approach to history that serves to support personal identity (Holzer 1994: 35).

Minkenberg characterizes right-wing radicalism or extremism the following way: *“right-wing extremism is a political ideology revolving around the myth of a homogenous nation – a romantic and populist ultra-nationalism hostile to liberal, pluralistic democracy, with its underlying principles of individualism and universalism”* (Minkenberg 2013: 11). The key characteristics we can take away from this definition are ultra-national-

ism, anti-liberalism, anti-pluralism, and anti-individualism. Nevertheless, as we will see, the phenomenon is a highly context-sensitive one where certain characteristics (such as anti-Semitism in Europe) may lose their relevance and new features gain prominence.

In this vein, Mudde (2000) warns that we should distinguish ‘traditional neo-fascist’ types from new, ‘post-industrial’ types of radical right-wing populist parties. The new type radical right-wing populist parties distinguish themselves from old-fashioned, neo-fascist extremism, with its anti-democracy and inclination to violence. These new type parties rather give a nationalistic response to the challenge of globalisation (Mudde 2000).

For the purposes of the present research we focus on the ideologies of parties in order to identify them as right-wing extremist, with an emphasis on ultra-nationalism, anti-liberalism, anti-pluralism, and anti-individualism. Nevertheless, we also claim that the contents of these ideologies are subject to change, similarly to the transformation that Mudde explained above.

Among “demand-side” theories of right-wing extremism, for the sake of the present research, we differentiate between four explanatory models, that we consider as different dimensions of the issue. The dimensions discussed below are: social status, socio-economic changes, socio-psychological drivers, and political attitudes.

The first dimension states the importance of *social status* in right-wing extremist affinity. This approach connects the support of right-wing extremism to the lower strata of society, especially during crisis (Goldner 2016). The threatened economic interest theory put forward by Lipset posits that exclusivism is common among working class voters who find they have to fight for scarce resources (1966). The impact of job insecurity has also been researched in this vein (Billiet et al. 2014). Nevertheless, this dimension provides a partial explanation at best, since on the one hand there is a clear difference between objective measures of social status and its perception, while on the other hand changes in social status should be included in our understandings as well.

A second dimension to understanding the demand for right-wing extremism therefore includes theories that emphasize changes, and the attraction of losers of socio-economic changes to right-wing extremist ideologies (De Weerd et al. 2007, Flecker 2007). It is not objective social status, but a perception of changes that drive right-wing extremist affinity here. Furthermore, the theory of political dissatisfaction claims that losers of changes turn to extreme parties due to disappointment (Van der Brug et al. 2000). The above theories, however, are unable to explain the radicalization of the political centre and of the winners of changes. A number of approaches have attempted to interpret these phenomena. First, the theory of fear of *déclassement* claims that the middle-class feels that their position and identity may be threatened, contributing to radicalization (Lipset 1966). Others argue that radicalism in fact comes from the centre of society (Butterwege 2002). A difficulty with these approaches however lies in the fact that changes affect political preferences in a multitude of ways: they can lead to feelings of deprivation, but in times of disruption, feelings of empowerment as well; they can have detrimental effects on feelings of social attachment but can create strong ties of micro-solidarity as well.

Therefore, a third dimension, that is, the inclusion of *socio-psychological drivers* is necessary. The inclusion of these drivers is also important because a number of approaches investigate the link between issues such as new mercantilism (Flassbeck 2016), neoliberalism (Bruff 2014) and austerity (Doležalová 2015) on the one hand, and right-wing extremism on the other. A thread within this approach stresses the crisis of modernity (Betz 1994, Ignazi 2000); another emphasizes the erosion of identity where right-wing extremism offers a symbolic community (Sennett 1998). These are all connected to individualization and a destabilization of existing institutions. During times of crisis and chaos, right-wing extremist “solutions” can serve as “identity stabilizing tools”, for these reasons we look at *socio-psychological drivers*, such as subjective wellbeing, feelings of collective deprivation and social attachment and their relationship to right-wing extremism.

Finally, a further dimension connects right-wing extremism to *political attitudes*, such as welfare chauvinism (Hentges and Flecker 2006), social dominance orientation (SDO), ethnocentrism, xenophobia, authoritarianism and political powerlessness which can provide explanations of right-wing extremist breakthroughs even in strong welfare states. Existing research has shown that social dominance orientation, welfare chauvinism, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, and xenophobia are related to the support of right-wing extremist parties (Flecker 2007). We also analysed political powerlessness, as protest voting or political powerlessness can make voters turn towards extreme actors (Van den Burg et al. 2000).

While these dimensions might appear at first glance as competing explanations of the same phenomenon, we believe that an analytical advantage of our research design is to investigate the role and importance of different dimensions on the path to right-wing extremism, rather than seeing the phenomenon in a mono-causal manner.

## RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST PARTIES IN HUNGARY AND AUSTRIA

In this chapter we briefly present the history and the most important characteristics of recent right-wing extremist parties in the investigated countries.

### Jobbik

Jobbik (Movement for a Better Hungary) was founded in 1999 by right-wing university students disillusioned by Orbanian (“neo-liberal politics in a conservative disguise”) and Csurkian (Jewish conspiracy theories) politics. Gábor Vona became the party’s president following the failed elections in 2006, and he created the paramilitary Hungarian Guard banned in 2009. Vona made the Arpad striped flag of the Nazi-ally Arrow Cross Party the symbol of his party and announced a markedly exclusivist extreme right-wing campaign. One of its victims was the Hungarian Roma population, but Jobbik did not spare gays, Jews, or left-wing liberals either. During the riots in the autumn of 2006, then vice-president of Jobbik, László Toroczkai, was also implicated in the siege of, setting fire to and ransacking of the TV headquarters.<sup>5</sup> The economic, political and corruption crisis of 2008, the radicalising tone of Fidesz, the murder in Olaszliszka (where men of Roma origin killed a “Hungarian” man), and the popularity of the Hungarian Guard created to curb “Gypsy crime” brought the first

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NJvNRvYtNM>

success for Jobbik (for a more detailed analysis, see: Buzogány 2011, Karácsony and Róna 2011, Kovács 2013, Varga 2014, Tóth and Grajczjár 2015). The party received nearly 15% of the votes at the EP elections, nearly 17% at the parliamentary elections of 2010, and over 20% in 2014 (Nemzeti Választási Iroda 2014). The most important feature of Jobbik is that it revolts against the embedded liberalism of the open internal market of the European model, and that of the liberal democratic state building model followed in the region after 1989 (on embedded liberalism see: Ruggie 1982).

Jobbik offers by its simple populist slogans and putative national truths a new regime through ‘clean hands’ policy, protection for ‘common men’ and of national interests. Nevertheless, it offers a strong, fair, meritocratic and safe nation state based on a law and order policy as seen in the most recent political campaigns of the party. Jobbik is a radical party in the sense that it advocates revolutionary radical change to put the nation on a new development route akin to the „third way model” (between capitalism and socialism) proposed in the thirties, based on small private entrepreneurs in locally closed national markets, which would create an ethically and morally new and „right” nation as a new system. It is also radical in the sense that its political behaviour is driven by anger and hatred against the elites “serving foreign interests” and facilitating the exploitation of the virtuous people. It is nationalist as its concept of nation is diametrically opposed to traditional patriotism and it promotes an ethnocentric nationalism directed against minorities “unable” to assimilate culturally to the “nation”.<sup>6</sup> Finally, it is populist by demanding a strong state that ensures “socialistic” style welfare support and jobs for the “virtuous” and “hardworking” people, excluding minorities like the Roma, who are deemed culturally distinct and living on welfare support and crime (see Halasz 2009, Magyar 2011, Nagy et al. 2012, Grajczjár and Kenéz 2015, Tóth and Grajczjár 2015).

## Fidesz

The economic crisis of 2008, the political corruption scandals, and the critical state of the economic and political management forced socialist Prime Minister Gyurcsány to resign, but the new Prime Minister Bajnai did not manage to create an economic and social policy convincing enough for the broad spectrum of the society before the subsequent elections. In a radicalized atmosphere, the European Parliament elections in 2009 resulted in the success of Fidesz and Jobbik, and the elections of 2010 were won by Fidesz practically without an actual programme (Szűts et al. 2015), also winning a two-thirds majority in parliament. While there is considerable academic debate about the conceptualization of the regime introduced by Fidesz, there is also a consensus among scholars that it represents an autocratic turn in all spheres of politics (Kornai 2015). Taking advantage of the two-thirds majority, and the vengeful public sentiment, Orbán embarked on a nationalistic, witch-hunting, markedly exclusivist radicalization of Hungarian society. The historical relativisation of the Nazi-ally Horthy regime, and the use and partial realization of Jobbik<sup>7</sup>s political programme of played an active

6 Lukács highlighted the difference between the patriotism of traditional conservative elites and that of ethnocentric racist nationalism of the Nazi party in the interwar years in Germany (Lukács 1998).

7 For example: diminishing Hungary’s role in World War II., freedom fight against the EU, strong anti-migration campaign, discrimination against multinational corporations, nationalizations in the financial sector, the public utility sector and the private pension system, public work for the unemployed, the idea of reintroducing of death penalty, opening to the East, and stronger ties with illiberal and authoritarian regimes first of all with Russia, eliminating the separation of church and state, while upholding segregation in the education system (for a more detailed analysis see: Political Capital 2015)

part in this operation with a double purpose: on the one hand, to take the wind from Jobbik's sails, and, on the other hand, to start a right-wing re-socialisation process that makes the return of parties previously considered earlier as left-liberal impossible.

Orbán introduced a new constitution based on a nationalistic credo, conquered the majority of printed and online, public and private media, started to create a new upper class called "national capitalists", to position the groups loyal to him, to nationalise the education system and to fill it with national authors, to reduce the number of graduates at universities and colleges, and to create an illiberal society based on work (for a more detailed analysis see: Bajomi-Lázár 2013, Sipos 2014, Csillag and Szelényi 2015, Ágh 2016, Enyedi 2016, Kornai 2016). The main feature of the latter is the anti-poor policy of exclusive solidarity based on the public employment system which does not lead back to the world of work, and which excludes people with low salaries from family benefits in most cases, and, at the same time, encourages well-to-do families to have more children (Szeredi 2013).

An important feature of Orbán's system is the freedom fight against the EU and global capital, the populist scapegoating attitude, keeping society constantly ready through the use of rumours, anti-migration and anti-refugee rhetoric (Krekó and Mayer 2015), and building a fence; thus creating a constant feeling of being endangered. As we will see, this discursive construction of fear is something that connects right-wing extremist parties in the two countries (Rheindorf and Wodak 2018, Krzyzanowsky et al. 2018).

The Fidesz-led right-wing government initiated a number of high profile conflicts with NGOs with international backgrounds, especially targeting those receiving and redistributing the Norwegian Grants and those supported by Hungarian-American businessman and philanthropist George Soros.

## FPÖ

The FPÖ was founded in 1956 as the successor to the short-lived Federation of Independents (VdU). This was a "conglomerate of former Nazis, German nationalists and a few liberals" (Bailer et al. 2000: 106). The FPÖ aimed at representing the "third camp" of Austrian politics, including German nationalists but also liberal political currents. Its first party leader was Anton Reinthaller, a former Nazi Minister and SS officer, thus a great percentage of former Nazis "felt at home" in the party: "The first programme was a brief catalogue of catch-phrases corresponding to the political interests of former NSDAP members" (Falkenberg 1997: 81). In the early 1980s the "young liberal forces" in the FPÖ seemed to have made the ultimate breakthrough. Voted in as party leader at the 1980 congress, Norbert Steger, much abused for his "left-wing liberal" course, was from the very start in the firing line both from other extreme right organisations and from the right within the FPÖ, and was particularly opposed by Jörg Haider (Bailer et al. 2000: 111). The "putsch-like" takeover (Falkenberg 1997: 109) of the FPÖ by Jörg Haider at the 1986 congress should be seen as the final victory of these extreme right forces. According to Rösslhuber (1999: 22), with the takeover by Jörg Haider the FPÖ entered a phase of "populist protest".

Since Jörg Haider's takeover of the leadership in 1986 the FPÖ increasingly became an "authoritarian leader-party" (Bailer 1995: 273). Under Haider there was a greater integration of right-wing extremism in the

party in terms of its membership (through an increased inflow of traditional extreme right and German-nationalist oriented people as well as neo-Nazis), although simultaneously, at the level of the official programme and public presentation of the party, German nationalist ideology and symbolism was being given up.

The cornerstones of the political orientation of Haider's FPÖ (based on an analysis of the party programme and political position on selected issues) were:

- Xenophobia, ethnocentrism, new racism and anti-Semitism;
- Volksgemeinschaft ideology;
- Enemy-image and scapegoat construction;
- Authoritarianism and anti-pluralism;
- A nationalist view of history and playing down of Nazism.

In 2006, the FPÖ split into two parties: the FPÖ (stronger orientation towards right-wing nationalist populism) and the BZÖ (stronger orientation towards right-wing liberalism). The FPÖ was initially weakened, but regained considerable strength from 2006 on, under its new leader Heinz Christian Strache. Since then the FPÖ has continuously gained further seats in regional as well as in national elections and reached government participation in upper Austria (since 2015 in coalition with the ÖVP) and in Burgenland (since 2016 in coalition with SPÖ). In the presidential elections in Austria in 2016 the FPÖ candidate Norbert Hofer gained most of the votes in the first round and narrowly lost the run-off (Bundesministerium für Inneres 2016). Now, FPÖ is in a governmental position in coalition with ÖVP. Concerning ideology, the FPÖ under Strache is still clearly right-wing and openly xenophobic and racist. Although its economic program is clearly neoliberal and thus advantageous for the elites, it presents itself as the party of the oppressed and anti-elite. What FPÖ is presently executing can be characterised as an exclusive solidaritarian turn by focusing on the welfare state, calling itself the social homeland party, while also trying to maintain a neoliberal approach as well by arguing for the conditionality of the welfare state when it comes to refugees.

## METHODOLOGY

This paper presents results of the SOCRIS-survey conducted between July and September 2017 in Austria and Hungary, near the dates of the parliamentary elections in both countries (October 2017 in Austria and April 2018 in Hungary). The surveys were based on representative samples of active aged employed and unemployed people. The SOCRIS databases were weighted with the help of European Labour Force Survey 2016 data, so they are representative for gender, age-categories, level of education and degree of urbanization among employed and unemployed people between 18 and 65 years.

The SOCRIS-questionnaire – as the quantitative tool of the follow-up research to the SIREN-project – included the following sections: socio-demographics, labour market position, perceptions of socio-economic changes, socio-psychological drivers, political attitudes, orientations, voting behaviours, and subjective and objective incomes.

In this paper, all analyses were based on simple and step by step multiple linear regression models using confidence intervals for comparing country-results. Furthermore, we built path models to analyse latent



processes on routes from social status and perceptions of socio-economic changes to affinity to right-wing extremism.

### Operationalization of background variables

As discussed before, we differentiated between four interrelated explanatory approaches to analyse the “demand-side” of right-wing extremism, namely: status, socio-economic changes, socio-psychological drivers and political attitudes. In the following chapter we present a short description of our background variables based on this distinction.

There is a general consensus in the literature that those who belong to lower social classes (that is: unskilled manual labourers, people with lower levels of education, the unemployed) can be counted among the prominent losers of social transformations (Lubbers 2001, Van der Brug 2003). A common argument connects the increasing support of right-wing extremism to such lower strata of society, especially during crisis (Golder 2016). In order to test whether this relationship exists, we used an aggregated variable (principal component) to measure the objective social status offered by Lenski (2013):

- q7 – occupational position (4-point scale),
- edu\_level – education (10-point scale),
- q29/q30 – income per capita (objective income on 10-point scale).

We have seen that the relationship between perceptions of socio-economic changes and right-wing extremist attitudes is debatable at best. Therefore, the present paper focuses on the connection between affinity to right-wing extremism on the one hand and belonging among “losers” or “winners” of socio-economic changes on the other (De Weerd et al. 2007, Flecker 2007). One of the most important results of the SIREN-project was that it proved that radicalisation and affinity to right-wing extremism takes place not only among “losers” but also among “winners” of socio-economic changes, among a large European sample (De Weerd et al. 2007, Flecker 2007). The winners belonged mostly to higher social strata. The winners’ route was taken by workers who felt employable and as a consequence emphasized attitudes of competition and exclusion, opting to reduce competition on the labour market (e.g. migrants). These winners stressed attitudes such as social dominance orientation (e.g. to legitimize inequality and dominance of some groups over others), expressed chauvinism, prejudice against immigrants and authoritarian attitudes, and favoured right-wing parties.

Therefore, in order to measure socio-economic changes, we used variables by combining 1) unemployment situation and workload in order to be able to measure socio-economic changes among the active aged (q10 combined with q3) and, 2) job security (by combining feelings of secure jobs among the employed and chances of having a job among the unemployed). From these variables we created an index.

Moving on to *socio-psychological explanations*, significant potential drivers behind radicalization are subjective wellbeing and collective relative deprivation. It is commonly understood that feelings of deprivation and lack of wellbeing explain unfavourable attitudes towards members of outgroups. Therefore, we can consider the “demand” side of exclusivist politics as rooted in a need for ‘identity stabilising tools’ once feelings of deprivation emerge and increase. These tools promise to replace feelings of insecurity with security,

competition with well-deserved positions, and feelings of chaos with order (Kriesi et al. 1998, Vester 2001: 299). It should be noted, however, that approaches positing a linear relationship between relative deprivation and right-wing extremism have also been challenged in scholarly discussions, and the rival theory of relative gratification (or appreciation) claims that gratification can also lead to increasing hostility against outgroups (Grofman and Muller 1973).

The subjective wellbeing variable (principal component) is based on the following components (originally measured by 4 and 5-point Likert-scales):

- q14 – changes in the financial situation of the family,
- q15 – optimism concerning financial possibilities of the family in the near future,
- q31 – subjective income.

Collective relative deprivation (principal component) was operationalized as follows (originally measured by 5-point Likert-scales):

- q19\_1 – the appreciation that people like me get is not proportionate to the appreciation we deserve,
- q19\_2 – people like me get rewarded for their effort,
- q19\_3 – people like me have the power needed to defend our interests.

When examining the route to radicalisation, an important factor is social attachment. On the one hand we can consider social attachment on the macro-scale: as processes of “individualisation” have transformed broader society, it has led to the destabilization of traditional social institutions (the family or the neighbourhood), which in turn lose their ability to function as forms of security and protection. Feelings of isolation, insecurity, and perceptions of powerlessness therefore may increase, which can be potentially utilized by right-wing extremist ideology (Heitmeyer et al. 1992, Endrikat 2003). Elements of such an ideology – hostility towards the outgroup, authoritarianism – provide affected individuals with a sense of stability (Zoll 1984).

Thus, social attachment/identification (principal component) was operationalized as follows (originally 5-point Likert scales):

- q20\_1 – I feel strong ties with my relatives,
- q20\_3 – I feel strong ties with my neighbourhood,
- q20\_5 – I feel strong ties with Austria/Hungary.

Finally, we examined the relationship between what we call political attitudes and right-wing extremist party affinity. The SIREN-project has already established that the existence of such attitudes, namely social dominance orientation, welfare chauvinism, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism or xenophobia based on the idea of inequality and discrimination, are clearly related to the support of right-wing extremist parties (Flecker 2007). Furthermore, feelings of political powerlessness may also affect right-wing extremism, as protest voting or political powerlessness can make voters who have lost trust in traditional party formations turn towards marginal and extreme actors (Van den Burg et al. 2000).

To measure social dominance orientation (principal component), we chose 3 variables (in the SOC-RIS-questionnaire measured by 5-point Likert-scales) from the original operationalization of Pratto’s work (Pratto et al. 1994):

- q22\_1 – some people are just inferior to others,
- q22\_2 – to get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on others,
- q22\_3 – it is probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top.

We operationalized welfare chauvinism (principal component – originally measured by 5-point Likert-scales) as follows (Norris 2005):

- q22\_7 – when jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to [Hungarian/Austrian] people over immigrants
- q22\_8 – people in rich countries should pay an additional tax to help people in poor countries
- q22\_11 – the government should be fair and humane in judging people’s applications for refugee status.

Based on recent theory and measurement instruments of authoritarianism (Altemeyer 1988; principal component), it was operationalized as follows (originally measured by 5-point Likert-scales):

- q22\_12 – obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn,
- q22\_13 – most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of immoral and anti-social people,
- q22\_14 – we need strong leaders who tell us what to do.

Based on our original SIREN-conceptualization, we kept two variables to measure xenophobia (index – originally measured by 5-point Likert-scales):

- q22\_9 – immigrants increase crime rates in Austria/Hungary,
- q22\_10 – immigrants contribute to the welfare of this country.

Similarly, following the SIREN-conceptualization, we preserved two variables for measuring ethnocentrism (index- originally measured by 5-point Likert-scales):

- q22\_5 – the world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Austrians/Hungarians,
- q22\_6 – people should support their country even if the country is wrong.

The operationalization of political powerlessness (principal component) is as follows (originally measured by 5-point Likert-scales):

- q23\_1 – it seems that whatever party people vote for, things go on pretty much the same,
- q23\_3 – people like me have no influence on what the government does,
- q23\_4 – the people we elect as members of parliament very quickly lose touch with their voters.

## FINDINGS

Based on bivariate correlations, we first summarize the most important differences and similarities between the two countries under investigation concerning perceptions of changes and different exclusive attitudes.

According to our results the situation assessment of the respondents is rather optimistic (satisfaction, appreciation, positive perception of changes) in Austria, and rather pessimistic in Hungary, which is probably due to the fact that Hungary was worse hit by the crisis, and its society became much more polarized in comparison. Authoritarianism, welfare chauvinism, xenophobia and right-wing extremist affinity are more typical of Hungarian society, while social dominance orientation (SDO) occurs more frequently in Austria.

The socio-demographic background of the attitudes is quite similar in both countries, with minor differences. This corresponds to similar research results emphasizing the relevance of status in the mechanisms of prejudices, nationalism, and group-focused enmity. However, the subjective status-effect is rather weak in the explanation of identification with attitudes, with some exceptions. These include the case of Austria, where the level of authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and welfare chauvinism significantly increases among people with low subjective welfare. However, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism and SDO are especially typical in Hungary among those who regard themselves as the losers of social-economic changes. Ethnocentrism among Hungarians is not only increased by lower subjective wellbeing, but by appreciation and social attachment as well.

### Stepwise regression models explaining right-wing extremist party affinity in Austria and Hungary, separately

In this chapter we analyse the effects of the most important influencing factors towards right-wing extremist party affinity (RWEPA) in a step by step manner (Fidesz affinity was measured by satisfaction with the Orbán-government). It means that we build different, ever expanding explanatory models, where the included independent variables hold each other's effects to the given dependent variable under control. The first models always include socio-demographic variables, the second ones the perceptions of socio-economic changes as well, the third ones are complemented by socio-psychological drivers and subjective wellbeing, and the fourth ones by political attitudes.

Table 1. Stepwise overall regression on FPÖ affinity in Austria (N=806; enter method)

FPÖ Affinity	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender (Male/Female)	-0,05	-0,05	-0,07*	-0,05
Age	0,08*	0,07	0,04	0,03
Status (Lanski final)	-0,22***	-0,24***	-0,2***	-0,13***
SEC Index		0,11**	0,1*	0,13***
Subjective wellbeing			-0,02	0,01
Appreciation			-0,14***	-0,07*
Social attachment			0,22***	0,15***
SDO				0,15***
Welfare chauvinism				0,26***
Authoritarianism				-0,06
Political Powerlessness				0,24***
Xenophobia (-)vs. Tolerance (+)				-0,2***
Ethnocentrism				-0,14**
Adjusted R2	0,05	0,06	0,13	0,39

Legend:

\* =  $p < 0,5$

\*\* =  $p < 0,01$

\*\*\* =  $p < 0,001$

We found that status has a strong influence on right-wing extremist party preferences in Austria: the higher one's status the less likely one is to support right-wing extremist parties. The introduction of SEC also increases the effect of status on RWEPA. The relationship between the SEC-index and right-wing extremist af-

finity is significant: winners are more inclined to sympathize with FPÖ, but the introduction of this variable only increases the proportion of variance explained with 1%.

Adding subjective wellbeing, appreciation and social attachment lead to some important changes in this model: while subjective wellbeing has no effects on RWEPA, the less appreciated people feel, the more likely they are to prefer FPÖ. Feelings of social attachment strongly increase the likelihood of voting FPÖ as well. Altogether, the introduction of these variables doubles the explanatory value of the model from 6 to 13%.

The introduction of political attitudes (SDO, welfare chauvinism, authoritarianism, political powerlessness, xenophobia and ethnocentrism) has a clear positive effect on the overall explanatory power of the model (39%). The effects of receptiveness attitudes are as expected, with two exceptions. SDO, welfare chauvinism, political powerlessness, and xenophobia all have strong positive relationships with RWEPA. However, the effect of ethnocentrism is inverse: the less ethnocentric people are, the more likely they are to support FPÖ. Finally, the effects of authoritarianism are not significant.

*Table 2. Stepwise overall regression on Jobbik affinity in Hungary (N=833; enter method)*

Jobbik affinity	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender (Male, Female)	-0,08*	-0,08*	-0,09*	-0,07
Age	-0,09*	-0,08*	-0,14**	-0,13**
Status (Lanski final)	-0,11**	-0,12**	-0,09*	-0,05
SEC Index		0,003	0,03	0,003
Subjective wellbeing			-0,02	0,01
Appreciation			-0,15***	-0,08
Social attachment			0,07	0,05
SDO				-0,007
Welfare chauvinism				0,12*
Authoritarianism				0,1
Political Powerlessness				0,13**
Xenophobia (-) vs. Tolerance (+)				0,06
Ethnocentrism				-0,05
Adjusted R2	0,02	0,02	0,06	0,06

*Legend:*

\* =  $p < 0,5$

\*\* =  $p < 0,01$

\*\*\* =  $p < 0,001$

Regarding the potential relationship between explanatory variables and Jobbik affinity in Hungary, a model similar to the previously discussed one in Austria was constructed. It should be noted that even after the introduction of all variables explained above the explanatory value of the final model does not reach above 6%. These weak explanatory values probably show that the investigated attitudes (independent variables) are rather prevalent in Hungarian society and influence not only the affinity to Jobbik, but to other parties as well.

In the first three models gender, age and status have a significant effect on Jobbik affinity. Men and younger people appear to be more likely to prefer Jobbik. Status also has an influence on Jobbik-affinity; in Hungary just as in Austria, the relationship is inverse: people with higher status show less affinity to RWEPA. It should be noted, however, that only lower age remains significant in the final model. The addition of the

SEC-index has practically no effects on Jobbik affinity. Only feelings of appreciation have a strong inverse effect on Jobbik-affinity: the less appreciated (deprived) people feel the more likely they are to prefer Jobbik. Overall, the introduction of these three variables increases the explanatory power of the model to 6%.

Interestingly, the introduction of receptiveness attitudes (SDO, welfare chauvinism, authoritarianism, political powerlessness, xenophobia and ethnocentrism) does not increase the explanatory power of the model. The effects of gender, status and appreciation on Jobbik-affinity disappear. The effects of age also slightly decrease. However, the effects of most political attitudes (SDO, authoritarianism, xenophobia, and ethnocentrism) are also not significant. Welfare chauvinism and feelings of political powerlessness significantly increase Jobbik-affinity. At this stage, only three variables have a significant effect on Jobbik-affinity: age, welfare chauvinism and political powerlessness, and, as mentioned above, the overall explanatory value of the model is only 6%.

Table 3. Stepwise overall regression on Orbán-government satisfaction in Hungary (N=838; enter method)

Orbán government satisfaction	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender (Male, Female)	-0,02	-0,01	0,03	0,04
Age	0,07*	0,08*	0,15***	0,11**
Status (Lanski final)	0,001	-0,02	-0,08*	0,04
SEC Index		0,08*	-0,005	-0,002
Subjective wellbeing			0,2***	0,12**
Appreciation			0,2***	0,07
Social attachment			0,13***	0,03
SDO				-0,02
Welfare chauvinism				0,12**
Authoritarianism				0,09*
Political Powerlessness				-0,33***
Xenophopia (-) vs. Tolerance (+).				-0,19***
Ethnocentrism				0,15***
Adjusted R2	0,01	0,01	0,11	0,31

Legend:

\* =  $p < 0,5$

\*\* =  $p < 0,01$

\*\*\* =  $p < 0,001$

Gender and status show practically no significant effects on Orbán-government satisfaction. Age, however, has a weak positive effect: older people seem to be more satisfied with the government. The introduction of socio-economic changes does not provide for a much clearer picture, but the addition of subjective wellbeing, appreciation and social attachment do: the higher one's level of subjective wellbeing, the more appreciated and integrated one feels, the more likely people are to be satisfied with the government. Taking these variables into consideration the proportion of variance explained through the model increases to 11%.

As a next step, political attitudes (SDO, welfare chauvinism, authoritarianism, political powerlessness, tolerance/xenophobia and ethnocentrism) are introduced in the model. First, this step weakens the effects of age, status (which becomes non-significant), subjective wellbeing, appreciation and social attachment (the latter two also become non-significant).

Political attitudes have ambivalent effects on satisfaction with the government. In the case of welfare chauvinism, xenophobia, authoritarianism and ethnocentrism, this relationship is positive: people who are more welfare chauvinist, xenophobic, authoritarian and ethnocentric are more likely to support the government. However, the effect of political powerlessness is inverse: people who feel more powerless are less likely to support the government. SDO has no significant effect on government satisfaction. The introduction of political attitudes increases the explanatory power of the model to 31%.

In sum, the effect of status on RWEPA declines by the entrance of attitude variables in Austria, while it completely disappears in Hungary. In both countries the influence of deprivation melts away in the final models. Younger respondents, moreover welfare chauvinistic and politically disillusioned people support Jobbik, while older people and those having high subjective status, moreover xenophobic, welfare chauvinistic, authoritarian and ethnocentric respondents and those having strong political trust support the Orbán-government.

In Austria, both objective losers (with lower social status) and subjective winners (with positive perceptions of SEC), moreover socially attached (integrated) and social dominance oriented respondents support FPÖ as well. Nevertheless, welfare chauvinism, political powerlessness and xenophobia strengthen FPÖ-affinity. Here, we can detect both winner and loser routes to FPÖ.

### PATH-MODELS

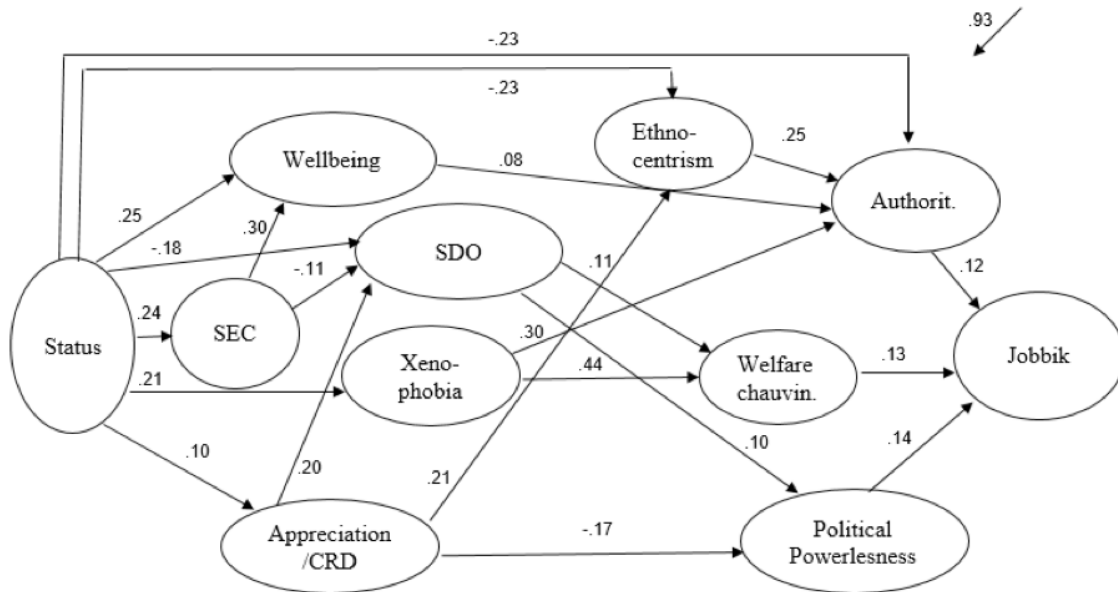
Path-models are linear regression chains, where the correlation between two variables is broken up to some different routes. In the following we present 3 path-models, where the correlations between social status and affinity to an extreme right party are broken up to so called “winner and loser” routes.<sup>8</sup> So, we are able to analyse latent, indirect effects of social status and the perceptions of the crisis (SEC – socio-economic changes) on RWEPA (right-wing extremist party affinity).

In Hungary, affinity to Jobbik is directly influenced by authoritarianism, welfare chauvinism, and political powerlessness (see figure 1. – however, the effects of the explanatory variables are very weak, only 7%): the more authoritarianism, welfare chauvinism and political powerlessness the stronger the affinity to Jobbik. Respondents with a lower social status can develop the attitudes of ethnocentrism and authoritarianism directly. Ethnocentrism leads then through authoritarianism to Jobbik affinity. Nevertheless, the lower status and the negative perception of socio-economic changes (SEC) can lead to social dominance orientation (SDO) directly, which, through the attitudes of welfare chauvinism and political powerlessness, runs to affinity to Jobbik. A lower status, moreover, can lead to collective relative deprivation (CRD), which, through the attitude of political powerlessness, gets to Jobbik affinity.

However, not only so-called loser routes can lead to affinity to Jobbik. A higher status leads to more appreciation, appreciated respondents are more ethnocentric, and this route leads through authoritarianism to Jobbik affinity. Nevertheless, more appreciation leads to more SDO too, which strengthens welfare chauvinism and feelings of political powerlessness as well. These attitudes correlate with Jobbik affinity directly then. Also,

<sup>8</sup> Because social attachment has no correlation with social status and SEC among active aged respondents in Hungary, instead we used subjective wellbeing in the path models there. However, we furthermore used social attachment variable in the Austrian model, as we did in the SIREN project.

Figure 1. Jobbik affinity (N=833; enter method)  
**Jobbik – Active aged (SOCRIS)**



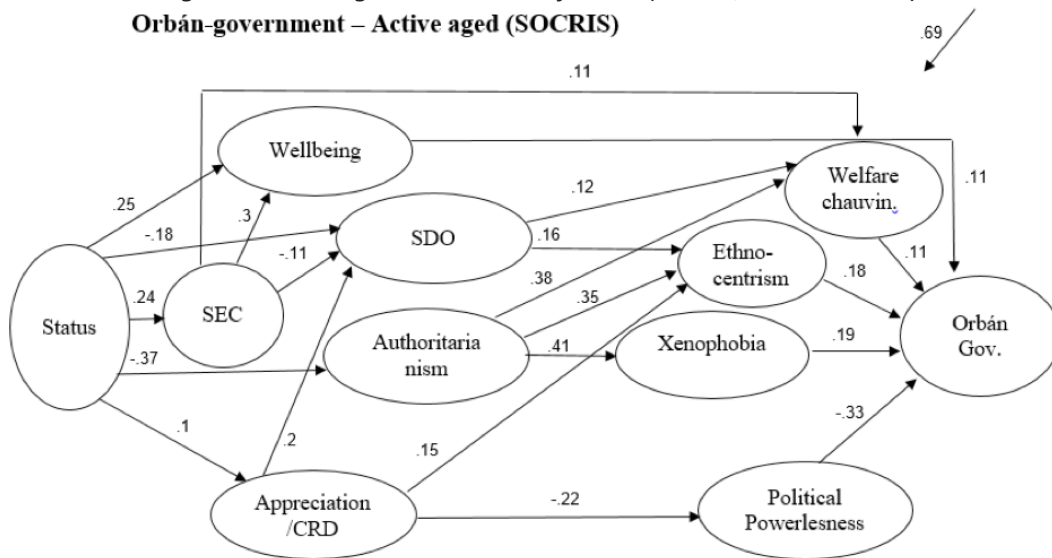
people with a higher status and/or positive perceptions of SEC show higher subjective wellbeing, which leads through authoritarianism to Jobbik affinity again. Higher status can also lead to xenophobia directly in Hungary, an attitude which through authoritarianism and welfare chauvinism strengthens the affinity to Jobbik as well.

In sum, collective relative deprivation, social dominance orientation, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, welfare chauvinism and political powerlessness characterize the loser routes, while appreciation, subjective wellbeing, ethnocentrism, social dominance orientation, authoritarianism, xenophobia, political powerlessness and welfare chauvinism mark winner routes in case of Jobbik in Hungary. The most important surprise here is that social dominance orientation belongs not only to the winner route, and political powerlessness not only to the loser route; moreover, xenophobia belongs not to the loser, but to the winner route, as we saw in the SIREN-project 14 years before.

In case of satisfaction with the Orbán government (see Figure 2. – where the effects of the explanatory variables are much stronger than in the case of Jobbik – 31%) we can state that feelings of appreciation and subjective wellbeing are important drivers on winner routes towards support of the Orbán government. What's more, appreciation strengthens political trust, which leads directly to satisfaction with the government. Besides many direct and indirect winner routes, authoritarianism and SDO drives ethnocentrism, welfare chauvinism and xenophobia on loser routes. Practically, authoritarianism and xenophobia belong only to loser routes, while SDO, ethnocentrism and welfare chauvinism belong both to winner and loser paths. Feelings of deprivation play no role in the satisfaction with the Orbán government.



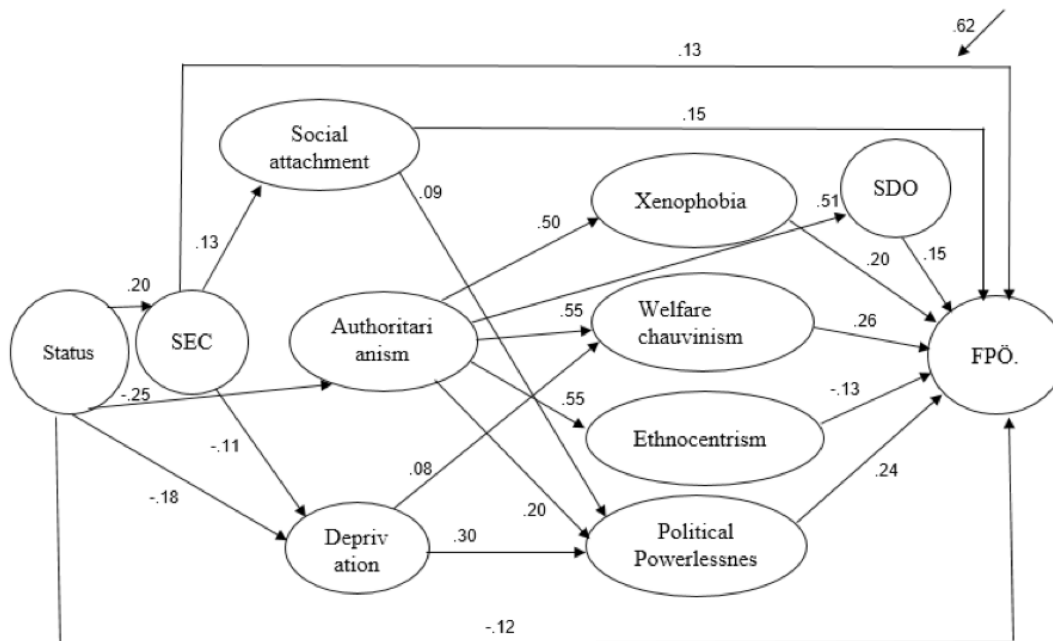
Figure 2. Orbán-government satisfaction (N=838; enter method)  
Orbán-government – Active aged (SOCRIS)



Analysing affinity to FPÖ we find winner and loser routes, as in the Hungarian models (see Figure 3. – the effects of the explanatory variables are 38%). SDO, xenophobia, welfare chauvinism and political powerlessness influence affinity to FPÖ directly. As we saw earlier, ethnocentrism plays no role, what's more, refusal of ethnocentrism correlates with FPÖ affinity.

Figure 3. FPÖ affinity (N=806; enter method)

FPÖ – Active aged (SOCRIS)



Lower status leads directly to FPÖ affinity in Austria. Nevertheless, lower status and negative perceptions of socio-economic changes both run through deprivation and political powerlessness and/or welfare chauvinism to affinity to FPÖ. Lower status, moreover, influences authoritarianism directly as well. Authoritarianism strengthens social dominance orientation, xenophobia, welfare chauvinism and political powerlessness and, as we already saw, these all lead to FPÖ affinity directly.

Similarly to the Hungarian models, not only loser routes lead to affinity to FPÖ. Higher status leads to more positive perceptions of SEC, which directly influences FPÖ affinity, or indirectly through social attachment (integration). Interestingly, higher integration can lead to stronger feeling of political powerlessness too, which runs to FPÖ affinity as well.

In sum, right-wing extremist political attitudes only play important roles on loser routes (with the exception of political powerlessness), while winner routes mostly directly or with the intermediary role of social attachment connect to the affinity to FPÖ. In 2017, however, political powerlessness became also a part of the winner routes in Austria. What's more, authoritarianism (probably as a scale of open/closed mindedness) behaves like a socio-psychological driver in the Austrian model.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The results of the regression analysis presented in our paper clearly demonstrated differences between the Austrian and the Hungarian situation.

Answering our first research question, namely, what the most important explanatory factors behind right-wing extremism are in Austria and Hungary, we can state that in Austria the popularity of the right-wing extremist FPÖ is due to a strong social disruption in the country and is primarily conspicuous in the area of political and social values. As far as political attitudes are concerned, the supporters of FPÖ share a relatively unified and coherent ideology where social dominance orientation, welfare chauvinism, political powerlessness, and xenophobia are all very popular. This is complemented by lower status and deprivation, but a stronger social attachment among supporters of right-wing extremism. One surprising finding here is that a marked part of FPÖ supporters have a positive perception of socio-economic changes, that is, they consider themselves as the winners of these changes. At the same time, concerning social stratification, ideological and value-based division lines are not observable. According to the results of the regression analysis, although FPÖ is more popular among people with lower status indeed, and slightly more popular among the deprived, neither other socio-demographic variables, nor subjective wellbeing has an impact on FPÖ-affinity.

In Hungary the social background of right-wing extremist voters is remarkably different from those in Austria. The voters of Jobbik, the second largest Hungarian right-wing extremist party, can be found in all segments of society, and neither socio-demographic differences, nor political attitudes play an important part in who is attracted to or who rejects its right-wing extremist ideology. Those who are somewhat younger, welfare chauvinists, and politically disillusioned are attracted to Jobbik, but the explanatory power of the models is very weak.

However, when right-wing extremist politics gets into governmental position, which also means it is widely supported by voters, as in the case of Fidesz, sociological demarcation lines are clearly visible. First of all, those who strongly support Fidesz are also the winners of the right-wing extremist governance. This is reflected primarily by the positive effect of subjective well-being regardless of sex, age or social status. Those who consider themselves as winners are attached to Fidesz, and, considering the election results, this covers a significant social group in various segments of the social hierarchy. At the same time, political attitudes (SDO,

welfare chauvinism, authoritarianism, xenophobia and ethnocentrism) demonstrate that the ideological narrative of Fidesz finds its audience in the wider society, associated by political trust.

The path models partly prove and partly refine this picture, and open the door to answer our second and third research questions (about the links between status, socio-economic changes and RWEPA, as well as differences and similarities between the two countries). In Austria, the coherent system of social values that constitutes FPÖ's ideology is also confirmed by using a path model. Concerning structural effects, both a high SEC-index and a low status have a direct influence on FPÖ-affinity. However, the so-called loser and winner paths have very different attitude structures. The group with a lower status is characterised by being open to authoritarian political solutions complemented by supporting political attitudes, which results in an affinity towards FPÖ. On another loser path, for the deprived group of low status with a negative experience of the socio-economic changes only political powerlessness and welfare chauvinism leads to FPÖ. What makes the Austrian situation especially interesting though is the attachment of people of a higher status to right-wing extremism. They do not need (or they hide) the acceptance of the right-wing extremist ideology. This is hard to explain based on our results. It might be because of their dissatisfaction with the traditional party system and politics (political powerlessness), or they wish for a new style of political life for Austria and FPÖ makes them believe in this.

Path models refined the picture of course in Hungary, too. According to the complex explanatory model of people's social status, satisfaction, and system of values, the sympathizers of Jobbik also show extreme political attitudes. Political powerlessness, welfare chauvinism, and authoritarian attitudes are typical of their sympathizers, with indirect ethnocentrism, social intolerance, and xenophobia in the background. However, the social basis of Jobbik is narrower, it is mainly followed by people with a lower status, dissatisfied with their situation, who feel they are the losers of the economic and social changes. Among people with a higher status, the honoured and the winners, Jobbik can rely on a small, dissatisfied radical group that has either been originally authoritarian, or has become authoritarian or welfare chauvinistic through SDO, xenophobia and ethnocentrism.

However, the popularity of Fidesz's right-wing extremist rhetoric is significantly different. According to the results of the path model, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, and welfare chauvinism are the three political narratives directly determining its support and success. All of these have the same origin, namely the government's xenophobic campaign related to migration and the refugee issues, using the complete power-reservoir. However, this is only one element. Our model also shows the other factor behind the success of Fidesz, namely that they have managed to make everyone in the higher segments of the society whose situation has improved (or at least has not worsened) believe that this is due to the government (and share attitudes like SDO, ethnocentrism and welfare chauvinism). For those of a lower social status, and those who have been the losers of the past few years they were able to offer political ideological models like authoritarian power politics and the compensative attitude of social dominance, traditionally highly popular in Hungary. All this is paired by the image of the common national enemy, the migrant and refugee that only Fidesz can save the Hungarian nation from.

But what is most interesting concerning how and to what extent right-wing extremist ideology is becoming popular in Hungary is not the differences between the two groups of voters. The pools of supporters of the two parties are different indeed, but the main difference in comparison to Austria comes from the fact that direct connections exist between right-wing extremist affinity, social status and socio-economic changes in Austria, whereas there are only indirect/latent links in Hungary. This indicates that while right-wing extremist thinking and attitudes still characterize (at least characterized in 2017) clearly definable minority groups in Austria, there is a wide permeation of right-wing extremism among different social strata in Hungary, most probably due to the difficult experiences of the multiple socio-economic and political crises of 2008/2009 in the majority of the population and the collapse of the left-liberal political camp. As mentioned, people in all social strata have received enough right-wing extremist attitudinal and ideological – or, in the case of the higher strata, also financial – ammunition from Fidesz to believe that the recovery from the crisis is only due to their governance. The picture is even clearer if we take into consideration that the extreme right (Fidesz and Jobbik together) constitutes more than two-thirds of active voters in Hungary. Practically, right-wing extremist political ideology is common ground in Hungary today.

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