

National Threat Perception, Dominance-Submissive Authoritarian Syndrome and Totalitarian Socialist Ideology

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Abstract

A structural model for prediction a totalitarian socialist ideology on a sample of Croatian population was developed and evaluated by using full information maximum likelihood estimates obtained from LISREL 8.52 computer programs. We have assumed that both national threat perception and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome would affect a totalitarian socialist ideology. The data reported here were obtained by standard survey methods on a sample of adult population (N=553) who were all of Croatian ethnicity. Totalitarian socialist ideology was defined by the latent variables labeled political totalitarianism, state economic interventionism, and egalitarianism and working-class ruling. National threat perception was defined by the latent variables labeled national siege mentality, European Union threat perception, and support for immigrant persecution. Dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome was defined by the variables labeled authoritarian aggression, authoritarian submission, and dominance orientation. A second-order confirmatory factor analysis yielded the latent construct of totalitarian socialist ideology, national threat perception, and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome with acceptable fit indices. A structural model tested on the examined sample indicated that national threat perception and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome were significant predictors of a totalitarian socialist ideology, where national threat perception indicated a much stronger effect than dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome. Goodness-of-fit indices suggested acceptable fit (RMSEA=0.06, NFI=0.97, CFI=0.98, SRMR=0.03, AGFI=0.94). The concept of threat perception, avoidance of uncertainty, and authoritarian personality were used in interpreting the findings and its political implications.

Keywords: totalitarianism, threat perception, authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, ideology, structural modeling

Introduction

Sometimes we hear among the people in Croatia, as might also be heard in some other former socialist countries, that communist system was better than capitalism, more existentially secure and more safe to live in. Collective memory of former communist regime is surely a site of social and political meanings the members of a society express. Certainly, the economic crisis in Croatian society, reflecting a moral crisis too, may have reinforced such feelings, attitudes and perceptions or, better to say, such a social cognition. In the context of historical economic and political transition, our society still goes through, such a socialist sentiment or preferences of former political system and regime values might be considered and treated as a special kind of conservative political ideology. The more such a conservative political ideology might have in itself a social and political revolutionary potential, the more it is significant to investigate a structure and function as well as potential political implications such an ideological pattern might have under certain political and economic circumstances.

Accordingly, the problem of this research was defined in terms of detecting those interrelations of social attitudes and political values that might indicate the existence of the resistance to transitional and integrative social and political processes on one side, and the existence of the fruitful soil of potential social conflicts on the other side. Namely, the purely economic factors are very often emphasized and considered to be the most important factors for social and economic processes in a society and in the formation of political ideology, at same time neglecting or paying less or no attention to the specific character of social consciousness, type of political culture or ideological patterns internalized. Even more, the fact that political ideology may have substantial heritable components (Alford, Funk and Hibbing, 2005), i.e. may be associated with neurocognitive functioning (Amodio, Jost, Master and Yee, 2007; Jost, Nam, Amodio & Van Bavel, 2014) shows an additional important reason to investigate and understand political psychological meaning of political attitudes and orientations. Underestimating the political-psychological factors influencing political attitudes and social processes, there is a great chance to produce unreal political and economic expectations, produce failures and even, to a certain degree, the counter effects. That is why we made an endeavor of elucidating some of the attitudinal antecedents of attachment to a kind of a totalitarian socialist ideology.

Erikson and Tedin's (2011) definition of political ideology as a set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved and Converse's (1964) concept of ideology as configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together and cognitively organized, served as the basis for defining our concept of a totalitarian socialist ideology as a higher order attitudinal construct consisting of latent dimensions of political orientations indicating certain beliefs and preferred type of government ruling, i.e. attitudes in which the elements are bound together. Namely, as Feldman and Johnston (2014) suggest "ideology cannot be reduced to single value or measure which ...represents the political beliefs..." (p. 338). In other words, the concept of ideology should not disregard its complexity in meaning and structure if we want to detect the aspects of ideology and their ultimate consequences for politics (Feldman and Johnston, 2014). Thus, we have defined totalitarian socialist ideology as the three sets of political orientations labeled (1) state economic interventionism, (2) egalitarianism and working-class ruling, and (3) political totalitarianism. Our first hypothesis was that the social, economic, and political sub-dimensions of socialist ideology, defined in the three political orientations, would be in such relations that on a higher level they would form an internally coherent model of a totalitarian socialist ideology. We supposed that the individuals will tend to gravitate to clusters of political attitudes (Alford, Funk & Hibbing, 2005; Feldman and Johnston, 2014; Jost, Glaser, Kruglansky & Sulloway, 2003) and that ideology is consisted of an interrelated network of beliefs, opinions, and values (Fiske, Lau & Smith, 1990; Jost et al., 2003).

Treating ideology as an interrelated set of attitudes, beliefs, values with cognitive, affective, and motivational properties implies that ideology can be analyzed in terms of its content and in terms of its function (Jost, Federico & Napier, 2009). "That is ideology can be thought of as having both a discursive (socially constructed) superstructure and a functional (or motivational) substructure" (Jost et al., 2009, p.315). The functional substructure refers to social and psychological needs, goals, and motives underlying a specific political ideology. There are at least three major classes of psychological variables that comprise the motivational substructure of political ideology: (1) epistemic motives where ideology offers certainty, (2) existential motives where ideology offers security, and (3) relational motives where ideology offers solidarity. Specifically, individuals with heightened needs for epistemic and existential certainty and security will be more apt to adopt and internalize political beliefs and values that would be characterized as conservative (Jost et al., 2003). In other words, the uncertainty-threat model predicts that the psychological appeal of conservative attitudes, values and opinions is strengthen whenever needs to reduce uncertainty and threat are elevated (Jost & Napier, 2012). The latent existence of the uncertainty-threat model we expected to appear within the space of threat perceptions defined by (1) national siege mentality, (2) European Union threat perception, and (3) persecution of immigrant organizations. Thus, our second hypothesis was that these three components of threat perception would be in such relationship that on a higher level they form a super factor labeled national threat perception, implying the existence of intergroup threat whose effects on intergroup relations might be largely destructive (Stephan & Renfro, 2003). Other significant predictors of political and ideological phenomena are various concepts and measures of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) (Altemeyer, 1996; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008; Zakrisson, 2005), social dominance orientation (SDO) (Crawford & Pilanski, 2014; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), as well as the concept of authoritarian submission (Šram, 2008b). Although there is a view that RWA and SDO scales measure dimensions of personality, there are good reasons to treat them as social attitudes and beliefs of a broadly ideological nature (Saucier, 2000).

Both the RWA and SDO scales therefore seem more appropriately viewed as measuring social attitude or ideological belief dimensions, rather than personality. However, authoritarianism in its different aspects and inclination to social dominance attitudes or potential behavior in social interactions should not be completely rejected, at least these constructs might be accepted as a kind of political-psychological hybrid consisted of personality traits and social or political attitudes. Duckitt (2001) has proposed a model in which authoritarianism and social dominance are viewed as expressing motivational goals that have been made activated for individuals, both by their social worldviews and by their personalities. Having in mind the evidences on correlation between RWA and SDO (McFarland, 2010; Roccato & Ricolfi, 2005) and a high positive correlation between aggressive and submissive authoritarianism (Oesterreich, 2005), our third hypothesis was that all the three constructs i.e. (a) authoritarian aggression and traditionalism (Altemeyer, 2006), (b) authoritarian submission (Šram, 2008b), and (c) social dominance orientation syndrome (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) would be the components of an ideological and/or personality-attitudinal construct, of a higher factorial order, indicating the existence of dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome.

There is a good deal of evidence suggesting that personality traits, cognitive style, and motivational needs co-vary with political ideology. Namely, perceiving the social world as random and chaotic can be a very stressful experience and full of existential threat (Sullivan, Landau & Kay, 2012) and lack of perceived control over the environment leads to high arousal, and even to see perceptual patterns in incoherent sets of stimuli (Mirisola, Roccato, Spagna & Vieno, 2014). From a social and political psychology point of view, as already mentioned before, a totalitarian socialist ideology was conceptualized as a conservative political ideology. Since those inclined to conservative ideology are more authoritarian, less tolerant of ambiguity, tend to exhibit higher personal needs for order, structure and closure, tend to perceive the world as more dangerous and threatening, and tend to express a strong feeling of uncertainty and insecurity (Federico & Deason, 2012; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Jost et al., 2007) and even less intellectually sophisticated and more closed-minded (Hodson & Busseri, 2012), we assumed that threat perception and authoritarianism would be associated with a totalitarian socialist ideology (that in fact represents a conservative political ideology). The authoritarians expressing threat perception will be inclined to endorsing external systems that impose structure and order in their social world. This is the so called Compensatory Control Mechanism (CCM) developed by Kay, Whiston, Gaucher & Galinsky (2009). The main compensatory external systems believe in a controlling God and in the government. "...Resorting to such compensatory systems will be a beneficial strategy to cope with perceived lack of primary control by helping people to perceive a vicarious control over their world" (Mirisola et al., 2014, p.796). In other words, in the case of lacking control the most efficient strategy people can rely on is to submit to powerful others. On the basis of all these findings and other relations that exist between a conservative ideology, threat perception, and authoritarianism, we could predict the existence of their structural relations. In other words, we wanted to find out whether and to what degree national threat perception and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome as motivational substructures are good and significant predictors of a superstructure labeled totalitarian socialist ideology. We have supposed, and this is our fourth hypothesis, that both motivational substructures will be significant and good predictors of totalitarian socialist ideology.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The data reported here were obtained by standard survey methods on the sample of adult population (N=553) from the Croatian region which is called east Slavonija and Baranja and should not be considered a nationally representative sample. All the participants were of Croatian nationality. The socio-demographic characteristic of the sample is presented in table 1. As we can see, the sample was skewed toward above-average educational attainments because such a research requires an adequate literacy of respondents. The self-report questionnaires were administered to respondents in their own homes. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaires by themselves.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Total Sample

Variable	Per cent
Gender	
Male	46.1
Female	53.9
Age groups	
30 years or lower	28.1
31-45	27.4
46-60	26.3
61 or higher	18.2
School attainment	
Elementary school	6.6
Vocational school for skilled workers (Three years)	15.2
Secondary school (Four years)	40.5
College	12.0
University degree	25.6

Measure Instruments and its Latent Structures

Nine measure instruments were applied in this research defining the spaces of (1) political orientations, (2) threat perceptions, and (3) authoritarian tendencies. The responses of these self-report scales rated on a 5-point Likert scale from: (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using maximum likelihood estimation method was performed for testing validity of the instruments applied in the study, using the LISREL 8.52 program. Namely, CFA provides a powerful tool for evaluating the validity of hypotheses about a scale's structure. The following fit of indices were used: The Chi-Square statistic, RMSEA – Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation, CFI – Comparative Fit Index, NNFI – Non- Normed Fit Index, GFI – Goodness of Fit, SRMR - Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual. In the case that the chi-square statistic for goodness-of-fit is statistically significant, it does not imply that overall fit is not acceptable because in a large sample even minor and trivial deviations of the data from the model can result in statistical significance. Namely, the Chi-Square statistic is sensitive to sample size which means that the Chi-Square statistic nearly always rejects the model when large samples are used (Bentler & Bonnet, 1980). An RMSEA in the range of 0.05 to 0.10 is considered an indication of fair or mediocre fit and values above 0.10 indicated poor fit (MacCallum, Brown & Sugawara, 1996).

Political Orientations

Three measure instruments were used covering the space of political orientations: (1) state economic interventionism scale, (2) and egalitarianism and working-class ruling scale, and (3) political totalitarianism scale. State economic interventionism scale, consisting of 4 items, was one of the measures of socio-economic orientations developed by Šram (2008). CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (2) =12.11, $p=0.00$, RMSEA= 0.09, SRMR= 0.02, CFI= 0.98, NNFI= 0.95). The latent structure of state economic interventionism was defined by the items: 1. The state authorities know best what are the real interests and needs of their citizens (0.41); 2. When the main economic branches are in question, the state should protect them from the free market (0.65); 3. Only by the state interventions in economy is possible to realize social justice (0.89); 4. Economy can be developed and advanced only if it is lead by the firm hand of the state (0.69). Egalitarianism and working-class ruling scale consisted of 4 items. The items indicating egalitarian syndrome were overtaken from an earlier scale of socio-economic orientations (Šram, 2008a), while the items indicating the need for working-class ruling were developed for the purpose of this research. CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (2)=8.22, $p=0.01$, RMSEA= 0.07, SRMR= 0.02, CFI= 0.99, NNFI= 0.98). The latent structure of egalitarianism and working-class ruling was defined by the items: 1. All the workers in our society should have equal wages because all of them have the same living needs (0.80); 2. The working class should have the greatest political power and influence in our society (0.69); 3. All the people should have equal living standards, no matter how low the standard (0.74); 4. In our society the working class should take power in our society, even by force and revolution if necessary (0.61).

The number of observation is ten and number of free parameters is nine. Political totalitarianism scale, originally consisting of 5 items, was constructed on the basis of item selection of Mehrabian's libertarianism-totalitarianism scale (Mehrabian, 1996). CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (2) =5.35, $p=0.06$, RMSEA= 0.05, SRMR= 0.01, CFI= 1.00, NNFI= 0.99). The latent structure of political totalitarianism was defined by the items (parameter estimates such as the items' factor loadings are put in brackets): 1. We need a strong intelligence agency to tap phones, investigate bank accounts and do whatever else is necessary to protect us against state enemies and foreign spies (0.69); 2. In the case of bigger social riots it is the army that should take over the power in the country (0.71); 3. When people don't have enough sense to know what is good for them, government must step in, and if necessary, use force to show them the way (0.79); 4. Government must limit our individual freedoms so as to prevent unchecked selfishness, greed, and immorality (0.88).

Threat Perceptions

Three measure instruments were used covering the space of threat perceptions: (1) siege mentality scale, (2) European Union threat perception scale, and (3) persecution of immigrant organizations scale. Siege mentality scale, consisting of 5 items, was constructed on the basis of item selection measuring siege mentality construct developed by Bar-Tal and Antebi (1992). CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (5)=5.24, $p=0.38$, RMSEA= 0.00, SRMR= 0.01, CFI= 1.00, NNFI= 1.00). The latent structure of national siege mentality was defined by the items: 1. Our existence is the end which justifies the means (0.70); 2. The whole world is against us (0.80); 3. Only demonstration of force will deter our enemies from attacking us (0.74); 4. When neighboring countries get into conflict, we will often be blamed for (0.74); 5. Most nations will conspire against us, if only they have possibility to do so (0.71). European Union threat perception scale, consisting of 4 items, was constructed on the basis of Šram's construct of anti-Western orientation (Šram, 2001). CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (2)=3.78, $p=0.15$, RMSEA= 0.04, SRMR= 0.00, CFI= 1.00, NNFI= 1.00). The chi-squared test for goodness-of-fit is not statistically significant (Chi-square=3.78, $df= 2$, $p=0.15$). The latent structure of this construct was defined by the items: The European Union will completely ruin our state sovereignty (0.90); The European Union will not bring any benefit to our country (0.82); The European Union will destroy our national identity (0.92); The European Union will ruin our national wealth (0.90).

Persecution of immigrant organizations scale, consisting of 4 items, was a modified version of the original scale developed by Ho, Sidanius, Pratto, Levin, Thomsen, Kteily and Sheehy-Skeffington (2012). We asked respondents the following question: „Suppose that our government sometime in the future passed a law outlawing immigrant organizations in our country. Government officials then stated that the law would only be effective if it were rigorously enforced at the local level and appealed to every our citizen to aid in the fight against these organizations. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. “The responses of this self-report scale rated on a 5-point Likert scale from: (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (2) =7.51, $p=0.02$, RMSEA= 0.07, SRMR= 0.99, CFI= 1.00, NNFI= 0.99). The following items defined this latent construct: 1. If I were asked by the police, I would help hunt down and arrest members of immigrant organizations (0.83); 2. I would participate in attacks on the immigrant headquarters organized by the proper authorities (0.89); 3. I would support physical force to make members of immigrant organizations reveal the identity of other members (0.97); 4. I would support the execution of leaders of immigrant organizations if the government insisted it was necessary to protect our country (0.85).

Authoritarian Tendencies

Three measures were used covering the space of authoritarian tendencies: authoritarian aggression and traditionalism, (2) authoritarian submission, and (3) social dominance orientation. Authoritarian aggression and traditionalism scale, consisting of 5 items, was constructed on the basis of item selection of Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale developed by Altemeyer (2006). CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (2) =21.96, $p=0.00$, RMSEA= 0.07, SRMR= 0.02, CFI= 0.99, NNFI= 0.97). This latent construct was defined by the following items: 1. The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leaders in prison, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas (0.78); 2. Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fiber and traditional beliefs (0.67); 3.

What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path (0.60); 4. There are many radical, immoral people in our country today, who are trying to ruin it for their own godless purposes, whom the authorities should put out of action (0.72); 5. This country would work a lot better if certain groups of trouble makers would just shut up and accept their group's traditional place in society (0.72). Authoritarian submission scale, consisting of 5 items, was constructed on the basis of an earlier version of authoritarian tendencies scale (Šram, 2008b). CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (5)=9.54, $p=0.08$, RMSEA= 0.04, SRMR= 0.02, CFI= 1.00, NNFI= 0.99). This latent construct is defined by the following items: 1. Obedient citizens are the only guarantee of political stability in our society (0.53); 2. Juvenile delinquents should be severely punished (0.60); 3. Children should submit to all the commands of their parents because they know best what is good for them (0.75); 4. Those who do not show respect to authorities are a great danger for the community they live in (0.84). Social dominance orientation syndrome scale, consisting of 4 items, was constructed on the basis of item selection of the original SDO scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle (1994). CFA yielded unifactorial solution indicating that a measurement model has overall fit (Chi-Square (2) =6.91, $p=0.03$, RMSEA= 0.06, SRMR= 0.01, CFI= 1.00, NNFI= 0.99). This latent construct is defined by the following items: 1. If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems (0.63); It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom (0.69); Inferior groups should stay in their place (0.93); Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place (0.79).

Results

Second-Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Second-order models are applicable in research context in which measurement instruments assess several related constructs, each of which is measured by multiple items. The second-order model represents the hypothesis that these seemingly distinct, but related constructs can be accounted for by one or more common underlying higher order constructs. Second-order factor models hypothesized (1) that the responses to the measurement of Totalitarian socialist ideology could be explained by three first-order factors labeled political totalitarianism, state economic interventionism, and egalitarianism and working-class ruling; (2) that the responses to the measurement of National threat perception could be explained by three first-order factors labeled national siege mentality, European Union threat perception, and persecution of immigrant organizations; and (3) that the responses to the measurement of Dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome could be explained by three first-order factors labeled authoritarian aggression and traditionalism, authoritarian submission, and social dominance orientation. In comparison to first-order models with correlated factors, second order factor models can provide a more parsimonious and interpretable model since we hypothesized that higher order factors are underlying their data.

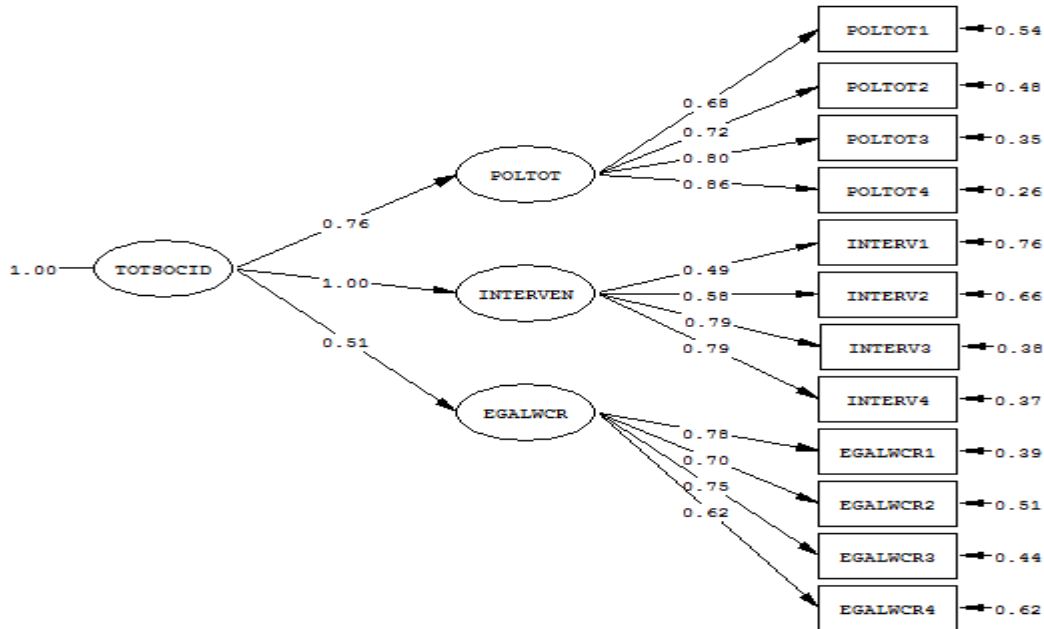
A set of equation is said to be "identified" if the known information available implies that there is one best value for each unknown in the equations. The requirement that the number of parameters to be estimated in a model cannot exceed the number of unique variances and covariances in the sample variance-covariance matrix is satisfied. T-rule for identification states that the number of unknown parameters to be estimated in the model must be less than or equal to the number of non-redundant elements that is 78, 91 and 105 for the second order CFA's and 45 for the hybrid model (SEM). Our models are all "overidentified". While t-rule is "necessary" condition for identification it is not a "sufficient" condition. Three Measure Rule is also satisfied for all models: 1) each latent construct is associated with at least three indicator variables, 2) each indicator variable loads onto only one factor and 3) there are no covariances amongst the measurement error terms. Because latent variables are unobserved and therefore have no definite metric scale every latent variables must have its scale determined. By default LISREL 8 automatically standardizes both the independent and dependent latent factors, if no reference variable is specified for the measurement model. (Byrne, 2014). Latent variables in models were scaled by default way fixing the variance of a factor to equal constant.

Political Orientations

Confirmatory factor analysis extracted a more general factor (figure 1) within the space of latent dimensions of political orientations (figure 1). The extracted second-order factor, labeled **Totalitarian socialist ideology**, has satisfying goodness-of-fit within the allowed levels of standard error (Chi-Square (51) =343.35, $p=0.00$, RMSEA= 0.10, SRMR= 0.06, CFI= 0.94, NNFI= 0.93).

The loadings of lower-order factors on the higher-order factor were 1.00 (state economic interventionism), 0.76 (political totalitarianism), and 0.51 (egalitarianism and working-class ruling). We can see that Totalitarian socialist ideology as a second-order factor represents a theoretically based model, whose hypothetical latent structure has a satisfactory fit with empirical data.

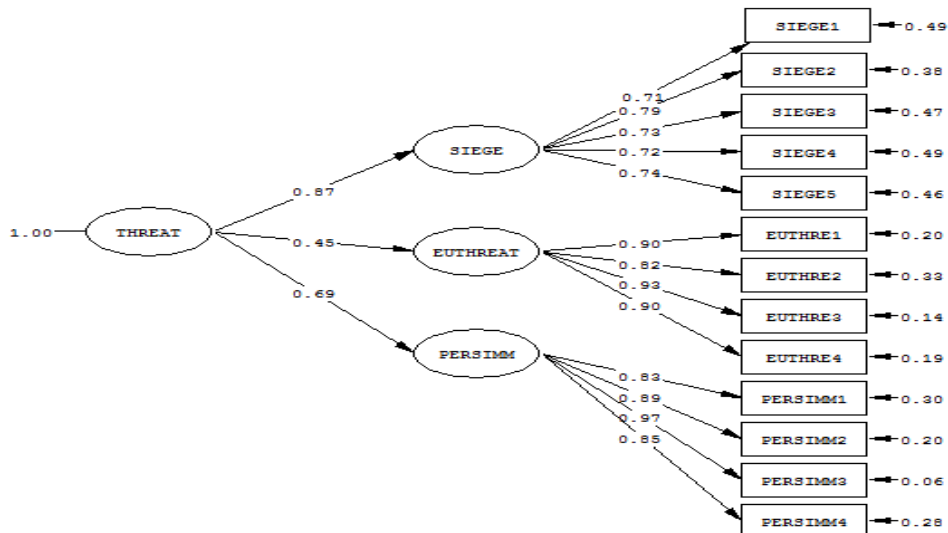
Figure 1: CFA of Latent Variables from the Space of Political Orientations



Threat Perceptions

Confirmatory factor analysis extracted a more general factor within the space of latent dimensions of threat perceptions (figure 2). The extracted second-order factor, labeled **National threat perception**, has satisfying goodness-of-fit within the allowed levels of standard error (Chi-Square (62)=319.46, p=0.00, RMSEA= 0.08, SRMR= 0.04, CFI= 0.97, NNFI= 0.96). The loadings of lower-order factors on the higher-order factor were 0.87 (national siege mentality), 0.45 (European Union threat perception), and 0.69 (persecution of immigrant organizations). National threat perception as a higher-order factor is a theoretically based model.

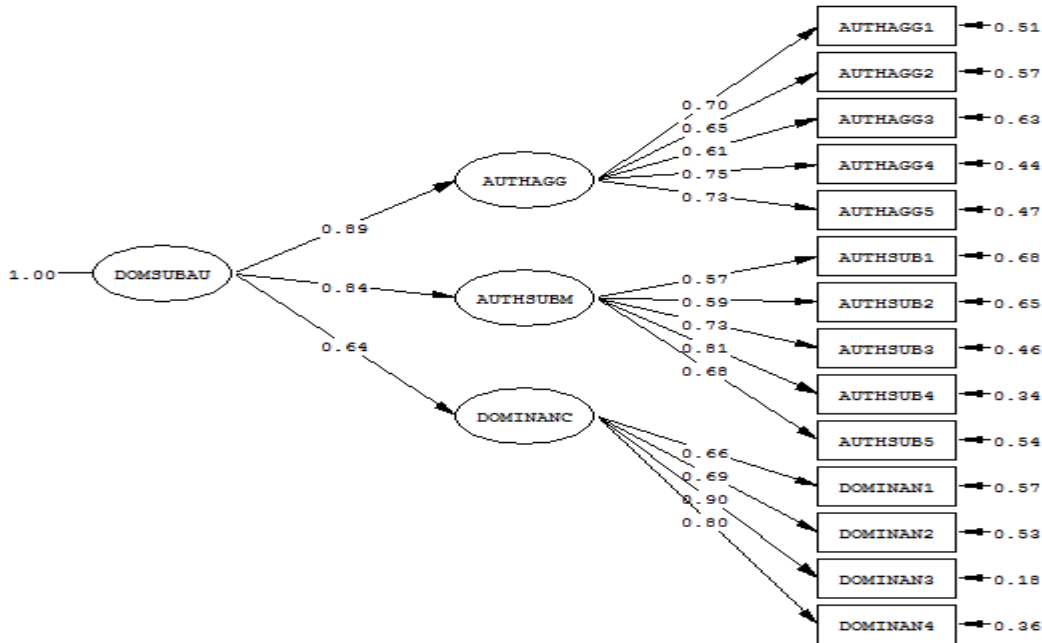
Figure 2: CFA of Latent Variables from the Space of Threat Perceptions



Authoritarian Tendencies

Confirmatory factor analysis extracted a more general factor within the space of latent dimensions of authoritarian tendencies (figure 3). The extracted second-order factor, labeled Dominance-submissive authoritarianism syndrome, has satisfying goodness-of-fit within the allowed levels of standard error (Chi-Square (74)=415.59, p=0.00, RMSEA= 0.09, SRMR= 0.06, CFI= 0.96, NNFI= 0.95). The loadings of lower-order factors on the higher-order factor were 0.89 (authoritarian aggression and traditionalism), 0.84 (authoritarian submission), and 0.64 (social dominance orientation syndrome). It is obvious that Dominance-submissive authoritarianism syndrome as a second-order factor represents a theoretically based model. Namely, this hypothetical latent structure has a satisfactory fit with empirical data, indicating the existence of an internally coherent dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome on a higher-order level.

Figure 3: CFA of Latent Variables from the space of Authoritarian Tendencies



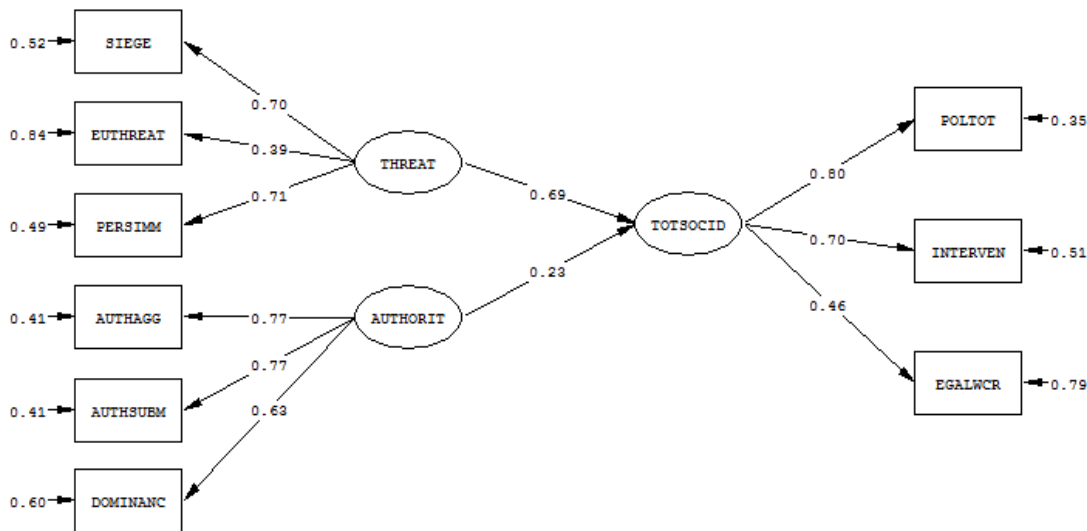
The Effects of National Threat Perception and Dominance-Submissive Authoritarian Syndrome on Totalitarian Socialist Ideology

A structural model for prediction a totalitarian socialist ideology was developed and evaluated by using full information maximum likelihood estimates obtained from LISREL 8.52 program. Structural equation model was used to test the theoretical model that national threat perception and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome would effect a totalitarian socialist ideology. The covariance matrix, presented in table 2, has shown close relationships among the second-order latent dimensions investigated indicating the existence of an internally coherent political-attitudinal structural model. The fit indices indicated good overall fit for the model (Chi-Square (24)=80.15, p=0.00, RMSEA= 0.06, SRMR= 0.03, CFI= 0.98, NNFI= 0.97) representing a theoretically based model. About 74 per cent of the variance can be explained by this structural model. We can see from the figure 4 that national threat perception as the second-order factor served as a major source of explained variance (beta=0.69) in totalitarian socialist ideology as a second-order attitudinal construct. Dominance-submissive authoritarianism as the second-order syndrome proved to be also a statistically significant predictor of totalitarian socialist ideology, but to a much lesser degree (beta=0.23).

Table 2: Covariance Matrix of Latent Variables

	1	2	3
1 Totalitarian socialist ideology	1.00		
2. National threat perception	0.84	1.00	
3, Dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome	0.68	0.66	1.00

Figure 4: Structural Equation Model of the Effects of National Threat Perception and Dominance-Submissive Authoritarian Syndrome on Totalitarian Socialist Ideology



Discussion

Our first hypothesis about the existence of the totalitarian socialist ideology on the factorially higher order was confirmed. Since in our hypothetical frame of references higher-order factors are hypothesized to affect lower-order factors causally, it is reasonable to assume that internalizations of the values of political totalitarianism, state economic interventionism, and egalitarianism and working-class ruling, are the results of the existence of a broader political totalitarian ideology. Namely, we found out that correlations between latent variables labeled state economic interventionism, egalitarianism and the working-class ruling, and political totalitarianism were so high that on a higher level they formed an internally coherent model of the totalitarian socialist ideology. It is obvious that people’s political attitudes and beliefs tend to be organized in a way that describes the existence a broader and specific ideological pattern (Feldman, 2013; Goren, 2004) and gravitate to clusters of political attitudes (Jost et al.,2003; Alford, Funk & Hibbing, 2005). Strong demands for state political interventions and protectionism in the economy, a need for the existence of an omniscient and omnipotent state, demand for the egalitarian economic redistribution, a desire for re-establishing the socialist workers’ self-management that existed in former communist Yugoslavia, support for state intelligence surveillance, approval of military coup, supporting government to use force, and accepting the restrictions of individual freedoms imposed by government are elements of political mind encompassing the pattern of the totalitarian socialist ideology.

We can see that the totalitarian socialist ideology, which is very similar to the ruling ideology of former communist regime in former Yugoslavia, formed an ideological pattern of interrelated network of beliefs, opinions, and values (Fiske, Lau & Smith, 1990; Jost et al., 2003) that are bound together and cognitively organized (Converse, 1964). In other words, Croatian citizens exhibited a political attitudinal coherence that merits the label totalitarian socialist ideology. Having in mind Erikson & Tedin’s (2011) definition of political ideology as a set beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved, we might argue that the demands for state political interventions and protectionism in the economy and the demands for the egalitarian economic redistribution and re-establishing the socialist workers’ self-management correspond to the beliefs about the proper order of society, while giving support to and accepting the repressive political totalitarianism represent the way how such a “proper order” of society should be achieved. In short, the latent pattern of political ideology we are dealing with is, in fact, a pattern of etatism as a form of state socialism where the state should control economic and social policy by the repressive political ways and means. We can notice that the political mind encompassing the elements of state economic interventionism and protectionism, political values of egalitarianism, working-class ideology, and the existence of repressive political control resembles strongly to the well-known communist doctrine i.e. socio-political thought called “dictatorship of proletariat”.

Supposing that attitudes really do underlie and cause behaviors (Ajzen, 2011; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005) and that attitudes are generated to guide and sometimes rationalize actions (Schwartz, 2000), we could speculate about political implications of our findings in the following way: (1) The deeper economic crisis in the Croatian society, the greater existential threat appears; (2) the greater pauperization, the greater rejections of the free market economy and less degree of democratic political culture; and (3) the more huge moral and value vacuum emerge, the greater risk of appearing and accepting the socialist totalitarian ideology, even in the shape of revolutionary movements or openly supporting state dictatorship. Taking into account the political-psychological nature of this pattern of ideology, current in the former communist regime, and held among many people in ex-Yugoslavia, the totalitarian socialist ideology should be considered conservative as opposed to the free-market and liberal ideology. We might even speak, in line with Hoeckens (1993), about the possible rise of the right in post-communist countries. Thus, the former leftist ideology became the rightist within the context of transition from communism to capitalism social system.

Our second hypothesis about the existence of a super factor labeled national threat perception on a higher order was confirmed. The correlations between latent dimensions of siege mentality, European Union threat perception, and persecution of immigrant organizations were in such a strong degree that on the level of second order they proved the existence of an uncertainty-threat model called national threat perception. Such a political-psychological super factor encompasses the existence of threat perception imposed by exterior country's enemies, mental readiness to fight against and defend from those enemies, the existence cultural, ecological, economic, and political threats imposed by the membership in European Union, and an anti-immigrant orientation underlying the existence of mental readiness to extremely persecute their organization if permitted by law. In short, national threat perception as a higher-order factor is a theoretically based uncertainty-threat model underlying specific national threat perceptions such as a „feeling“ of being endangered by other nations and the whole world, European union integration processes, and implicitly by all the immigrants. This finding is in line with those that established the correlations between siege mentality and threat perception (Bar-Tal & Atebi, 1992) and EU threat perception and anti-immigrant orientation (Šram, 2014). The feeling of endangered national security, what our construct of national threat perception implies, on the various levels (domestic, environmental, global) may activate and develop various political, economic and psychological defense mechanisms, bearing in mind the importance which the feelings of security have in the motivational patterns (Blascovich, 2008; Gasper & Gomez, 2015; Jolly, 2014; Maslow, 1982). The higher order latent structure of national threat perception might be considered within the intergroup threat theory (Stephan, Ybarra & Morrison, 2009). The latent structure of national threat perception is in line with the standpoint that realistic and symbolic threat “are considered complementary rather than exclusive, such that beliefs about the threat of the out group make up the common factor determining the different types of attitudes towards the out group” (Włodarczyk, Basabe & Bobowik, 2014, p. 61).

The third hypothesis about the existence of dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome on the level of second-order factor was confirmed. Namely, correlations between the dimensions of authoritarian aggression and traditionalism, authoritarian submission, and social dominance orientation were associated to such a high degree that they formed an internally coherent personality-attitudinal hybrid labeled dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome. Such a political-psychological super factor encompasses sticking to traditional values and punishing all who break these values in any way, indicates the existence of a strong demand for submitting and obedience to social, political, and parental authorities, and a strong desire for social dominance and superiority for its own group over other groups. The latent structure of this super factor confirms those findings that made evidences on correlation between dimensions of authoritarianism and social dominance orientation (Craig & Richeson, 2014; McFarland, 2010; Oesterreich, 2005; Roccato & Ricolfi, 2005) underlying the existence of motives to achieve dominance in a competitive world and to achieve security from threats (Duckitt, 2001). Although authoritarianism and social dominance orientation have different social and psychological bases (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010), in the sense that authoritarianism derives from a belief that the world is a dangerous place and full of threats whereas social dominance orientation derives from a belief that the world is a competitive jungle, we argue that there is a political-psychological construct on a higher factorial level underlying the psychological simultaneous need to attack at and need to escape from the source of threat. Walter Bradford Cannon coined the term “flight or fight” describing response to threats (Cannon, 1994).

Having in mind the latent structure of dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome we would reformulate the term “fight or flight” to the term “flight and fight” implying the existence of a deep conflict. While “fight or flight” implies the behavioral patterns in the face of threat, the term we suggest to be coined, i.e. “flight **and** fight” implies the existence of a deep inner conflict developed by psychological frustrations and perceiving social threats. In other words, we could argue that different social and psychological basis of authoritarianism and social dominance orientation might have an underlying social-psychological basis indicating the presence of an intrapsychic conflict, i.e. socially based emotional clash of opposing attack and escape impulses and drives. A substantial correlation between national threat perception and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome was found ($r=0.66$). This finding is supporting the significant evidence of an interaction between authoritarian predispositions and perceived threat (Feldman & Stenner, 1997) and consistent with empirical findings indicating that threat and fear underlie authoritarianism (Lavine, Lodge & Freitas, 2005; Mirisola, Russo, Spagna & Vienno, 2014). The established correlation between the constructs of national threat perception (collective threat) and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome is in line with the findings that authoritarianism is in the strong correlation with the threats to ingroup and has a stronger effect for social threats (Shaffer & Duckitt, 2013). In other words, authoritarian reactions are related to people highly identified with their national ingroup under personal threat, indicating that authoritarian responses may operate as a group-level coping strategy for a threat to personal self (Asbrock & Fritsche, 2013). The authoritarians are obviously sensitive to threats, and particularly to threats involving the “outsider” (for instance, neighbouring countries, immigrants, and European Union, as in our case) who does not fit authoritarian standards of uniformity and order (Butler, 2013). We cannot but mention that there are various approaches as to the question of causal relations between perceived threat and authoritarianism. The question arises whether perceived threat is a cause of authoritarianism or perceived threat is a consequence of authoritarianism. We would agree with the assumption that “authoritarianism is arguably not only a consequence but also a cause of perceived threat” (Cohrs, 2013, p.52). It seems, therefore, that threat perception and authoritarianism can have different positions and psychological meaning in a causal-consequential order, depending on the context or the nature of other political-psychological variables (e.g. ideology).

Finally, our fourth hypothesis, concerning the effects of national threat perception and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome on totalitarian socialist ideology, was also confirmed. The structural equation model represents a theoretically based model. Namely, both national threat perception and dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome, as functional (or motivational) substructures, were proved to be good and significant predictors of a totalitarian socialist ideology. As we noted before, the functional substructure refers to social and psychological needs, goals, and motives underlying a specific political ideology (Jost et al., 2009). Totalitarian socialist ideology, as a kind of political conservatism, may be adjusted in response to motivations that may be heightened by perceptions of threat that jeopardize one's sense of security. Our findings confirmed that individuals with heightened needs for epistemic and existential certainty and security were more inclined to internalize political beliefs and values that would be characterized as conservative (Jost et al., 2003). In a complex structure of national threat perception we can observe the existence of an uncertainty-threat model underlying totalitarian socialist ideology. In other words, such an uncertainty threat model strongly predicted that the psychological appeal of conservative attitudes, values and opinions, comprising the structure of totalitarian socialist ideology, is strengthened whenever needs to reduce collective uncertainty and threat are elevated (Jost & Napier, 2012). We can also implicitly conclude that perception of dangerous world underlies political conservatism (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001). In other words, uncertainty avoidance and threat management are underlying a totalitarian socialist ideology. Historical experiences and collective traumatic memories as “a site of social meaning” (Tileaga, 2013, p. 105), as well as a disappointment with the results of „introduced“ capitalism, may be the origins of revival and restoration of a totalitarian socialist ideology and communist ideological matrix. In other words, national threat perception might be a temporal precedence to appearing a specific totalitarian ideology and internalization of its political values.

As assumed, dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome was proved to be a significant predictor of totalitarian socialist ideology. This finding is in line with those showing that significant predictors of ideological phenomena may be various aspects and kinds of authoritarianism and social dominance orientation (Altemeyer, 1996; Crawford & Pilanski, 2014; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008; Šram, 2008b). Although it seems that the idea of authoritarianism as a personality trait has been given up (Duckitt, 1989; Feldman, 2003), we are more apt to define and treat the second-order construct of dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome as a kind of political-psychological hybrid consisting of social or political attitudes as well as personality traits.

Detlef Oesterreich argues that “authoritarianism is a person’s habitualized reactive tendency to flee to the shelter of those who offer support in critical and threatening situations” (Oesterreich, 2005., p. 283). Authoritarianism defined in such a way reveals its sheltering and protective function that might have in a cognitive system. In this sense we can understand and explain the relationships between perceived threats and authoritarian tendencies within an ideological frame of reference (Merolla, Ramos & Zechmeister, 2012; Onraet, Dhont & Van Hiel, 2014). There is evidence that the authoritarians expressing threat perception incline to endorsing a totalitarian socialist ideology (an external system) that impose structure and order in their social world. In other words, a totalitarian socialist ideology may present the Compensatory Control Mechanism (Kay et al., 2009) within which the main compensatory external system is believing in an omniscient and omnipotent government. Resorting to the political, social and economic values of a totalitarian socialist ideology might be, as Mirisola et al. (2014) would say, “a beneficial strategy to cope with perceived lack of primary control by helping people to perceive a vicarious control over their world” (Mirisola et al., 2014, p. 796). The obtained results support the Compensatory Control Mechanism (CCM) implying that in the case of lacking control the most efficient strategy people can rely on is to submit to powerful others.

Although national threat perception has much greater predictive power than dominance-submissive authoritarian syndrome on the emerging of totalitarian socialist ideology, there is a strong evidence that all the three second-order latent constructs cover very similar political-psychological space. It is seen on the basis of covariance matrix of second-order latent variables: ideology and perceived threat (0.84), ideology and authoritarianism (0.68), and perceived threat and authoritarianism (0.66). We could assume therefore that on the third-level there is an internally coherent ideological or political-cultural model having both a discursive (socially constructed) superstructure such as totalitarian socialist ideology is a functional (or motivational) substructures indicating the existence of national threat perception and dominance-submissive authoritarianism. In this way ideology is analyzed in terms of its content and in terms of its function (Jost et al., 2009 Taking into consideration the psychological underpinning of both perceived threat and authoritarianism, primarily their sheltering and protective function, such a complex ideological or political-cultural pattern might be labeled “totalitarian protective socialist ideology”. In other words, totalitarian socialist ideology might be considered the consequence, using Duckitt’s words, of “self-protective, defensive motivational needs for control and security (Duckitt, 2001, p. 85). In short, the desire to avoid uncertainty and insecurity is strongly associated with totalitarian socialist ideology that was a ruling political ideology in the communist regime of former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. There is an evidence that in the political mind or culture of Croatian people exists a type of political cognition, consisting of totalitarian socialist ideology and perceived national threat, which will certainly have an inhibitory effect on economic transitional and integrative social and political processes on one side, and be serving as the fruitful soil of potential social conflicts on the other side. Political implications of our findings might be summarized in the following way: The deeper economic and moral crisis in Croatian society will be, the grater existential insecurity will appear, and the more huge moral and value vacuum will emerge, the greater risk of appearing and accepting the values of political extremism and historical regression would be more possible, even in the shape of revolutionary movements or openly supporting political dictatorship. We daresay that Croats’ relationship to the past is an unfinished business that might lead to re-evaluation of the values and standards of former communist political regimes.

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