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# Romanian Authoritarianism 10 Years After Communism

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*Four studies were conducted examining authoritarianism in Romania. It was found that authoritarianism could be measured reliably and was consistently related to political attitudes, political support, and prejudice. More specifically, authoritarianism was positively related to support for communist principles of distributive justice and a communist economy. However, authoritarianism was unrelated to actual support for the socialist left, positively related to support for the noncommunist, fascist right, and negatively related to support for the pro-Western centrist parties. The strength and consistency of the findings more than 10 years after the fall of communism suggest that authoritarianism's relationship with communism in Eastern Europe might be more resistant to change than originally thought and may extend on to future generations. Implications for current authoritarianism theory are discussed.*

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More than five decades ago, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) introduced the concept of authoritarianism to help predict and explain ethnocentrism and antidemocratic attitudes. Since that time, the strong adherence of authoritarians to right-wing political ideology has been well documented in the West (Altemeyer, 1988, 1996; McFarland, Ageyev, & Djintcharadze, 1996; Melen, 1993). However, there has been some debate as to the generalizability of these findings outside of the Western World (Altemeyer, 1988, 1996; Stone & Smith, 1993).

The issue of communist, or left-wing, authoritarians arose shortly after the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*. Shils (1954) was the first to argue, although without empirical support, that Soviet communists appeared to display all of the characteristics of authoritarians in the West with the exception of their adherence to a seemingly left-wing political ideology. Shils then equated Soviet communists with Western communists and became one of the earliest believers in the existence

of a neglected species of left-wing authoritarian (Stone & Smith, 1993).

Rokeach (1956, 1960) also objected to the alignment of authoritarianism with right-wing ideology. His proposed alternative, the Dogmatism scale, was presented as a measure of "general authoritarianism" that was not confounded with political ideology. However, later studies have generally found that dogmatism is highly related to authoritarianism and, similar to authoritarianism, is more frequent among adherents to right-wing political ideologies (for a review, see Stone, 1980).

Altemeyer (1988, 1996) recently tried to lay this issue to rest in his sophisticated extension and reformulation of Adorno et al.'s (1950) conception of authoritarianism. Altemeyer (1981, 1988, 1996) suggested that authoritarianism has three major components: aggression, submission, and conventionality, all of which also were identified by Adorno et al. (1950). Using this conceptualization of authoritarianism, Altemeyer (1988, 1996) tried to solve the debate by equating "conventional" and "right-wing" and then arguing that what is right wing (conventional) depends on the culture of reference but that authoritarianism should be highly related to adherence to whatever is classified as right wing (conventional). Therefore, Russian authoritarians should be expected to be communists and American authoritarians should be capitalists, which is exactly what the vast majority of studies have found (for a review, see Altemeyer, 1996; McFarland, 2000).

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## THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The general aim of the present research was to investigate the relationships between authoritarianism, political ideology, and prejudice in Eastern Europe just over a decade after the fall of the Berlin wall. Romania was chosen because it appeared typical of Eastern Europe both politically and economically. Romania is a fledgling democracy that is currently facing a choice between attempting to join the European Union (EU) and strengthening its ties with Russia. In addition, similar to most of the East, the period after the revolution has been extremely difficult for the common citizen, with rampant inflation and currency devaluation lowering the standard of living to, or near to, third-world conditions.

Four interrelated studies were conducted. The first attempted to set the foundation for the modern study of authoritarianism in Romania through the construction of a reliable measure of Romanian authoritarianism. The second attempted to validate the measure of Romanian authoritarianism through an examination of its relationships with prejudice. The third examined the relationship between authoritarianism and support for communism and capitalism. The fourth examined the relationships between authoritarianism and support for specific politicians and political parties.

## STUDY 1: CONSTRUCTION OF A MEASURE OF ROMANIAN AUTHORITARIANISM

Psychological research was rarely conducted in Romania during communist rule. Under Ceausescu's brutal leadership, psychology was viewed as a potentially subversive element to his reign. Psychology was thus removed from the universities and was all but nonexistent in other sectors of society. Despite the recent rebirth of psychology in Romania, no research has ever examined Romanian authoritarianism. Therefore, the first study was conducted to construct a reliable measure of Romanian authoritarianism.

*Method**PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE*

The 84 (23 men and 61 women) participants in this study were employed by a hospital in Bucharest or were family or close friends of these employees. Participants averaged 33 years old ( $SD = 14.01$  years). As part of a larger project, participants were contacted by a member of the hospital staff and asked to voluntarily complete the questionnaire for \$1.10 (about a third of a day's wage). Full confidentiality and anonymity were assured, although participants were paid contingent on their return of the completed questionnaire to the administrator.

*MEASURES*

Because of its well-established validity, Altemeyer's (1996) Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale was used to develop a measure of Romanian authoritarianism. Because it seemed possible that Romanian authoritarians would tend to be atheists, the 1996 RWA scale was modified by the removal of all mentions of religion, God, and other related concepts. (Unless otherwise mentioned, all scales used in this series of studies were modified in a similar fashion.) One item about the virtues of atheists (Item 8) could not be meaningfully modified and was removed. Three other items (Items 11, 13, and 16) did not seem valid as measures of Romanian authoritarianism and also were removed. One item from both McFarland's 1996 Russian Authoritarianism scale (Item 27) and Altemeyer's 1982 version of the RWA scale (Item 13) were added to make a 32-item response set balanced scale.

All measures presented in this article were translated from English to Romanian and then back-translated from Romanian to English by independent translators. Responses to all measures were made along a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

*Results*

The RWA scale required significant modifications. The 32-item RWA scale included 5 items that failed to correlate positively with the rest of the scale.<sup>1</sup> These items were removed along with 5 additional items that were lowering the reliability. Eight reverse-scored items were then removed to balance the scale for response sets, which left 14 items with a respectable alpha of .79. Thirteen of the 14 retained items came from Altemeyer's 1996 RWA scale (Items 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 19, 23, 25, 26, 27, and 34; pp. 13-14) and one item came from McFarland's 1996 Russian RWA scale (Item 27; p. 217). Some of the top items were "the only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leaders in power, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas" and "the *real* keys to the 'good life' are obedience, discipline, and sticking to the straight and narrow." An analysis of the content of the retained items did not suggest that the construct was significantly narrowed in meaning in comparison to the original.<sup>2</sup>

A principal components analysis with oblique (promax) rotation was then conducted on the two components (eigenvalues of 3.79 and 3.59) that were revealed by a scree plot test. The first component consisted of all seven pro-trait items and the second component consisted of all seven con-trait items. This seemed to indicate that, with the exception of response set biases, the newly constructed Romanian authoritarianism scale was essentially unidimensional.

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics for Measures in Study 2

	Dorm Sample (n = 97)			Cafeteria Sample (n = 100)		
	$\alpha$	M	SD	$\alpha$	M	SD
Authoritarianism	.80	2.76	.50	.81	2.49	.56
Prejudice-Arabs	.76	2.84	.49	.77	2.79	.61
Anti-Semitism	.72	2.66	.49	.81	2.54	.71
Sexism	.81	1.90	.69	.88	2.01	.88
Prejudice-Hungarians	.86	2.89	.78			
Attitudes-homosexuals	.88	2.75	.83			
Prejudice-Roma	.83	3.31	.65			
General Prejudice-3	.81	2.47	.40	.87	2.45	.57
General Prejudice-6		2.72	.47			

### Discussion

The 14-item Romanian Authoritarianism scale seemed to display adequate internal reliability and content validity in this relatively small, select sample. The structure of the measure also seemed to be adequately unidimensional because response-set-based, two-factor solutions similar to the one found in this study are sometimes obtained with Altemeyer's RWA scale in the West (cf. Tarr & Lorr, 1991). In short, the 14-item authoritarianism scale appeared to be adequate for use as a measure of authoritarianism in Romania.

### STUDY 2: AUTHORITARIANISM AND PREJUDICE

Study 1 constructed a reliable measure of Romanian authoritarianism. However, no study has yet examined how authoritarianism in Romania relates to its most important correlate: generalized prejudice. Generalized prejudice, which Adorno et al. (1950) labeled "ethnocentrism," is a prejudice against all outgroups, whether they are ethnic, sexual, or even fictional (cf. Hartley, 1946). Authoritarianism was developed by Adorno et al. (1950) to predict generalized prejudice and is still regarded, more than 50 years after its initial development, as one of the best predictors of generalized prejudice (Altemeyer, 1998; McFarland, 2001). Thus, any valid measure of authoritarianism should be significantly related to a wide variety of specific prejudices as well as generalized prejudice. Study 2 was designed to establish the validity of the newly constructed measure of Romanian authoritarianism through an examination of its relationships with prejudice in Romania.

### Method

#### PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

The 197 participants in this study were drawn from two different samples. The first (the dormitory sample) consisted of 97 residents of student housing (30 men, 65

women, 2 unknown) who had agreed, as part of a larger project, to complete the questionnaire for a small amount of money (approximately 35 cents). The second (the cafeteria sample) consisted of 100 students (50 men and 50 women) that had agreed to voluntarily fill out the questionnaire on the spot when approached by a student administrator in a campus cafeteria. The participants from both samples were students at a large state university in Bucharest and were 21 years old on average (approximate  $SD=2$ ). All participants responded anonymously and were assured of confidentiality.

#### MEASURES

Both samples completed the 14-item Romanian Authoritarianism scale from Study 1, a six-item prejudice against Arabs scale (e.g., "Most Arabs smell"), a six-item anti-Semitism scale (e.g., "You can't trust Jews"), and a six-item sexism scale (e.g., "Important decisions should be left to men") that was partially derived from the Old-Fashioned Sexism scale (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). In addition, the dormitory sample completed a six-item prejudice against Hungarians scale (e.g., "Most Hungarians are intentionally mean"), an eight-item prejudice against Roma scale (e.g., "Gypsies should be locked up to protect society"), and an eight-item prejudice against homosexuals scale (e.g., "Besides their sexual preferences, homosexuals are just like everyone else") based on Altemeyer's (1988, 1996) Attitudes Toward Homosexuals scale. Because valid measures of Romanian prejudice have not yet been published, all measures of prejudice were developed for this project.<sup>3</sup> All measures contained equal numbers of pro- and con-trait items. Responses were made along a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

#### Results

As Table 1 shows, every measure of prejudice exhibited satisfactory levels of internal reliability in both samples, with all measures having coefficient alphas more than .70 and all but two (the prejudice against Arabs and

**TABLE 2: Correlations Between Romanian Authoritarianism and Prejudice**

	<i>Dorm Sample</i> (n = 97)	<i>Cafeteria Sample</i> (n = 100)
Prejudice-Arabs	.39***	.34***
Anti-Semitism	.34***	.52***
Sexism	.27**	.30**
Prejudice-Hungarians	.50***	
Attitudes-homosexuals	.73***	
Prejudice-Roma	.38***	
General Prejudice-3	.45***	.49***
General Prejudice-6	.64***	

\*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

anti-Semitism scales) having alphas of at least .80. The Romanian Authoritarianism scale also had a satisfactory level of internal reliability in both samples, with an alpha of .80 in the dormitory sample and .81 in the cafeteria sample.

A principal components analysis conducted on the sexism, prejudice against Arabs, and anti-Semitism scales yielded only one component with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 in both samples. Because the cafeteria sample only completed these three scales, they were averaged together to form a measure of generalized prejudice (Generalized Prejudice-3) for both samples. An additional principal components analysis on the six prejudice scales from the dormitory sample also yielded only one component with an eigenvalue greater than one. These six scales also were averaged together to form a more complete measure of generalized prejudice (Generalized Prejudice-6).

The correlations between RWA and the prejudice measures are presented in Table 2. As expected, every measure of prejudice was moderately to strongly related to authoritarianism in both samples.

### Discussion

As in previous work in Eastern Europe (for a review, see McFarland, 2000) and the West (for a review, see Altemeyer, 1996), authoritarianism was found to be significantly related to generalized prejudice and to each of the specific prejudices examined. This indicates that in Romania, as in the West, knowing how authoritarian someone is tells a lot about their level of prejudice against all outgroups. These findings also provide some indication of the validity of the 14-item measure of Romanian authoritarianism developed in Study 1.

### STUDY 3: AUTHORITARIANISM AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Study after study (cf. McFarland, Ageyev, & Abalakin-Papp, 1992; McFarland et al., 1996) and theorist after theorist (cf. Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1996) has

stressed that conventionalism is a core component of authoritarianism. Altemeyer (1988, 1996) also has suggested that the alignment of authoritarianism with "right-wing" ideology is justifiable as long as "right wing" means "conservative" or "conventional." However, what is classified as conservative and conventional depends on the culture of reference. For example, Altemeyer (1996) and McFarland et al. (1992) have both shown that authoritarianism strongly predicts support for capitalism and rejection of communism for Americans, although the precise opposite pattern was true for Soviets directly after the cold war. Yet, it is unclear what authoritarians should endorse in a situation such as currently exists in most of Eastern Europe, where the once conventional values are now seen as obsolete and the newly accepted values were once persecuted. In other words, it is unclear whether authoritarians in Eastern Europe would continue to endorse communism or would start to endorse capitalism given that more than 10 years have passed since the fall of communism.

Adorno et al. (1950) believed that as conventional values change, authoritarians would slowly change what they endorse to become more in line with what is conventional. This analysis is consistent with Duckitt's arguments that authoritarianism is best understood as an overly strong attachment to the ingroup (1989) and adherence to group norms (2001). In other words, authoritarians are conformists at heart and will slowly change their beliefs to become more in line with the norms of their group (McFarland et al., 1996). However, studies by Altemeyer (1996) have suggested that although authoritarians are conformists, they may be more concerned with the appearance of conformity than with actual conformity. Thus, what an authoritarian may endorse on a questionnaire may not necessarily be accurate if their true beliefs are not perceived as socially desirable. Study 3 was designed to examine whether authoritarianism would still be related to the endorsement of communism more than 10 years after the fall of communism in Romania. In addition, Study 3 was designed to examine whether the social desirability of communism and capitalism would affect their relationship with authoritarianism.

### Method

#### PARTICIPANTS

The 281 participants in this study were drawn from the three previously mentioned samples (the hospital sample from Study 1 and the cafeteria and dormitory student samples from Study 2).

#### MEASURES

As mentioned previously, all samples completed the 14-item Romanian Authoritarianism scale. The cafeteria

**TABLE 3: Correlations Between Romanian Authoritarianism and Political Attitude Components and Items**

<i>Component and Item</i>	<i>Dorm Sample (n = 97)</i>	<i>Cafeteria Sample (n = 100)</i>
Component 1: Pro-communism/anti-capitalism (5 items)	.53***	.43***
I still believe that socialism is the best way for our society <sup>a</sup>	.30**	.21*
Capitalism is the best way for our society (reversed) <sup>a</sup>	.35***	.24*
I very much regret that Romania is going the way of capitalism and the market economy <sup>a</sup>	.44***	.22*
Behind the material well-being and high living standards in capitalist countries there is decay and spiritual emptiness <sup>b</sup>	.49***	.50***
Capitalism creates mutual hatred and distrust among different social groups <sup>b</sup>	.31**	.26**
Component 2: Alliances (2 items)	-.28**	-.12
Instead of relying on old alliances, Romania should make new alliances with the West	-.19	-.16
Romania should do everything it can to enter into the European Union	-.26**	-.03
Component 3: Freedom (3 items)	-.34**	-.25*
I really appreciate the new religious freedom that the revolution has brought in the past 10 years	-.11	-.25*
I really enjoy the freedom the revolution has brought with it	-.24*	-.02
Despite the fact that Romania is going through a very hard time, I still prefer economic, political, and intellectual freedom	-.40***	-.26**

a. This is a communist economy item.

b. This is an anti-capitalist item.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

and dormitory student samples completed 10 items regarding political opinions and beliefs about the current situation in Romania, 5 of which were adapted from McFarland et al. (1996). Five, five-item scales adapted from McFarland et al. (1992) also were administered to the hospital and the cafeteria samples to measure support for the distributive justice principles of equality (e.g., "It is just that basic material goods, such as basic food, salaries, etc., be distributed to all members of society equally"), equity (e.g., "It is just that people be paid according to the quality and social benefit of their work"), status (e.g., "It is just to distribute material goods according to a person's rank, status, or social prestige"), relative need (e.g., "It is just that people's housing be based upon need, such as larger families, etc."), and laissez-faire individualism (e.g., "It is just that housing be based upon one's ability to pay"). Last, the impression management subscale from version 6 of Paulhus's (1984) Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding was administered to the hospital and the cafeteria samples to measure social desirability. Responses to all measures were made along a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

### Results

A principal components analysis was conducted on the 10 items regarding political beliefs and opinions. This analysis revealed three interpretable components. The items loading on each component are presented in Table 3 along with their correlations with authoritarianism.

The correlations between authoritarianism and communism/anti-capitalism are high and positive in both

samples ( $r = .53$ ,  $p < .001$ , and  $r = .43$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which is surprising given the period of time that has passed since the fall of communism and the fact that almost every participant was in elementary school at that time. In the dorm sample, authoritarianism also was related to decreased support for forming alliances with the West, which is very important considering that Romania is currently vying for admission to the EU and NATO. Last, in both samples, authoritarianism was related to a decreased appreciation of the freedom that the revolution has brought with it, which seemingly indicates an increased willingness to give up these new freedoms.

Unlike previous studies examining principles of distributive justice (e.g., McFarland et al., 1992, 1996), all three scales measuring capitalistic principles of distributive justice (status, equity, and laissez-faire individualism) were positively interrelated, as were the two scales measuring communist (socialist) principles of distributive justice (equality and relative need). These scales were thus combined to form measures of capitalistic and communistic (socialistic) principles of distributive justice. Following McFarland et al. (1992, 1996), an overall measure of pro-communist/anti-capitalist distributive justice principles was formed by reversing the measure of capitalistic principles and adding it to the measure of communist (socialist) distributive justice principles.

Table 4 reports the correlations between authoritarianism, principles of distributive justice, and social desirability. In both samples, authoritarianism was positively related to communist principles of social justice and, as hypothesized, impression management.

Unexpectedly, the two samples differed in the degree to which capitalistic and communist principles of distrib-

**TABLE 4: Correlations Between Romanian Authoritarianism, Principles of Distributive Justice, and Social Desirability**

	Cafeteria Sample (n = 100)		Hospital Sample (n = 84)	
	RWA	IM	RWA	IM
Authoritarianism (RWA)		.23*		.40***
Communism principles	.33***	.21*	.27**	-.01
Capitalism principles	.01	-.06	.11	.38***
Overall pro-communist	.23*	.18	.10	-.33**

NOTE: RWA = Romanian Authoritarianism scale, IM = Impression Management scale.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

utive justice were seen as socially desirable, with impression management positively correlating with capitalist principles in the hospital sample ( $r = .38, p < .001$ ) and with communistic principles in the cafeteria student sample ( $r = .21, p < .04$ ). To examine whether authoritarianism would be related to “faking capitalist” in the hospital study and, more improbably, “faking communist” in the cafeteria study, the correlations between authoritarianism and principles of distributive justice were reexamined with impression management controlled. As expected, the relationship between authoritarianism and overall communist principles became clearer once impression management was controlled in the hospital sample, with authoritarianism’s relationship with overall pro-communist/anti-capitalist principles of social justice becoming significant ( $r = .10, p < .39$  to  $r = .26, p < .02$ ). However, in the cafeteria sample, authoritarianism’s correlations with principles of distributive justice did not change much once impression management was controlled. In other words, authoritarianism was related to “faking capitalist” in the hospital sample and was unrelated to “faking communist” in the cafeteria sample.

It also appeared possible that age may influence the relationships between authoritarianism and communistic beliefs and ideology, with the link between authoritarianism and communism possibly being stronger for older participants because of their increased exposure to communist indoctrination. To examine this possibility, the relationships between authoritarianism and the other variables were reexamined with age controlled. Unexpectedly, age was not significantly correlated with either authoritarianism or political ideology in any of the three samples (all  $ps > .06$ ). Thus, controlling for age had virtually no effect on the relationship between authoritarianism and political ideology in the three samples, with all correlations being within .02 of those previously cited. In short, age did not appear to be related to the relationship between authoritarianism and communist beliefs and ideology.

Last, the descriptive statistics for each scale are shown in Table 5. As can be seen, the reliability coefficients of

the Romanian Authoritarianism scale and the Impression Management scale were relatively satisfactory across samples. On the other hand, the measures of political attitudes and distributive justice principles, as in McFarland et al. (1992), were somewhat low. However, the strength and consistency of the major findings suggest that the measures were sufficiently reliable for the present purposes.

### Discussion

The results from Study 3 show that Romanian authoritarianism is still significantly related to a variety of pro-communist political attitudes and opinions more than 10 years after the fall of communism. This is surprising because of the sheer amount of time that has passed since the fall of communism as well as the young age of the participants used in this study. Even more unexpected was the finding that the relationship between authoritarianism and support for communism is currently stronger in Romania than McFarland et al. (1996) found in Russia just 2 years after the fall of communism. Equally surprising was that age was unrelated to the relationship between authoritarianism and communism. In addition, some evidence was found that authoritarians may lessen the degree to which they endorse communist principles if they do not perceive them as socially desirable. This last finding is very relevant to Romania’s immediate future given that in the 2000 general elections the socialist left took power and the previously obscure fascist right became the second most powerful party in Romania.

### STUDY 4: AUTHORITARIANISM AND POLITICAL PREFERENCES

Study 3 was limited by the fact that it only examined authoritarianism’s relationships with abstract ideological beliefs and not its relationships with more specific political preferences. This limitation was an important one because the ruling pro-Western coalition of centrists recently was stunningly defeated in the general elections by the party of former communist Ion Iliescu (the Party of Social Democracy) and the party of ultra-nationalist Corneliu Vadim Tudor (the Great Romania Party), both of which have questionable commitments to economic and political reforms (Roddy, 2000; Shafir, 2001). In an effort to overcome this limitation, a fourth study was designed. In this study, it was hypothesized that support for the socialist “left” (the Party of Social Democracy) and the fascist “right” (the Party of Great Romania) would be positively related to authoritarianism and anti-Western attitudes, whereas support for the centrist parties would be negatively related to authoritarianism and anti-Western attitudes. In other words, it was expected that, as in post-communist Russia (McFarland

**TABLE 5: Descriptive Statistics for Measures in Study 3**

	<i>Dorm Sample (n = 97)</i>			<i>Cafeteria Sample (n = 100)</i>			<i>Hospital Sample (n = 84)</i>		
	$\alpha$	M	SD	$\alpha$	M	SD	$\alpha$	M	SD
Authoritarianism	.80	2.76	.50	.81	2.49	.56	.79	3.05	.45
Component 1: Pro-communism/anti-capitalism	.75	2.55	.66	.68	2.24	.64			
Component 2: Alliances	.49	3.88	.65	.43	3.74	.76			
Component 3: Freedom	-.31	3.79	.61	.44	3.87	.67			
Communist principles				.61	3.29	.50	.38	3.41	.37
Capitalist principles				.60	2.90	.40	.75	3.03	.45
Overall communist principles					3.19	.35		3.19	.26
Impression management				.76	0.32	.19	.79	0.39	.21

et al., 1992), support for both fascist and socialist parties would be related to authoritarianism despite the fact that they are on opposite ends of the political spectrum.<sup>4</sup>

### Method

#### PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

The 92 (50 men, 42 women) participants in this study were students at a large state university in Bucharest that had agreed to voluntarily fill out the questionnaire on the spot when approached by a student administrator on a campus walkway. The participants averaged 21 years old ( $SD = 1.7$  years). The administration was completed in the 2 weeks between the 2000 general elections and the run-off presidential elections.

#### MEASURES

The participants completed the 14-item Romanian Authoritarianism scale ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = .53$ ), the five pro-communism/anti-capitalism items from the Study 3 scale ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = .62$ ), and a single item from Study 3 regarding whether Romania should join the EU scale ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = .71$ ). In addition, participants rated their approval of seven major politicians and the five major political parties they represented on a 5-point scale with endpoints labeled *strongly disapprove* and *strongly approve*.

### Results

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was first conducted on the approval ratings of seven politicians and five political parties. Demonstrating the high salience of politics at this time, this analysis yielded five components that perfectly matched the five major parties with their representatives. However, the components representing the three centrist parties (the Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, and the Romanian Democratic Convention/current administration) were all positively correlated and were combined into a general measure of centrist support.

An additional principal components analysis was conducted on the five pro-communism/anti-capitalism items from Study 3. This analysis unexpectedly yielded

**TABLE 6: Correlations Between Romanian Authoritarianism, Approval of Political Parties, and Political Attitudes**

	$\alpha$	RWA	<i>Communist Economy</i>	<i>Anti-Capitalism</i>	EU
Fascist right	.95	.42***	.03	.21*	-.21*
Socialist left	.84	.04	.20	-.15	.13
Centrists	.72	-.33**	-.12	-.26*	.35***

NOTE: RWA = Romanian Authoritarianism scale, EU = European Union.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

two components. The first component (communist economy) consisted of the three items regarding a preference for a communist/socialist economy (see Table 3). The second component (anti-capitalism) consisted of two items reflecting negative attitudes about capitalist societies, which in Romania means Western societies.<sup>5</sup>

The correlations between approval of the different political parties, authoritarianism (RWA), support for a communist economy (communist economy), anti-capitalist attitudes (anti-capitalism), and support for Romania's entrance in the EU are shown in Table 6. As hypothesized, approval of the fascist right (the Party of Great Romania), although unrelated to support for a communist economy, was significantly related to authoritarianism and anti-Western attitudes. Also as expected, approval for the centrist parties was negatively related to authoritarianism and to anti-Western attitudes. Unexpectedly, approval of the socialist left was unrelated to authoritarianism and, although related to support for a communist economy at a moderately significant level ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .06$ ), was unrelated to anti-Western attitudes.

### Discussion

Contrary to expectations and past research (McFarland et al., 1992, 1996), authoritarianism, although highly related to support for communist economic policies, was not related to support for the socialist left in this relatively small, select sample. However, authoritarianism

was positively related to support for the noncommunist, fascist right. Thus, it may seem that there is some evidence that authoritarians are moving from the socialist left to the fascist right in Romania. Yet, the fact that support for the socialist left was only weakly related to support for a communist economy and, if anything, was related to slightly pro-Western attitudes suggests that it is more probable that the socialist left draws support for a number of reasons and not just a reactionary desire to reinstate communist/socialist policies. In other words, the socialist left may draw a large amount of support from people high in authoritarianism, but it also seems to draw an equally large amount of support from those low in authoritarianism. On the other hand, support of both the fascist right and the centrists seems to be highly, although oppositely, related to authoritarianism. It is thus not surprising that the centrists and the fascist right were soundly defeated by the socialist left in the recent elections because, unlike the socialist left, the centrists and the fascist right draw support from mainly only one end of the authoritarianism spectrum.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION

As in past research (for a review, see Altemeyer, 1996), authoritarianism was found to be significantly related to a variety of attitudes and political affiliations. Authoritarianism in Romania, as in the West, was highly related to prejudicial attitudes against every outgroup measured. Study 4 also provided some evidence that anti-capitalistic attitudes might be, in part, just another form of prejudice, although future work on the distinction between communistic beliefs and anti-capitalistic attitudes is needed.

Authoritarianism in Romania, unlike in the West, was highly related to support for communism and was related to the endorsement of communist (socialist) principles of distributive justice. It thus seems that unlike McFarland et al. (1992, 1996) found in Russia, Romanian authoritarians do not seem to have been deprived of their communist ideology. Instead, Romanian authoritarians seem to have kept their communist ideology relatively intact over the past 10 years and have even passed it on to their children, who served as participants in the last three studies. It thus appears that authoritarianism's relationship with communist ideology in Eastern Europe might be more resistant to change than originally thought (cf. McFarland, 2000; McFarland et al., 1996) and may even extend on to future generations.

Despite the strong and robust relationships between authoritarianism and communist ideology in Romania, support for the socialist left (the Party of Social Democracy) did not appear to be related to authoritarianism in Romania but seemed to appeal to those along every part of the authoritarianism spectrum. However, the socialist

left in Romania appeared relatively moderate and pro-Western, which indicates that these findings might not extend to a country, such as Russia, with a more reactionary, socialist (communist) left. In these countries, high correlations between support for the socialist left and authoritarianism should probably still be expected.

Support for the fascist right, on the other hand, does appear to be strongly related to authoritarianism. It thus appears that in Romania, as in the West, the fascist right is intrinsically more appealing to those high in authoritarianism. This is probably due to the strong leaders (would-be dictators), the ultranationalism, and the "law and order" approach that the fascist right almost invariably provides (for a review, see Altemeyer, 1996).

Some evidence also suggested that authoritarians, being conformists, may attempt to hide their opinions if they are not socially desirable. This obviously is a very dangerous type of behavior because it indicates that authoritarians would be some of the most likely to have a nondemocratic change of opinion when given the opportunity (as they would be given if they were in power). In addition, this behavior, through cognitive dissonance, may provide the mechanism for Adorno et al.'s (1950) and McFarland et al.'s (1996) theorized "mainstreaming" of authoritarians' beliefs as their old beliefs cease to be widely accepted. However, unlike McFarland et al. (1996), no evidence of this slow change was found. Instead, authoritarianism appeared to adhere to the old, discredited belief system regardless of what they perceive to be socially desirable.

Overall, the results pose some difficulties for current authoritarianism theory. Authoritarianism is currently conceptualized as a submission to the "established authorities" in a society and a strict adherence to societal norms (cf. Altemeyer, 1981, 1988, 1996; Duckitt, 2001). However, in Romania, the general society and its established authorities have tended to favor capitalism over the past 10 years (Shafir, 2001), whereas authoritarianism is strongly related to support for communism. Given the emphasis that authoritarianism theory places on conformity to the norms of the general society, the pro-capitalist Romanian society, and the strong relationship between authoritarianism and communist ideology, the results seem to suggest that authoritarianism may have gained its relationship with communism prior to the fall of communism, when most of the participants were children (most participants were 10 in 1989). Because the attitude clusters that make up authoritarianism are currently thought to coalesce during adolescence (Altemeyer, 1988, 1996), the findings may therefore support pushing back the age at which authoritarianism is formed from adolescence into childhood (B. Altemeyer, personal communication, April 2, 2001). Yet, as Altemeyer (1988, 1996) has noted, the rela-



tively limited knowledge and mental abilities of children make it appear relatively implausible that authoritarianism and its relationships with political ideology could crystallize at such a young age. The implausibility of this explanation is further amplified by the fact that age was found to be unrelated to the relationship between authoritarianism and communism. In other words, the relationship between authoritarianism and communism was just as strong for the youngest participants (who were 7 and 8 years old in 1989) as it was for the older participants (who were about 12 years old in 1989). In short, if current authoritarianism theory is correct in its emphasis on conformity to the general society, then the results appear to support crediting young children with more advanced and more stable political attitudes than is probably warranted.

Instead of authoritarianism forming its relationships with political ideology at such an early age, it seems more likely that the participants acquired their authoritarian attitudes when they were somewhat older, which would have been sometime after the fall of communism for most participants. If this view is correct, then this would suggest that authoritarianism theory (Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1988, 1996; McFarland et al., 1996) may have overestimated the impact of the general society on authoritarian attitudes. In this case, it would appear that participants acquired their authoritarian attitudes not from the general, pro-capitalist society but largely from specific groups within the society (e.g., familial, religious, or friend groups) and the authorities associated with these groups (e.g., parents, relatives, or priests). In short, the results seem to suggest a "selective conformity" hypothesis in which authoritarians would acquire their beliefs from specific groups within the society and subsequently maintain them even in the face of opposition from the general society. However, the results do not clearly favor either the "selective conformity" hypothesis or the possibility of a childhood transmission of authoritarianism and political ideology. Thus, more work is clearly needed on the development of authoritarianism and its relationship with political ideology.

#### CONCLUSION

Authoritarianism was significantly related to a variety of communist and anti-Western attitudes in four different samples. Because three of these samples used university students more than 10 years after the fall of communism in Romania, authoritarianism's bond with communism should probably not be expected to lower significantly in the next 10 years. Even if authoritarianism does significantly lower its association with communism in the future, the fascist right will probably be the (only) beneficiary. If authoritarianism does indeed lose its association with communism, the current research

suggests that authoritarianism will not necessarily lose its associations with anti-capitalistic or anti-Western attitudes. At any rate, the authoritarian's anti-democratic desire for a dictatorship is an extremely dangerous desire whatever the dictator's political affiliation.

#### NOTES

1. All 32 items were scored, although the results would have been the same if Altemeyer's four "table-setter" items (items 1-4) were removed from the item pool.

2. A reader was surprised that the item "obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn," which was an original F-scale item, was not included in the Romanian Authoritarianism scale. This item was not significantly correlated ( $r = .01, p > .90$ ) with the Romanian Authoritarianism scale and was therefore not included in the scale. This seemed to be a result of the cramped living conditions in Romania, with most families living in small two- or three-room apartments regardless of the size of the family. Supporting this view was the high, negative correlation ( $r = -.49, p < .001$ ) between this item and a measure of emotional stability (Goldberg, 1999) that was included as part of another project. On the other hand, the Romanian Authoritarianism scale was positively correlated with emotional stability ( $r = .23, p < .04$ ).

3. Romanian-language versions of all measures used in this article are available from the author.

4. Due to a social stigma being associated with the term *communist*, self-labeled communists are all but extinct in Romanian politics, even among those who were important members of the former Communist Party, such as current president Ion Iliescu.

5. Because of the unexpected two-component solution in this sample, the five items were reanalyzed in the cafeteria and dormitory samples. Neither the Kaiser criterion nor the scree plot test revealed a two-component solution in these samples, but the two items that loaded the highest on the second component were the same. In addition, the two items loaded in the same order, with the "in capitalist countries there is decay and spiritual emptiness" item having the highest loadings in all three samples.

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