

Party Theater

and the Near Demise of the Federation of Young Democrats*

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1. Introduction:

“Life is theater and theater, life.” Hardly a new maxim, this analogy between theater and society has been echoed in the literature and philosophy of the West since at least the ancient Greeks (Sennett, 1974). But what are the political implications of this metaphor? If we see politics as a form of social struggle (e.g., the struggle for control over the state, or the struggle among states over the distribution of concrete goods), then this analogy would lead us to the conclusion that these conflicts have a theatrical side. For example, there is more to war than the production of weapons and the strategic movement of people and arms. If a nation attacks another nation over some concrete issue (for example, the price of oil), leaders of each country will back their instrumental actions with legitimating rhetoric, usually by justifying their stand in the name of democracy or sovereignty and accusing the other side of being Hitler, Satan, or some equivalent person or object. This rhetoric also will be backed by theatrical shows of personal determination, military strength, and human suffering. Indeed, this notion of conflict partially through theater can be seen as an extension of Schattschneider’s “socialization of conflict” thesis: It is a way to attempt to shift the balance of a conflict by helping to increase support for one’s side. (Schattschneider, 1960)

This framework also can be applied to political parties. Parties are bureaucratic organizations that focus on gaining or maintaining state power partially by building mass support. In modern democracies that mass support is especially necessary because of regular public elections. However, parties are not simply vote maximizing organizations. As V.O. Key had convincingly argued a few decades ago, parties can be conceptualized in terms of their role in government, their electoral focus, and their internal organization. (Key, 1964) To be at all

effective in government (and in order to gain the elite support needed to raise money and avoid backlashes), a party needs to build a coalition of support among interest groups by acting as their advocates in parliament or congress. On the other hand, the party must maintain mass support in order to keep getting elected into government. Within the theater framework, parties accomplish these dual and often conflicting goals by defining specific policies in universal and often simplistic terms for the mass public, thereby appealing to both an elite and mass audience. (The health care reform that would be advantageous to GM and labor unions can be presented as good for all Americans; the same health care reform that would cut into the profits of small businesses can be presented as an example of “big government.”) Beyond helping allies through this theatrical socialization of their specific conflicts, this expressing of concrete struggles through political theater helps the party build the mass support it needs to remain in government.

This framework also implies that the quality of a performance influences victory and therefore the distribution of power within a state. How, then, do we distinguish between a good and bad party performance? Certainly we cannot follow a journalistic tendency of equating political failure or success to the quality of the performance, since even a theater model would assume that an uncontrollable change in the setting could undermine any performance. Instead, we can turn to sociology as theater and apply it to the struggle for power among parties.

According to Ervin Goffman, social interaction is largely a form of theater. He argues that we give performances by presenting a “front,” or a durable framework through which our performance can be interpreted, and then maintaining that front through consistent acting. When we perform as a team, that team must also remain united during aspects of the performance related to the front. Applying this to parties, we can conclude that a good performance is one in which the party presents a “party front” that the audience finds positive and then maintains that

the front through a consistent and united performance. When the party contradicts that front or some aspect of the front (or, more accurately, when the public perceives the party to have contradicted its front,) the audience will tend to reject the performance. (Goffman, 1959)

In this paper, I will test this prediction through the following question: What happens when a party abruptly switches its party front, such as by suddenly changing its presented ideology? Presumably, the audience would reject this aspect of the performance, disbelieving any ideologically based stand that the party took. Most likely, support for the party would drop and possibly plummet. In 1993, the rather inexperienced politicians of the Federation of Young Democrats—a party that emerged from the Hungarian democracy movement a few years earlier and catapulted to the center of Hungarian politics—did just that. The party unexpectedly announced that it had shifted to the right on cultural issues and then effectively pushed out its most prominent liberal politicians. Using the Central European University—Median Surveys of September 1992 and May, 1994 as respectively a pre-test and post-test, I ran ordered logits that measured the relationship between respondents’ “cultural ideology” and their ratings of FIDESZ before and after the party changed its ideological presentation. If the hypothesis is correct, the cultural ideology scale will be significantly related to the FIDESZ rating in 1992 but not in 1994. As a control, I also ran the same pairs of ordered logits on the other five major parties in parliament. In these cases, there should be no change in the relationships between these variables from 1992 to 1994.

2. Literature and Theory:

A primary reason for the rise of political parties over the last century was the need for those wanting to win governmental power to build mass support. Duverger argued that parties

emerged when legislative factions and electoral committees combined, that is, when those who voted together began campaigning together. (Duverger, 1951) Similarly, most theories on political parties begin with the assumption that a primary (sometimes the primary) point of parties is to win elections. The most common definition of political parties is probably the one given by both Downs and Epstien: Parties are organizations that run candidates for elected office under a single label. (Downs, 1957; Epstien, 1967).

The theater framework can be easily applied to this understanding of parties. The key to party success is to build support within several audiences. The obvious example, and the focus of this paper, is mass support, through which elected positions can be won. Similarly, parties must win the support of elite groups that can provide a number of resources, including money needed for running campaigns and the party organization. Finally, parties need to develop loyal support among potential rank-and-file members, who they need for free or cheap labor.

Following this logic, a critical determinant of success is a party's location on stage. In most political systems and under most circumstances, the main political stage is parliament. This stage would give a party the highest level of public exposure. As the main stage, it also gives the party a level of legitimacy, and it allows the party to use legislation as props as well as to influence the setting. The primary resource difference, then, is between those parties on stage and those off stage. Under most circumstances, the parties off stage are in an exceptionally difficult situation, since a party can rarely get onto stage without mass support, elite financial backing, and/or an active rank-and-file membership, but it can rarely gain these resources without already being on the main political stage. This enormous difference between the parties in government and out government produces a type of oligarchy on stage in which the parties on stage largely monopolize most party resources.

But, even if a party wins a position on the main political stage, there is no guarantee that it will stay there. A number of factors make party performances quite difficult. (1) There are usually multiple parties on the political stage, with each trying to outperform and undermine the other. (2) Parties do not control the setting behind their actors. The setting invariably changes, and a compelling performance can easily be ruined by an economic downturn or international crisis, for example. (3) Parties do not necessarily have complete control over their own actors, who have political ambitions that may or may not be consistent with that of the party center. (4) Since parties must build support within various audiences with varying interests, there is pressure to move in different directions at the same time that it is trying to remain consistent. (5) Finally, theater promotes simplicity. A crowded stage is usually simplified by defining parties along a left-right continuum, and the mass audience will often focus on a few parties and may not give parties relegated to supporting cast the votes they need to reenter parliament.

What, then, distinguishes a party performance more likely to be successful and a performance that will likely fail? To answer this question, we turn to the sociology of Ervin Goffman.

2.1 Ervin Goffman, Life in the Theater:

If life is theater and theater is life, then political theater is but a subset of a much larger phenomenon. According to this framework, we all act roles, whether as professors, workers, bosses, parents, or children. The point, then, is to be convincing in one's role. To be a professor is to act like a professor; it is to perform in a way that one's audience—whether students in a seminar or colleagues in the mailroom—believe that one is indeed a professor. The same is true

of politicians that want to govern. To be supported as someone who should govern, one must first and foremost convincingly present oneself as someone who could govern.

The key to creating such a believable presentation, says Goffman, is to create a clear “front” and then to maintain it. The front gives the audience a role against which to judge the performance, such as the role of “professor.” The idea of a presenting and maintaining a front is fundamental to Goffman’s thesis, and it is central to party theater as well.

2.1.1 Life on the Little Stage:

Goffman is a sociologist best known for comparing society to theater. He argues that social life is played out through games of self-presentation. These presentation games are important because people judge others through inference; they use statements, gestures, clothing, and other behavioral signals as indicators of what the person is "really" like. The most important part of any performance is the “front.” He writes: “It will be convenient to label as ‘front’ that part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance.” For Goffman, then, one's front is a durable framework that an audience uses to interpret one's performance. (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman argues that, at some level, we all sense that the behavior of another person is (or at least could be) a performance; he says that we therefore judge that behavior like an audience. Goffman emphasizes that during performances audiences distinguish between "expressions given" and "expressions given off." The former are expressions that seem purposely engineered; it is the show that the performer wants the audience to accept. The latter are the expressions that the performer has less control over; they are the non-verbal, the habitual, and the seemingly accidental signals. Because they appear to be less controllable, these

expressions appear to be more real and revealing to the audience. The audience therefore takes greater stock in them, especially when they come in the form of a performance mistake. The most important are the disruptive events that contradict the front the performer is trying to get the audience to accept; because they appear so revealing, they often call into question or completely discredit the entire performance.

Performances can also be done in teams. For Goffman, teams are groups of people whose presentations are dependent on each other, like families, coworkers, and organization members. In this case, Goffman often uses the terms "on-stage" and "backstage," which are roughly analogous to expressions given and expressions given off, respectively. On-stage is team behavior when it is consciously performing; backstage is its behavior when it thinks that no audience is around. To an audience, backstage behavior seems more real; it is how the team acts when its guard is down. An audience will treat a disruptive event in a team's performance as if it had gotten a peek backstage.

For teams, the danger of disruptive events is significantly increased. Any team member can disrupt a performance with inconsistent conduct. A member might play out of character or contradict the team's front through "inappropriate" behavior, both of which are enough for an audience to call into question the performance. Worse yet is when team members disagree publicly, which can give off the impression that even the team does not believe its own front. The critical difference between individual performers and teams, then, is this dependence; team members are dependent on their colleagues to work with them to produce a fluid, consistent, believable performance, a situation that makes team performances much harder than individual performances.

2.1.2 *Party Politics: Grand Struggle on the Little Stage*

Goffman's framework can be applied to political parties if one does not forget that these performances are instruments in the quest for power. The point of these performances is not just to appear consistent with an assigned role; they are part of ongoing struggles to win the votes of citizens, the money and policy support of elite groups, and the faithful energy of party members. Part of winning is undermining the messages and roles of competitors; "symbolic violence", often in the form of mean, underhanded attacks, is just one more part of this competition among political professionals.

Just as the key to an individual's performance is the front, the key to party performances is the *party front*. A party front is the party's self-definition to its audiences. By "definition" I am not referring to a clear, well-demarcated conceptualization. Instead, to be successful, the party front must function like a symbol. On the one hand, it should provide a unifying frame through which audiences can judge the party vis-à-vis its competitors. On the other hand, it should be fuzzy enough that the party can apply it to varying political circumstances. The latter criterion is why a party front is not an ideology. If a party defines itself as "conservative," that concept produces some sense of what the party is like. But, whenever conservatism gets in the way of winning support, the term is bent to fit the needs of the party leadership. The same is true of "socialist" parties. To survive, socialist parties find themselves supporting big business and rather unsocialist ideas if doing otherwise would cause them political demise. The trick is to stretch the frame, not to contradict it. Socialist parties can support cutting government programs, for example, but these cuts must always be couched in the "ideals onto which the party was formed."

Just as a good party front indicates to audiences what the party and its politicians are like, it also helps distinguish the party from its competition on stage. To be a “liberal” party is to imply that other parties are illiberal; to be a patriotic party is to imply that other parties are unpatriotic. Distinction is fundamental to a successful party front. A new party that presents itself as “just like another party, but a little bit different” is destined for little political success; it gives the audience no clear reason to support it instead of the party with which it apparently has so much in common. A more successful approach is to always claim or imply that the party is completely different from all its competitors, even in cases when real policy positions are barely distinguishable. Of course, this becomes more difficult when there are many parties on the main stage; in this case, the party can use a more specific front to make the distinction clear, for example, by emphasizing some “unique” religious, age, policy, or regional characteristic.

Even though the party front has these differences with Goffman’s notion of the front, it has an important similarity: The party front is also a durable framework that audiences use to interpret the party’s performance. In other words, “conservative” parties cannot just say that they are conservative; they must also act conservative—that is, as the audiences would expect conservatives to act. Unlike a young, radical party, a conservative party cannot have its actors come in parliament in torn blue jeans. More specifically, while parties can bend the front to fit varying political circumstances, parties cannot appear to have contradicted that front. For example, a conservative party cannot announce suddenly that it is a socialist or liberal party (that is, if these terms are considered different from conservatism by the audiences.) This would be considered a performance break; if the audience sees the announcement as a contradiction to the conservative front, support by that audience will drop. Similarly, a party must avoid taking steps

that appear as contradictions to the audiences. An “honest” party can do dishonest things, for example, but appearing dishonest to audiences will cause support to drop.

We can simplify the above discussion by stating four characteristics of a party performance that is most likely to be successful. (1) The party performance must be built around a party front that some fraction of the audience finds positive. That front must act as a durable framework through which the audiences can interpret its behavior. (2) That front must distinguish the party from the other parties on stage. (3) The party must maintain that front through consistent performance over time. While a party need not—and should not—zealously adhere to a set of precepts, it does need to couch its tactics within this symbolic framework and avoid taking steps that the audience would consider a contradiction to the front. (4) The party keeps the performance united as it relates to the party front. While individual party members can compete against each other (though even this can hurt the party’s presentation), a conflict that seems to reveal internal disbelief in some aspect of the party front will tend to produce similar disbelief by the audience.

3. Case and Methods:

One prediction of the theater model of party competition is that if a party suddenly changes a primary component of its party front, the audience will most likely reject this aspect of its performance. It would simply disbelieve any aspect of the performance related that change, and support would most likely drop. For example, if the Greens suddenly announce that environmental protection policies should be curbed because it interferes with market forces, the public will tend to disbelieve its stands on both environmental and economic policy. Again, this does not mean that the Greens cannot shift stands on environmental and economic policy, only

that these often-necessary shifts must be couched within the environmental front onto which the Greens build their support.

The critical point is not that if a party suddenly switches ideologically from left to right that its supporters on the left might disappear. This we could expect without any tests. Instead, the prediction is that the public would simply disbelieve this aspect of its presentation. The relationship between ideology and support for this party would disappear. The party would lose any support based on ideology, and it would not be capable of gaining support for its new stands unless it stuck to that new front long enough (probably for years) for the public to believe that this position is “real.”

The Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) in Hungary provides an example of exactly this type of change. As I will clarify below, at the height of its popularity in 1993 it switched from a culturally liberal to a culturally conservative presentation. Since it was the only Hungarian party to make this move at this time, and since there were public opinion surveys asking related questions just before and just after this change, it provides a good test case for this prediction.

3.1 The Federation of Young Democrats:

The Federation of Young Democrats was formed in 1988 by a group of university students, most of whom had lived at the Bibó Collegium, a special dormitory for exceptional students who came to Budapest from the countryside to study law. The original point of FIDESZ was to create an alternative to the Young Communist League that would also participate in the growing Hungarian democracy movement. Partially because of free press by the regime, which gave repeated radio and television reports of an “illegal” and “criminal”

organization, and partially because news of its existence spread rapidly across Hungarian universities, FIDESZ grew at an explosive rate and became a well-known organization. In 1989, it was invited to participate in the Opposition Roundtable and Trilateral Negotiations for a regime change, despite initial objections by the Socialist Party, which led to even further national exposure and something of a national following.

In 1990, FIDESZ decided to run candidates in the upcoming national elections. It had hoped to win just over the 4% minimum party list vote needed to enter parliament. FIDESZ received 9% and won enough seats to become a faction in the new parliament. In 1990, there were six parties with factions in the Hungarian parliament, which are listed below by seating from left to right:

1. The *Hungarian Socialist Party* (MSZP), which was roughly the reform, pro-Western wing of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, which had ruled Hungary since its revolution against Soviet control in 1956. MSZP presented itself as social democratic and very pro-Western;
2. The *Alliance of Free Democrats* (SZDSZ), which had emerged from the radically pro-Western and anti-Communist dissident underground. SZDSZ presented itself as socially liberal and economically libertarian;
3. FIDESZ. Ideologically, it is almost indistinguishable from SZDSZ in 1990;
4. The *Hungarian Democratic Forum* (MDF), which was originally formed as a moderate group within the democracy movement. Unlike SZDSZ or FIDESZ, MDF was willing to work with the reform wing of the Socialist party. By 1990, it had transformed itself into a center-right, anti-Communist party that was conservative on social issues but supporting a more mixed economy as a means to protect the Hungarian culture from too great of Western influence;

5. The *Christian Democratic Peoples' Party* (KDNP), which was ideologically close to MDF but placed a special emphasis on church related issues;
6. The *Independent Smallholders' Party* (FKGP), which claimed to be the heir of the party of the same name that had won the 1945 election and headed the Hungarian government before it was ousted in 1948. In 1990, FKGP ran primarily on a pro-farmer plank and supported returning all farmlands to pre-communist owners.

MDF and SZDSZ had been the most supported parties in 1990. MDF won a plurality of votes and seats, which it used to form a center-right coalition government with KDNP and FKGP. However, the MDF party president and new prime minister produced a secret pact with SZDSZ to minimize the influence of MDF's populist wing (which was farther right on cultural issues) as well as to change the laws in a way that made governing possible. In return, SZDSZ was able to appoint the president of the republic, who would be in charge of running the state bureaucracy and implementing policy.

In terms of party theater, FIDESZ was put into the best position on the main political stage in a country about to move into an economic crisis. It was the only party that could avoid all blame for the economic hardship. The Socialists were regularly blamed for having produced the problems in the first place. MDF, KDNP, and FKGP were all part of the government coalition as the country slipped into a deep recession. And SZDSZ was involved through its role of implementation.

By early 1991, FIDESZ became the party with the greatest public support in Hungarian politics. By late 1992, FIDESZ held over 40% support among Hungarians who were likely to vote and who supported a major party, far higher than any other party. With the next election coming in May 1994, and with two to three times the support of any other party, the Young

Democrats seemed destined to lead the next government coalition, if it would need to go into coalition at all.

3.1.1 Exit Stage Right: FIDESZ Changes its Presentation:

It was at this point that the FIDESZ leadership chose to dramatically change the way that it presented itself to the Hungarian public. The leadership now gaining control over the party, led by founder Viktor Orbán, chose to make two critical changes in its public image. First, they decided that FIDESZ should abandon its (overwhelmingly popular) youth image. They would accomplish this partially by eliminating the rule that barred people over 35 years old from the organization and creating an age minimum of 16. They also proposed to change the party's name from Federation of Young Democrats to the "Federation of the Young Democracy." While the party congress in April accepted the new age rules, the name change and other attempts to abandon the youth image were so vehemently opposed by the party membership that the leadership abandoned the move.

Second, they decided that the party should stop being a liberal party associated with the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ.) Instead, it should become a center-right party presenting the ideology of József Antall's wing of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), that is, the wing that was leading the unpopular government coalition. Specifically, FIDESZ began changing the terms it used to describe itself. The key term became "polgár," which is often translated as "citizen" or "middle class." To be specific, there are generally three Hungarian adjectives that might be associated with being liberal: "liberális," "szabadelvű," and "polgári." To some Hungarians, "liberális" has negative connotations. It implies that the person is an internationalist who does not care about defending Hungary or its culture. "Liberális" is

associated by these Hungarians with the worst aspects of international capitalism, for example. “Szabadelvű” means almost the same thing, but its implications are different: It could be translated as “broadminded” or even more specifically as “freedom principled.” While “liberális” people might cheat Hungary for their own benefit, according to this perspective, a “szabadelvű” person would not.

In comparison, “polgári” implies patriotism. It means “citizen” in a more French use of the term, that is, citizenship with responsibility. In this context, it usually means patriotic responsibility to the Hungarian culture. It also implies that the liberals of SZDSZ and the “communists” of MSZP do not care about the Hungarian culture or even Hungary itself; they are instead “cosmopolitan” internationalists who selfishly promote their own personal advancement against the greater, Hungarian good. In a political sense, then, polgári means “national-liberal”, which does not imply the nationalism of some Hungarian populists but does imply the patriotism of József Antall. It is a very clear shift to the right on cultural issues.

This ideological shift to the right came in three main steps, not all of them intended by the leadership. In the first step, FIDESZ was caught in a scandal with MDF in which they were given state land (the old officers’ casino in Budapest) under the pretext that it would be divided into two party headquarters. An enormous building only technically meeting the specifications for party headquarters, it was immediately sold for a large sum of money by the parties. Part of the scandal was, of course, the obvious misuse of government property. But, part of the shock of this scandal was that it revealed a cooperation with MDF, a party that was supposed to be on the other side of the political spectrum.

Second, and far more important, in April, 1993 FIDESZ held its party congress at which Viktor Orbán was elected to the newly created position of party president. In his acceptance

speech, Orbán defined FIDESZ as a "nemzeti elkötelezettségű" party, which roughly means a party having a sense of "national responsibility." It was at this point that FIDESZ began shifting its rhetoric to the right, including using severely anti-Communist language, which at the time was characteristic of the right-wing parties. FIDESZ also announced that it would be willing to go into coalition with MDF but would under no circumstances consider a coalition with the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP.)

The third major step came several months later, when FIDESZ's most popular liberal politician, Gábor Fodor, and a number of other prominent politicians from the most liberal wing of the party suddenly and dramatically quit. Over the previous two years, the FIDESZ parliamentary faction (the de facto head of the party from 1990 to 1993) split into two warring factions referred to as the "Orbánites" and the "Fodorites." While the ideological distinction was not dramatic at first, the Fodorites tended to be closer personally and ideologically to the liberals of SZDSZ. Over time, Fodor was gradually and systematically marginalized within the party. Finally, when Fodor lost a bid for a party position to a less prominent Orbánite, he quit the party and forfeited his parliamentary seat. (A few months later, he joined SZDSZ and became number two on its national candidate list.) Several of his colleagues followed him, and most of the remaining liberal wing quit the party angrily.

The question is what happened to the public support of FIDESZ after it made this abrupt shift? (1) Did its public support drop after this ideological shift? (2) Did the public's perception of the party become unrelated to ideology as it relates to cultural issues? [In East-Central European politics, it is important to distinguish between the cultural and economic dimensions of ideology. Both the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and the Alliance Free Democrats (SZDSZ) could be considered on the left in terms of cultural ideology, for example. Preserving

a traditional heritage is less important to them than modernization and westernization. However, MSZP promotes social democracy while SZDSZ is far more libertarian on economic issues. While they could be put next to each other on a cultural ideology scale—in fact, SZDSZ would be the farthest to the left among major Hungarian party—they would be on opposite sides on an economic ideology scale.] If this prediction is correct, then in late 1992 Hungarians on the cultural left would have rated FIDESZ highly and been more likely to support it while Hungarians on the cultural right would have tended to rate FIDESZ poorly and not support it. By early 1994, the rating of and support for FIDESZ would have become unrelated to cultural ideology.

3.2 The Test:

The test of the second and more important prediction was performed on two studies conducted by the Central European University and the Median Survey Research Firm. The first was conducted in September 1992. The second was a post-election study conducted immediately after the parliamentary elections in May 1994.

The dependent variable was the rating of each party on a one to seven scale, with seven signifying that the party always expresses the respondent's opinions and one signifying that the party never expressed his or her opinion. In using this variable, I am making the assumption that it is, in fact, effectively another measure of the vote, that the party that "always expresses" the respondent's opinion is the party for which the respondent intends to vote. (91% of respondents said that they had (1994) or would (1992) vote for the party that they had given the highest rating on this scale. Another 6% said that they had or would vote for the party that they had given the second highest rating.) While using a seven-point, ordinal rating scale has its

disadvantages, it has a critical advantage to this design. If the prediction is correct, a sudden shift in the presentation would lead the voter to disbelieve that aspect of performance. Disbelief or confusion is not equivalent to dislike or disagreement. In the seven point scale, a strong dislike or a sharp disagreement would most likely be recorded as a “1” while disbelief or indifference towards would most like be recorded as a “4.” If FIDESZ’s sudden switch had the latter impact, the rating of FIDESZ would not only become unrelated to the cultural ideology scale by 1994, but the most common response to the rating question would the middle, 4, regardless of where the respondent fell on the cultural ideology scale.

The main independent variable is the cultural ideology scale, which is an interval level variable ranging from 0 to 5. This scale is based on five questions in which the respondent was asked to identify whether he or she “strongly agreed,” “rather agreed,” “rather disagreed,” or “strongly disagreed” with the statement. These five statements were as follows. (1) Atheists are unfit for public office. (2) Nationalism is always harmful. (3) Abortion should be allowed. (4) I prefer a patriotic politician. (5) The church has too much influence. Since the most important and reliable distinction was between agreeing or disagreeing with each statement, and in order to produce an interval level variable, I collapsed each into a dichotomy with the more ideologically left answer coded as 0 and the more ideologically right answer coded as 1. I then added them.

I used three other independent variables as well, which effectively acted as controls. The first was an economic ideology scale, which ranged from 0 to 3 and was coded with the same method as the cultural ideology scale. It was based on three statements that the respondents could agree or disagree with. (1) Provide a job for everyone. (2) Reducing income differences is harmful. (3) Privatization is going to help. Year of birth and gender were also included in the equations. Age is an especially important variable in Hungarian politics, since generation

differences seem to influence what parties voters support. This seemed especially true of the Federation of Young Democrats in the early 1990. They appeared to win much more support among younger than older voters.

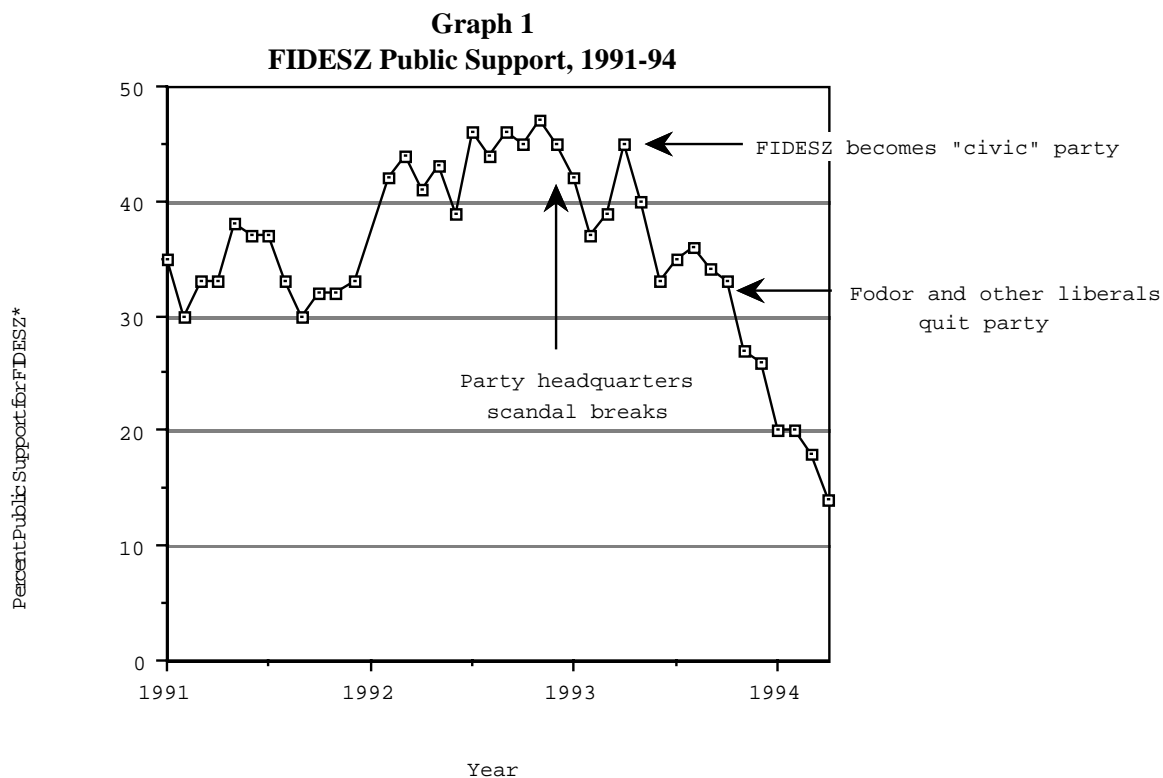
The relationship between the party rating and these independent variables was measured in twelve ordered logits, one for each party (MSZP, SZDSZ, FIDESZ, MDF, KDNP, and FKGP) in 1992 and 1994. In 1992, the coefficient for cultural ideology should be negative for the parties on the left (MSZP, SZDSZ, and FIDESZ) and positive for the parties on the right (MDF, KDNP, and FKGP.) In 1994, these results should be roughly the same, except that the relationship between cultural ideology and the rating of FIDESZ should become very weak. The critical test is the standard errors and the confidence interval for this equation.

4. Results:

4.1 Movement of Party Support:

As Graph 1 shows, public support for FIDESZ nose-dived in the months that followed its 1993 party congress, during which the newly elected party president announced that FIDESZ was a party with a sense of “national responsibility” and thereby made clear that the party was shifting right ideologically. According to Szonda-Ipsos, support for FIDESZ in April 1993 was 45% among likely voters who had supported one of the parties (i.e., the figure did not include the “undecided.”) A year later, in April 1994, only 14% of this same group supported FIDESZ. A month later, FIDESZ received only 7% of party list vote in the parliamentary election and became the smallest party faction in parliament. It is unclear to what degree this discrepancy between the Szonda-Ipsos measurements in April and the May electoral results are a product of

sample selection, a further decline in support, or the undecided voters uniformly supporting other



* Based on reported monthly tracking of party support based on the question: “Which party would you vote for if the election was this coming Sunday?”

Source: <http://www.szondaipsos.hu/partpref/>

parties. However, the impact on FIDESZ of this plummeting of support was near devastation. Dropping some 30% during this period—at least three-quarters of its former supporters abandoned the party in that year—had it fell under 5% of the list party it would have won no parliamentary seats and most likely been eliminated from Hungarian politics.

4.2 Cultural Ideology and Party Ratings:

The more interesting question is whether this sudden shift led voters' perception of FIDESZ to become unrelated to cultural ideology? This prediction is tested in Table 1, which shows twelve ordered logits, six for each 1992 and six for 1994. The coefficients for cultural ideology remain stable from 1992 for all the parties except for FIDESZ. Of these five parties, only the coefficient for the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) could be considered to move slightly. It shifted from -.21 (with a confidence interval of -.31 to -.11) in 1992 to -.32 (with a confidence interval of -.40 to -.23) in 1994. Otherwise, the coefficients remained well within their confidence intervals.

In comparison, this coefficient for FIDESZ moved quite significantly from 1992 to 1994. In 1992 the coefficient for cultural ideology was -.39 with a confidence interval of -.49 to -.28. In 1994 the same coefficient was a positive .10 with a confidence interval of .01 to .18.) While positive, it is significantly smaller than the same coefficient for any other equation and just barely more than two standard errors from zero. (The probability that this coefficient is greater than zero is .03.)

Probably the most revealing tests are shown in Graphs 2 to 4. These graphs are based on Clarify, which used Monte Carlo simulation to convert the raw parameter estimates of these ordered logits into quantities of interest and associated measures of uncertainty (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King, 1999). Basically, the graphs show an estimation of what percentage of people at each level of the cultural ideology scale rate the party a "1" (the lowest rating), "4" (the middle rating), or "7" (the highest rating) when the other three independent variables (economic ideology, year of birth, and gender) are held constant at their respective means.

Graphs 2a and 2b show these estimates for the rating of the Hungarian Socialist Party. They indicate that cultural ideology influenced these rating in both 1992 and 1994. In 1992, few Hungarians were willing to rate MSZP highly. Nonetheless, those falling on the left end of the scale (0) were more likely to give MSZP a rating of “7” than those on the right end of the scale (5): 9% to 1%, respectively. Similarly, more Hungarians on the left end of the scale would give MSZP a middle rating of “4” (20%) than those on the right side of the scale (9%.) On the other hand, nearly half of Hungarians on the right end of the scale (49%) would give MSZP the lowest rating, as compared to 13% of those on the left end of the scale.

This relationship between cultural ideology and rating MSZP persisted into 1994, as Graph 2b shows. Among Hungarians on the left side of the scale, 39% would give MSZP a high rating of “7.” Among those on the right side of the scale, only 8% would give the same rating. Conversely, only 4% of Hungarians on the left side of this ideology scale would give MSZP a rating of “1” while 24% of those all the way on the right side would give that same low rating.

Graphs 3a and 3b show that this relationship between party rating and cultural ideology also persisted for the center-right Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), except that the relationship is reversed. In 1992, 37% of those on the left side of the cultural ideology scale rated MDF a low “1” while only 11% of those on the right side of this scale gave MDF this same rating. Similarly, in 1994, 27% of those on the left end of this ideology scale would have given MDF a “1” while 6% of those on the right end of the scale would have given this low rating. Conversely, in 1992, only 3% of Hungarians on the left side of the ideology scale would have rated MDF a high “7” while 16% on the right end of the scale would have given this rating. In 1994, 4% on the left side of the scale would have given MDF a rating of “7” while 21% of those scaled all the way to the right would have given the same high rating.

The exception is FIDESZ. Graph 4a is consistent with the previous graphs. But, in 1994, the relationship almost completely falls apart. As Graph 4b shows, among Hungarians scaled 0, or on the left end of the cultural ideology scale, 15% would give FIDESZ a lowest rating of “1”. (The 95% confidence interval is from 13% to 17%.) Among those scaled 5, at the right end of the scale, 10% (with a confidence interval of 7% to 13%) would also give a “1”—a significant but hardly a dramatic shift. Similarly 5% (with a confidence interval of 4% to 6%) of those at the left end of the scale would give FIDESZ a high rating of “7”, as compared to 8% (with a confidence interval of 5% to 11%) of those at the right end of the scale. While these differences are statistically significant, they are also extremely small. Possibly the most striking result from this table is that the largest rating across the entire cultural ideology scale is a middle “4”. From 0 to 5 it shifts between 31% and 32%, which is to say that it does not shift.

Combined, these results are consistent with the predictions made earlier in this paper. After FIDESZ abruptly shifted its ideology (thereby making a performance break), its public support dropped at an alarming rate. But, that ideological shift right did not cause Hungarians on the left to begin rating FIDESZ low and Hungarians on the right to begin rating the party high. Instead, across the board, 30% would give a middle rating of “4” and over 60% would give the middle ratings of “3” to “5”. All the ratings flattened vis-a-vis the cultural ideology of the Hungarian public. The relationship between cultural ideology and the rating of FIDESZ nearly evaporated, as did the aspiration of the FIDESZ party president of becoming the youngest prime minister in Hungarian history.

Table 1: Ordered Logits

Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)						
	1992			1994		
	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.
Cultural Ideology	-.37	(.05)	-.48 to -.27	-.40	(.05)	-.50 to -.32
Economic Ideology	-.33	(.06)	-.45 to -.22	-.43	(.05)	-.53 to -.34
Year of Birth	-.012	(.003)	-.018 to -.007	-.003	(.003)	-.009 to .002
Gender	-.13	(.10)	-.33 to -.07	-.01	(.09)	-.16 to .19
Cut 1	-3.04	(.26)		-3.77	(.24)	
Cut 2	-2.24	(.26)		-3.22	(.23)	
Cut 3	-1.46	(.25)		-2.72	(.22)	
Cut 4	-.66	(.25)		-2.03	(.22)	
Cut 5	.13	(.25)		-1.32	(.22)	
Cut 6	1.24	(.26)		-.15	(.21)	

Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)						
	1992			1994		
	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.
Cultural Ideology	-.21	(.05)	-.31 to -.11	-.32	(.05)	-.41 to -.23
Economic Ideology	.04	(.06)	-.08 to .16	-.06	(.05)	-.15 to .04
Year of Birth	.008	(.003)	.002 to .014	-.010	(.002)	.004 to .015
Gender	.05	(.10)	-.15 to .25	-.15	(.09)	-.02 to .33
Cut 1	-1.55	(.25)		-3.33	(.25)	
Cut 2	-.77	(.25)		-2.62	(.23)	
Cut 3	.05	(.25)		-1.97	(.22)	
Cut 4	.93	(.25)		-.96	(.21)	
Cut 5	1.87	(.25)		-.11	(.21)	
Cut 6	3.24	(.28)		1.52	(.22)	

Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ)						
	1992			1994		
	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.
Cultural Ideology	-.39	(.05)	-.49 to -.28	.10	(.04)	.01 to .18
Economic Ideology	-.05	(.06)	-.17 to .06	.28	(.05)	.19 to .38
Year of Birth	.021	(.003)	.015 to .027	.034	(.003)	.028 to .039
Gender	.30	(.10)	.09 to .50	.27	(.09)	.09 to .45
Cut 1	-1.53	(.26)		.51	(.21)	
Cut 2	-.99	(.25)		1.16	(.21)	
Cut 3	-.41	(.25)		1.65	(.21)	
Cut 4	.30	(.25)		2.98	(.22)	
Cut 5	1.07	(.25)		4.06	(.23)	

Cut 6

2.01 (.25)

| 5.24 (.25)

Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)

	1992			1994		
	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.
Cultural Ideology	.32	(.05)	.22 to .42	.36	(.05)	.27 to .45
Economic Ideology	.37	(.06)	.25 to .49	.34	(.05)	.24 to .43
Year of Birth	-.010	(.003)	-.016 to -.004	-.010	(.003)	-.015 to -.004
Gender	.18	(.10)	-.02 to .39	.26	(.09)	.09 to .44
Cut 1	-.28	(.25)		-.69	(.21)	
Cut 2	.42	(.25)		.00	(.21)	
Cut 3	1.15	(.25)		.63	(.21)	
Cut 4	1.89	(.25)		1.52	(.21)	
Cut 5	2.53	(.26)		2.33	(.22)	
Cut 6	3.52	(.27)		3.42	(.23)	

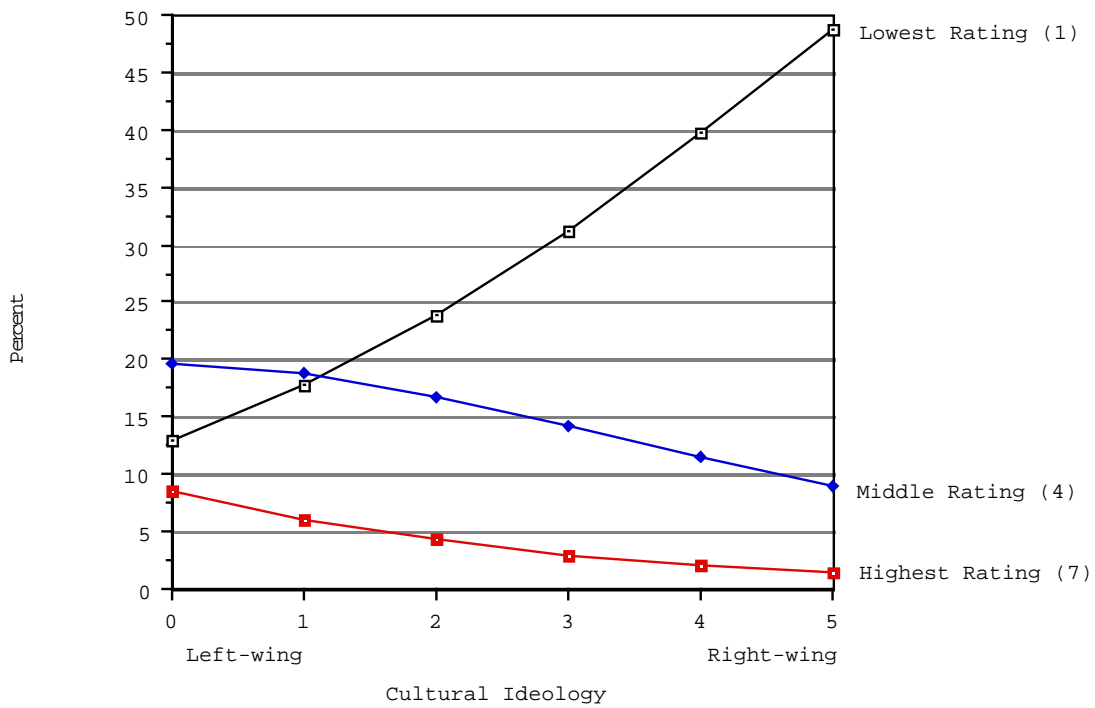
Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP)

	1992			1994		
	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.
Cultural Ideology	.43	(.05)	.32 to .53	.50	(.05)	.40 to .59
Economic Ideology	.17	(.06)	.05 to .29	.26	(.05)	.16 to .35
Year of Birth	-.018	(.003)	-.024 to -.012	-.016	(.003)	-.022 to -.011
Gender	.16	(.10)	-.05 to .36	.16	(.09)	-.02 to .33
Cut 1	-1.00	(.25)		-1.96	(.22)	
Cut 2	-.19	(.25)		-1.00	(.21)	
Cut 3	.67	(.25)		-.29	(.21)	
Cut 4	1.63	(.25)		.93	(.21)	
Cut 5	2.41	(.26)		1.91	(.22)	
Cut 6	3.34	(.28)		3.17	(.23)	

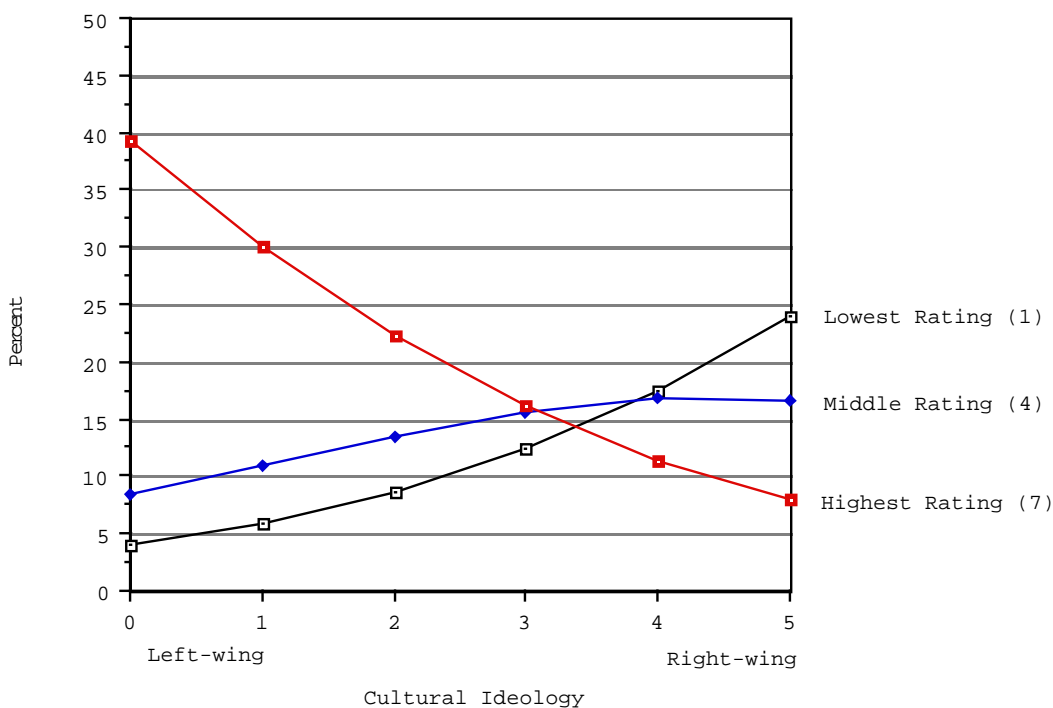
Independent Smallholders' Party (FKGP)

	1992			1994		
	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.	coef.	s.e.	conf. int.
Cultural Ideology	.35	(.05)	.24 to .46	.35	(.04)	.26 to .44
Economic Ideology	.02	(.06)	-.11 to .14	-.00	(.05)	-.10 to .09
Year of Birth	-.006	(.003)	-.012 to -.000	-.007	(.002)	-.012 to -.001
Gender	-.29	(.11)	-.50 to -.08	.32	(.09)	-.50 to -.15
Cut 1	-.50	(.25)		-1.74	(.21)	
Cut 2	.19	(.25)		-.97	(.21)	
Cut 3	.83	(.25)		-.45	(.21)	
Cut 4	1.43	(.26)		.50	(.21)	
Cut 5	2.05	(.26)		1.30	(.21)	
Cut 6	2.99	(.28)		2.33	(.22)	

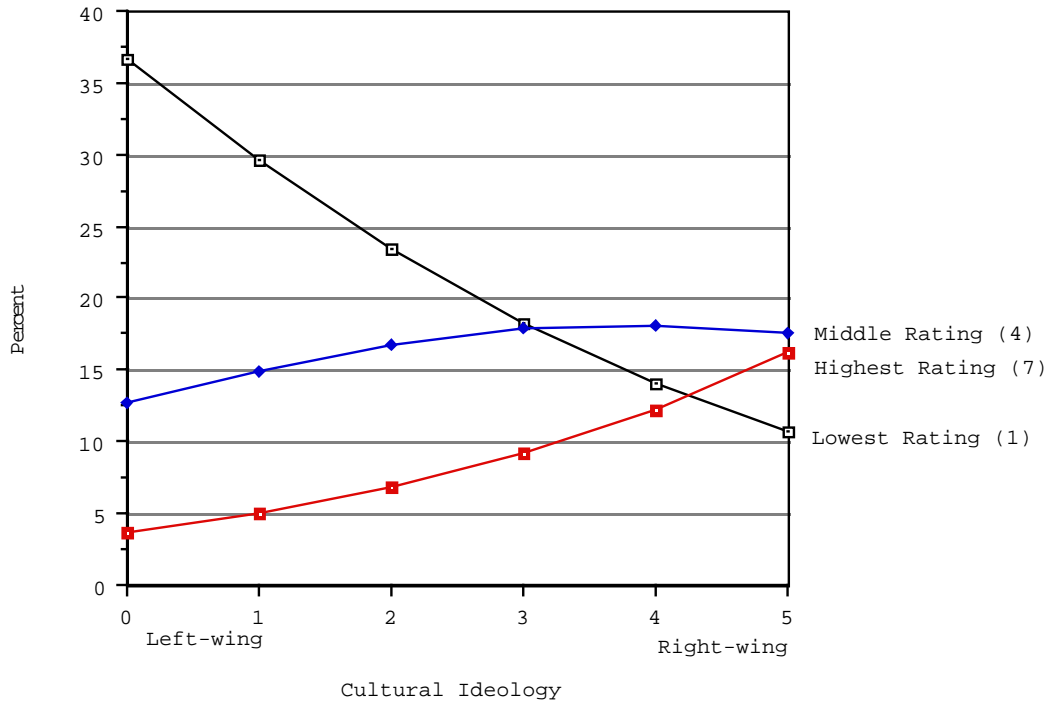
Graph 2a
Rating MSZP by Cultural Ideology, 1992



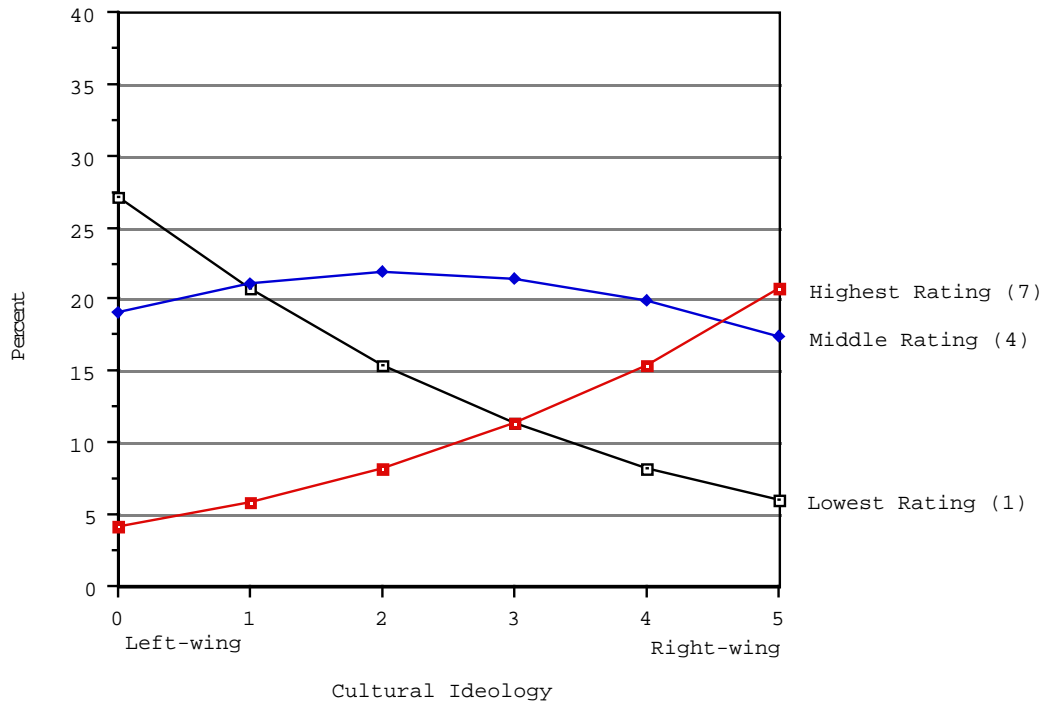
Graph 2b
Rating of MSZP by Cultural Ideology, 1994



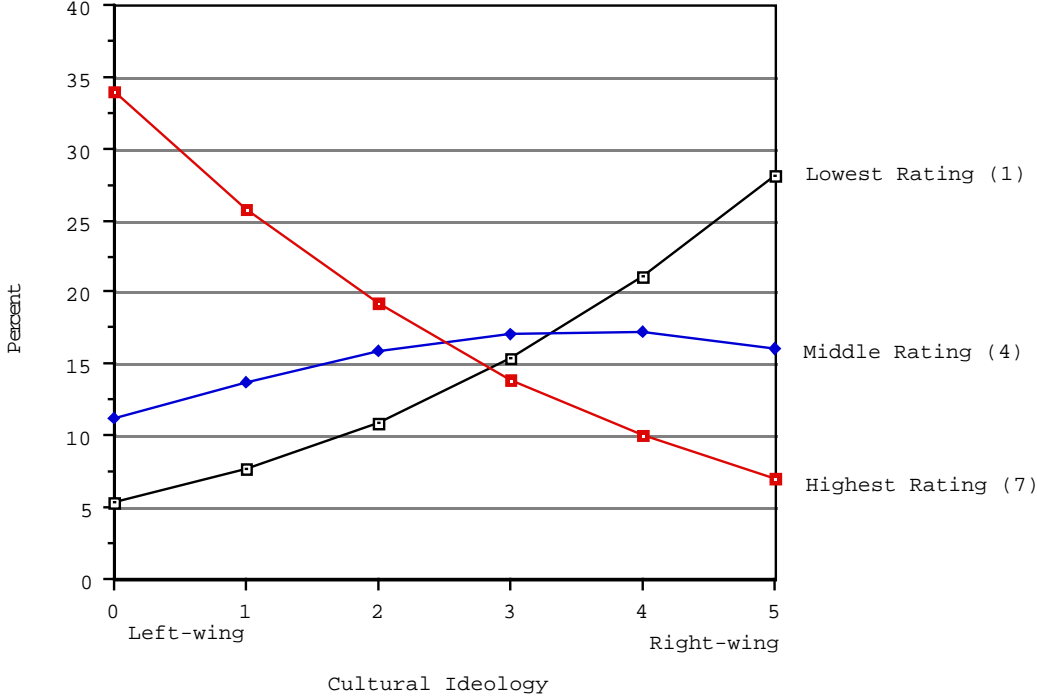
Graph 3a
Rating of MDF by Cultural Ideology, 1992



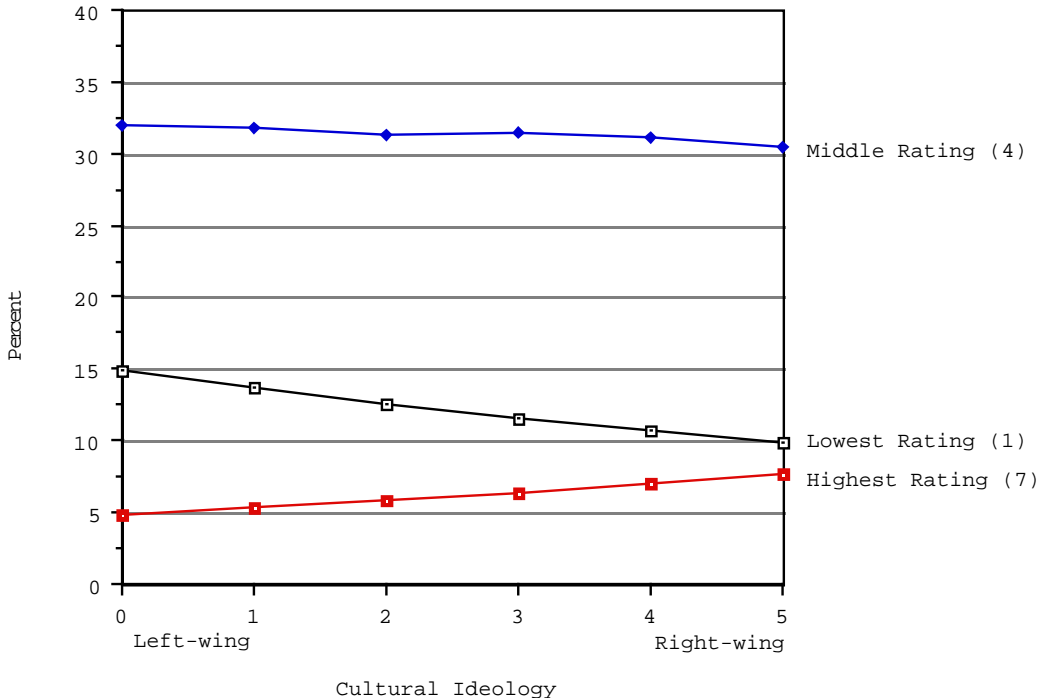
Graph 3b
Rating of MDF by Cultural Ideology, 1994



Graph 4a
Rating of FIDESZ by Cultural Ideology, 1992



Graph 4b
Rating of FIDESZ by Cultural Ideology, 1994



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