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Left-wing Authoritarianism in the Past and Contemporary Research in the Field of Political Psychology

Summary

The main goal of this article is to present different points of view on the issue of left-wing authoritarianism and its presence on the political scene as well as considering how the term is utilised in contemporary research on political extremism. It is worth noting that although the question of whether authoritarianism is typical only for one side of the political continuum, or whether it is present on both sides of the political spectrum, has been a widely discussed issue for some time, it seems worth reconsidering, especially in the context of Eastern European countries.

Keywords
left-wing authoritarianism, extremism, political psychology

AUTORYTARYZM LEWICOWY W BADANIACH Z ZAKRESU PSYCHOLOGII POLITYCZNEJ

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie różnych punktów widzenia, dotyczących zagadnienia autorytaryzmu lewicowego i jego obecności na scenie politycznej, a także zbadanie, na ile pojęcie to jest przydatne we współczesnych badaniach nad ekstremizmem politycznym. Należy zauważyć, że chociaż rozważania nad tym, czy autorytaryzm jest charakterystyczny jedynie dla jednej strony kontinnum politycznego, czy też jest cechą wspólną dla obydwu stron politycznego spektrum należą od dawna do szeroko dyskutowanych kwestii, to jednak problem ten wydaje się wart ponownego rozważenia, zwłaszcza w kontekście przemian w krajach Europy Środkowej.

Słowa kluczowe

autorytaryzm lewicowy, ekstremizm, psychologia polityczna

THE CONCEPT OF THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY AND ITS CRITICISM

The quest for scientific evidence on the existence of left-wing authoritarianism, often called "the Loch Ness Monster of political psychology" [Altemeyer 1996, p. 216] began with the publishing of *The Authoritarian Personality* written by Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and Robert N. Sanford. The central theme of that work was the concept of the authoritarian personality, which was supposed to make an individual particularly susceptible to antidemocratic propaganda. The authors focused on discovering traits of a kind of personality which were, in their opinion, characteristic for a potentially fascistic individual who would support fascism if it would become a strong social movement [Adorno et al. 1950, p. 2].

Their research was based on the hypothesis that

> the political, economic and social convictions of an individual often form a broad and coherent pattern, as if bound together by a "mentality" or a "spirit", and that this pattern is an expression of deep-lying trends in his personality [Adorno et al. 1950, p. 1].

The personality of an individual was seen as the determinant of ideological preferences, although it should be mentioned that the authors did not consider personality as being the ultimate determinant of ideology and were aware of the fact that it always evolves under the impact of the social environment.

Their point of view, based mainly on the psychoanalytic approach, had an enormous impact on the methodology of research. Group studies as well as individual studies were conducted by means of interviews, clinical techniques and questionnaires. The authors constructed the anti-Semitism scale (A-S scale), the ethnocentrism scale (E scale), politico-economic conservatism scale (PEC scale) and, what is the most important regarding to the problem of the left-wing authoritarianism, the fascism scale, known as the authoritarianism scale, (F scale) which was supposed to be the measure of prejudice and of implicit antidemocratic trends in the personality, understood as antidemocratic potential within individuals [Adorno et al. 1950, p. 222-223].

The content of the F scale was based upon such variables as conventionalism, authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, anti-intraception, superstition and stereotypy, power and "toughness," destructiveness and cynicism, projectivity and finally sex (exaggerated concern with overt sexuality). According to the authors these variables were variables of personality, which formed a syndrome; a type of personality (the authoritarian personality), which was characteristic for potentially fascist individuals [Adorno et al. 1950, p. 230-250].

It should be also added that according to the authors, the individuals who scored extremely high on the F scale shared the authoritarian personality syndrome (with different "subsyndromes" within its framework), which was distinguishable from a variety of "low" syndromes found among low scorers. Types of the authoritarian personality found among high scorers (such as, for example, the "rebel and the psychopath," the "manipulative" type and the "authoritarian" type) consisted of all the personality variables listed on the F scale but they differed by emphasis on certain traits or dynamics between them. Those types of personality were connected with anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism and political-economic conservatism (named by the authors "pseudo-conservatism"). Types of personality found among

low scorers (such as for example the Genuine Liberal or the Easy-Going) were characterized mainly by the absence of prejudice and an "anti-totalitarian attitude" [Adorno et al. 1950, p. 751-783].

Additionally, it should be emphasised that the F scale correlated significantly with A-S scale, E-scale and PEC scale. In attempting to explain these correlations Adorno et al. pointed out that fascism, as an extreme right-wing political ideology, is at the same time the most antidemocratic form of ethnocentrism [Adorno et al. 1950, p. 151].

The concept of the authoritarian personality was widely criticized soon after the publishing of *The Authoritarian Personality* in 1950. This criticism was focused mainly on the shortcomings of the methodology of the research (such as the F scale validity as a measure of authoritarianism and the validity of the other questionnaires, which were used in the research but also the sampling methods) and on the theoretical background of the research which was based on psychoanalytic theory [Hyman and Sheatsley 1954, p. 50-122].

Reviewing the criticism of the psychometric properties of the F scale Bob Altemeyer pointed out that the F scale does not measure any single construct it was supposed to measure (the authoritarian personality) and is not a unidimensional instrument. Additionally he underlined that the F scale's relationships with other measures of prejudice and its high correlations with the A-S and E scales resulted from the way these scales were constructed. Also other critics of that methodology pointed out that all scales used by Adorn et al. were unidirectionally worded and that the response set contributed to the relationships between the F, E, PEC and A-S scales, as well as to the relationships between the F scale and other personality measures which were unidirectionally worded also [Altemeyer 1981, p. 15-30].

What seems most important from the point of view of the left-wing authoritarianism phenomenon is the critique, which was focused on the ideological content of the F scale. In that context Edward A. Shils's critical remarks (which were made soon after the publishing of *The Authoritarian Personality*) should be considered.

THE QUEST FOR LEFT-WING AUTHORITARIANISM

Shils pointed out that the left-right dichotomy present in the work of Adorno and his colleagues was based on the simplified conviction that all political and social beliefs and attitudes can be classified on the right-left continuum. He emphasised that two extremes are discussed in this work: the authoritarian personality (present by individuals who scored extremely high on the F scale) and the democrat/non authoritarian personality (individuals who scored low on the same scale) is not sufficient because it does not reflect the presence of Communists in the samples tested who might score low on the F scale but, in his opinion, should be considered as authoritarians as well. The author emphasised that Adorno et al. did not notice that the phenomenon of left-wing authoritarianism (communism) which was perceived by Shils as a major threat, much more important and threatening to democracy than right-wing authoritarianism present in the United States of America, on which the authors of the authoritarian personality theory focused their analysis [Shils 1954, p. 38].

In Shils opinion some of the individuals tested might not have agreed with statements of the F scale because its content was typical for an extremely right-wing ideology, not because they were non-authoritarians but because they were Communists, which was overseen by the authors of the authoritarian personality theory. As he wrote

> it is highly probable that a number of authoritarians of the "Left" have been included among those who scored "low" in Anti-Semitism, Ethnocentrism, Political-Economic-Conservatism or Fascism [Shils 1954, p. 31].

Additionally he noticed the psychological resemblance between the right-wing and left-wing authoritarianism in various aspects, such as the intolerance of ambiguity, preoccupation with power, faith in political leaders and submission to them. It should be noticed that Shils attitude toward communism was shared by many researches in the 1950s who were alerted to communism's threat and perceived fascism and communism as "basically similar," totalitarian regimes [Friedrich and Brzeziński 1956, p. 9-10].

Shils was not the only researcher in the field of political psychology who was convinced that authoritarianism is a common label for

communism and fascism. Hans J. Eysenck in his work *The Psychology of Politics*, which was first published in 1954, claimed that extremists of both sides of the political scene share the same attitudinal dimension of "tough-mindedness." In his opinion socio-political attitudes are not isolated one from another but are closely linked and form a pattern of correlations. That assumption was based on his research among supporters of the Conservative, Liberal, Labour and Socialist party of Great Britain, which were examined by Eysenck's Inventory of Social Attitudes. Based on the interpretation of the results of factor analytic studies he discovered two orthogonal, bipolar factors: a factor of Radicalism/Conservatism (the R-factor) and a factor of "tender-mindedness/tough-mindedness" (the T-factor). As he pointed out

> there is in truth only one ideological factor present in the attitude field, namely that of Radicalism-Conservatism. The T-factor itself does not constitute an alternative ideological system but is rather the projection of personality variables on to a Radical-Conservative attitude continuum [Eysenck 1954, p. 170].

From his point of view there was a close relationship between "tough-mindedness" and extraversion and between "tender-mindedness" and introversion. He claimed that "tough-mindedness" was the projection of the extraverted type of personality on to a Radical- Conservative continuum whereas "tender-mindedness" was the projection of the introverted personality type on that social attitude continuum. That assumption permits one to distinguish radicals who are "tough-minded" or "tender-minded" and conservatives who are "tough-minded" or "tender-minded" [Eysenck 1954, p. 190-191].

It should be noticed, that the name for the T-factor dimension was taken from William James characterisation of two opposed types of temperament. According to this author the "tender-minded" individual is rationalistic, intellectualistic, idealistic as well as optimistic, religious and monistic. On the other hand a person who is "tough-minded" was supposed to be empirical, sensationalistic, materialistic, pessimistic, irreligious and skeptical. Eysenck considered the "tender-mindedness" as dominated by ethical, altruistic values whereas the "tough-mindedness" was supposed to be overwhelmed by realistic and "egotistic values" [Eysenck 1954, p. 130-132].

What is the most important from the point of view of the left-wing authoritarianism phenomenon is that Eysenck pointed out that both dimensions of the T-factor could be found on the left as well as on the right part of political scene, and he identified "tough-mindedness" with the authoritarian factor. Results obtained in his research (in which supporters of communist and fascist parties were also tested) led him to conclude that Communists are "tough-minded" and radical (in relation to the R-factor) while Fascists appear to be "tough-minded" and conservative. Eysenck was convinced that "authoritarianism (tough-mindedness) could appear equally well on the left as on the right" and he perceived "Stalin as equally authoritarian as Hitler, communism as equally totalitarian as Nazism" [Eysenck 1999, p. xv].

In his following research Eysenck, in cooperation with Thelma T. Coulter, examined the members of the communist and fascist parties of Great Britain and concluded that these groups were very similar in the aspect of aggressiveness and traits such as dominance, rigidity and intolerance of ambiguity. It should be added that according to the authors, Fascists were prone to manifest aggression in an open way while Communists were supposed to present a tendency to indirect aggression. Communists had also a greater tendency towards open dominance whereas Fascists presented covert dominance [Eysenck 1954, p. 202-264].

His point of view was widely criticized, mainly by Milton Rokeach, Charles Hanley and Richard Christie. The criticism was focused on the calculations of the scores for various groups, the ambiguity of responses to the items, and the way the items themselves were chosen. The sampling techniques were also the subject of critique that led these authors to the conclusion that Eysenck's assumption about the relationship between "tender-mindedness/tough-mindedness" and political affiliation was invalid [Altemeyer 1981, p. 80-87].

One of Eysenck's critics, Milton Rokeach, was also a researcher who criticized the concept of the authoritarian personality. He agreed with Shils that the authors of the authoritarian personality theory neglected to study left-wing authoritarianism and focused only on the right-wing authoritarianism, but from his point of view Shils' critique was insufficient. Rokeach considered that researchers should overcome the dichotomy of "left" and "right" authoritarianism which is undesirable and

> should proceed from right authoritarianism not to re-focus on left authoritarianism but to the general properties held in common by all forms of authoritarianism. (…) we should pursue a more theoretical ahistorical analysis of the properties held in common by all forms of authoritarianism regardless of specific ideological, theological, philosophic, or scientific content [Rokeach 1960, p. 14].

In attempting to achieve that goal Rokeach focused on belief systems and their structural properties, not on their content. In his opinion, the personality of an individual was an organization of beliefs, which could be measured. He claimed that all belief systems have three major dimensions: a belief-disbelief dimension, a central-peripheral dimension and a time-perspective dimension. A belief-disbelief dimension represents all the beliefs that an individual considers as true at a given time (belief system) and a series of subsystems containing all the disbeliefs that a person at a given time rejects as false. He pointed out that a belief-disbelief systems may vary in the degree of differentiation, isolation and comprehensiveness or narrowness. A central-peripheral dimension represents the beliefs a person has about the nature of the world he lives in, the nature of the "self" and the "others" as well as beliefs about the nature of authority and beliefs derived from that authority. Finally a time-perspective dimension refers to the person's belief about the past, present and future and about their relations [Rokeach 1960, p. 31-53].

Rokeach was trying to examine and measure the organization of belief systems and especially the dimension of their openness/closeness. He described why and how belief systems may vary in the degree of their openness/closeness and constructed *The Dogmatism Scale* in order to measure individual differences in that aspect. He pointed out that dogmatism refers to the resistance to change of a total system of beliefs. Accordingly, to that assumption he described two extremes along a continuum of belief systems: the closed (dogmatic) belief systems and those that are open. He assumed that the closed belief system could be characterized by such traits as for example an isolation of beliefs within the beliefs system and between belief and disbelief systems, a high degree of rejection of disbelief subsystems, the belief in absolute authority and overreliance on it, acceptance or rejection of other people according to their agreement or disagreement with such authority, as well as a narrow, future-orientated time

perspective. The closed (dogmatic) system was also connected with perceiving the outside world as threatening; dogmatism was seen as a defense mechanism against perceived threat and anxiety [Rokeach 1960, p. 55-70].

Rokeach used in his research not only *The Dogmatism Scale* to measure individual differences in openness or closeness of belief systems but also *The Opinionation Scale* to measure "general intolerance" (which aimed to measure intolerance independently of the specific group discriminated against). In 1954 he examined English college students who identified themselves as Conservative, Liberal, Atlleeite Laborite, Bevanite Laborite, and Communist. In that research Rokeach compared these groups on Opinionation, Dogmatism, F and Ethnocentrism scales. According to the results obtained, Communists scored the highest of all groups on the Opinionation and Dogmatism Scale (although their results on the Dogmatism Scale were not significantly different from the means of others groups on this scale). Additionally Communists scored significantly lower than the other groups on the F Scale and on the Ethnocentrism Scale. Rokeach also noted that Conservatives scored the highest of all groups on the F Scale and Ethnocentrism Scale and relatively high on the Dogmatism and the Opinionation Scale [Rokeach 1960, p. 115-116].

In Rokeach's opinion these results indicated that *The Dogmatism Scale* was a measure of general authoritarianism (the measure of the relative openness or closeness of belief systems regardless to their ideological, religious or scientific content) whereas the F scale was the measure of right-wing authoritarianism only. Although it should be noted also that Dogmatism Scale correlated positively with the F Scale and Politico-Economic Conservatism Scale (PEC scale), which shows that the Dogmatism Scale is connected with the right-wing political orientation as Rokeach himself pointed out: "the data nevertheless show that there is a somewhat greater tendency for persons to the right of center to be more authoritarian than persons to the left of center" [Rokeach 1960, p. 129].

Critics of the dogmatism theory focused on the fact that the Dogmatism Scale was not in fact the measure of general authoritarianism as there were ideological biases remaining in that scale. Many researchers found that the level of dogmatism was higher among right-wing political supporters than among others [Barker 1963; DiRenzo

1967; Knutson 1974]. For example, in DiRenzo's study the D scale was administered to the members of the Italian House of Deputies. He found that deputies belonging to the neofascist Italian Social Movement had the highest mean score on the Dogmatism scale whereas deputies of the Italian Communist Party had the lowest mean score on that scale [DiRenzo 1967, p. 123]. It was also found that the Dogmatism scale correlated highly with the Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale and was connected with support for the right-wing political parties as well as with cultural conservatism [Kossowska 2005, p. 37].

Reviewing the literature on the left-wing authoritarianism William F. Stone wrote in 1980 that "the left-wing authoritarianism is no more to be found in the political samples that have been tested with the D Scale than it has been in studies using the F scale" [Stone 1980, p. 12]. From his point of view, left-wing authoritarianism is a myth and has no foundation in fact. He pointed out that authoritarianism (perceived as personality and attitude syndrome) is characteristic of right-wingers alone [Stone 1980, p. 14].

Nevertheless the debate on the left-wing authoritarianism did continue. A new point of view on the issue of left-wing authoritarianism was given by Bob Altemeyer.

RIGHT-WING AND LEFT-WING AUTHORITARIANISM

Bob Altemeyer was one of the critics of the authoritarian personality theory and other definitions of authoritarianism. He perceived authoritarianism as an orientation which can appear on both sides of the political scene; the orientation that was common for left-wing and right-wing extremists. Altemeyer had his own point of view on the subject of the left-wing and right-wing authoritarianism. It should be noticed that at the beginning Altemeyer was using the terms "right-wing" and then "left-wing authoritarianism" in a social psychological sense, which meant submission to the perceived established authorities in one's life. By right-wing and left-wing authoritarianism he meant the co-variation of three attitudinal clusters, such as authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression and conventionalism. In the case of the right-wing authoritarianism by authoritarian submission,

he denoted a "high degree of submission to the authorities who are perceived to be established and legitimate in the society in which one lives." Authoritarian aggression was defined as "a general aggressiveness, directed against various persons, which is perceived to be sanctioned by established authorities" and by conventionalism he meant "a high degree of adherence to the social conventions which are perceived to be endorsed by society and its established authorities" [Altemeyer 1981, p. 148].

Altemeyer developed the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (the RWA scale) in order to measure that phenomenon. He pointed out that High RWAs tend to be more submissive to established authority than most people are, they felt satisfaction at being able to punish people breaking social norms but at the same time right-wing authoritarians were showing double standards if the wrongdoers were officials who they admired. According to Altemeyer's research, right-wing authoritarians tend to be ethnocentric and prejudiced against many different minority groups. He also analyzed the relationship between right-wing authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism, and he considered that such fundamentalism can be perceived as a religious manifestation of right wing authoritarianism [Altemeyer 1996, p. 22-26, 161].

Additionally Altemeyer underlined that right-wing authoritarians were showing support for right-wing political parties. He also examined the results on the RWA scale obtained by members of Canadian and American political parties. These results indicated that members of right-wing political parties were scoring significantly higher in the RWA scale than members of left-wing political parties, which led Altemeyer to conclude that the RWA scale is in fact the measure of the liberal-conservative dimension in politics (and not only the measure of right-wing authoritarianism in a psychological sense as he claimed earlier) [Altemeyer 1998, p. 88].

It should be noted that, from the point of view of the main goal of this article, the most important aspect is the way Altemeyer defined left-wing authoritarianism. As it was mentioned before by left-wing authoritarianism, he meant the covariation of the same three attitudinal clusters, as in the case of the right-wing authoritarianism, but it should be emphasised that their meaning was different. Authoritarian submission denoted "a high degree of submission to authorities who

are dedicated to «overthrowing» the established authorities in one's society." By authoritarian aggression Altemeyer meant

> a general aggressiveness directed against the established authorities, or against persons who are perceived to support those authorities and conventionalism was considered as a high degree of adherence to the norms of behavior perceived to be endorsed by the revolutionary authorities [Altemeyer 1996, p. 219].

As it was emphasised at the beginning, Altemeyer was using terms "right-wing" and then "left-wing authoritarianism" in a social psychological sense, which meant submission to the perceived established authorities in one's life; in the case of left-wing authoritarianism, it was submission to revolutionary authorities and a willingness to "overthrow" established authorities in one's society. As he emphasised, not everyone who is against the established authorities (such as, for example, the government or political leaders) would be left-wing authoritarian. Submission to revolutionary movement's leaders and having enemies who must be destroyed was crucial for this phenomenon. Left-wing authoritarians were also supposed to follow certain rules and "party discipline" [Altemeyer 1996, p. 220].

Altemeyer developed the Left-Wing Authoritarianism Scale, which was supposed to measure the existence of that orientation. The LWA scale consists of twenty-two items of which only fifteen are scored. They are linked with submission to a revolutionary movement, which aims to overthrow the Establishment (for example statements such as "we should devotedly follow determined leaders who will fight the current social system") but also with the other attitudinal clusters of left-wing authoritarianism. It should be emphasised that the LWA scale consists also of items advocating hostility towards the Establishment ("the members of the Establishment deserve to be dealt with harshly, without mercy, when they are finally overthrown") and conformity to the norms of behaviour of the revolutionary movement ("persons who belong to a group trying to overthrow the oppressive forces in society must confirm strictly to the rules and norms of that group") [Altemeyer 1996, p. 220-221]. It should also be noted that the LWA scale consists not only of protrait items but also contrait items, such as the statement

> even a revolutionary left-wing movement dedicated to overthrowing the present, totally unjust right-wing system does not have the right to tell its members how to act, dress, think etc." [Altemeyer 1996, p. 222].

Since 1991 Altemeyer has been trying to prove the existence of the left-wing authoritarianism in his research. Contrary to his expectations, the correlation between RWA and LWA scores was positive, not negative, and no one scored highly on the LWA scale in absolute terms. Altemeyer noticed that among the examined individuals who obtained relatively high scores on the LWA scale were also those who scored highly on RWA scale; he named that group Wild-Card Authoritarians. They were individuals who believed deeply in conventionalism, aggression and submission, Altemeyer pointed out that these High-Highs "Wild-Card Authoritarians" would rather submit to the established authorities, but in extraordinary circumstances some of them might perceive these authorities as corrupt or evil and join revolutionary movements. Wild-Card Authoritarians were supposed to be hostile and prejudiced; they scored very highly on measures of aggression, ethnocentrism and attitudes towards homosexuals

Altemeyer also distinguished another group: Unauthoritarians, by which he meant individuals who scored lowly on both mentioned scales. The existence of Unauthoritarians and Wild-Card Authoritarians was in his opinion responsible for the positive correlation between RWA and LWA scores. The other two groups distinguished in his research were individuals who scored relatively high on the LWA scale and at the same time low on the RWA scale (called Left-Wingers but not authoritarians) and finally individuals which obtained extremely high scores on the RWA scale and scored low on the LWA scale (right-wings authoritarians) [Altemeyer 1996, p. 222-223].

Altemeyer conducted his research on left-wing authoritarianism mainly among Canadian students but also Saskatchewan politicians, and none of them could be characterized as left-wing authoritarian according to his definition of that term. In attempting to comment on these results he wrote: "is there an authoritarian on the left? No. Not if you are talking about Shils's left, not if you require scientific evidence" [Altemeyer 1996, p. 229]. Nevertheless it should be understood that Altemeyer's failure to find scientific evidence on the existence of the left-wing authoritarianism did not end the search for it.

LEFT-WING AUTHORITARIANISM IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Although Altemeyer could not demonstrate the existence of left-wing authoritarianism other investigators were able to show that left-wing authoritarianism does exist and can be found among members of extreme left-wing parties. Alain Van Hiel, Bart Duriez and Małgorzata Kossowska have pointed out that Altemeyer's failure to find individuals who could be labelled as left-wing authoritarians may be connected with the lack of appropriate samples in his research. Additionally they noticed that the concept of left-wing authoritarian conventionalism is unclear and hardly distinguishable from the concept of authoritarian submission [Van Hiel, Duriez and Kossowska 2005, p. 773].

In order to test the existence of left-wing authoritarianism in Western Europe the investigators developed a new LWA scale. It consists of eight items (three of them were literally drawn from Altemeyer's LWA scale and five were modified), which refers to authoritarian submission and authoritarian aggression. In their first study, conducted on a sample of ordinary Flemish voters, the authors didn't find any evidence of left-wing authoritarianism. Nevertheless it was found in their second study among activists of extreme left-wing parties. This political activists sample consisted of communist participants affiliated to the Stalinist "Partij Van De Arbeid," to the neo-Marxist Communist Party and of anarchists. That study was conducted also on the supporters of extreme right-wing party ("Vlaams Blok") as well as on the supporters of Christian democrat, socialist, and conservative parties. As the investigators indicated, activists of extreme left-wing parties scored significantly higher on the LWA scale than the anarchists. It should also be noted that anarchists in turn scored significantly higher on that scale than the others groups. Additionally it should be underlined that activists of extreme left-wing parties scored highly on both dimensions of left-wing authoritarianism (authoritarian aggression and submission) whereas anarchists obtained high scores only on the aggression facet. As the authors pointed out these results suggest that LWA in Western Europe is limited to specific samples and is rather a marginal phenomenon on the political scene [Van Hiel, Duriez and Kossowska 2005, p. 782-785].

Bojan Todosijević and Zsolt Enyedi also obtained interesting results in Hungary which pointed out that authoritarianism was found both on the extreme left and on the extreme right (when left-right self –identification was considered). It is also worth mentioning that in their study, members of the communist Hungarian Workers Party had scored highly on the authoritarianism scale, although the pattern of relationship between authoritarianism and ideological orientation was very complex, mainly due to the lack of a dominant ideology and, as the authors pointed out, due to the lack of a homogenous value system in Hungary.

Additionally the authors pointed out that authoritarianism increases with the strength of one's feeling for communists. Both individuals who had a positive attitude towards them and those who had negative attitudes towards that group were more authoritarian than those who had neutral feeling about communists. As they concluded their research in relation to the presence of the left-wing authoritarianism:

> leftists authoritarians exist, but they are few, they have recently lost "their" party (The Workers' Party), and their presence is overshadowed by the authoritarianism of the anticommunist right [Todosijević and Enyedi 2008, p. 785].

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that as was shown in the field of political psychology two main approaches towards left-wing authoritarianism can be distinguished. One line of investigation is focused on finding measures on which left-wing and right-wing extremists would score higher than ordinary citizens and members of centrist parties. Such attempts - mainly those made by Eysenck and Rokeach – seem not to have achieved that aim and have failed to show the psychological characteristics common for left-wing and right-wing extremists. Another way of proving the existence of left-wing authoritarianism was proposed by Altemeyer, and he uniquely considered creating a special measure of left-wing authoritarianism. Studies discussed in this article have shown that left-wing authoritarianism perceived in such a way is present on the political scene, although its presence is limited to small extremist groups. Nevertheless the concept of the left-wing authoritarianism seems useful, especially in the former communist countries in Eastern Europe where the

level of that phenomenon can be helpful in explaining such facts as support for socialist ideology, party preferences and finally positive feelings for communists and communistic principles [McFarland, Agayev, Abalakina-Paap 1993; Todosijević and Enyedi 2008]

Additionally, it seems interesting to examine the level of authoritarianism (both right-wing as well as left-wing) in the former communist countries in Eastern Europe, and in Poland, to test whether the levels of authoritarianism have changed due to the economic crisis and other social changes, and to examine the ideological changes that Polish society and Polish parties have gone through during the last two decades.

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