

# Who voted for the opposition in 2022?

*Political opinions, attitudes*

AN ANALYSIS BY REPUBLIKON INSTITUTE



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## SUMMARY

- The voters of the joint opposition list in 2022 make up a heterogeneous multitude based on their world views and political opinions.
- The common ground is the rejection of the Orbán-regime and the dissatisfaction with the country's situation and with Hungarian democracy. The opposition voters are therefore characterised by a negative and not a positive integration.
- The opposition voters, however, have not turned away from politics completely, 58 percent is very interested or more interested than not.
- An overwhelming majority (94%) of the respondents think that things are progressing in the wrong direction, and only 1 percent sees the country as clearly democratic.
- The relative majority (45%) thinks that the Orbán-government cannot be replaced by democratic means.
- In their circles, the most common worldview was a socialist, social democratic one, followed by the liberal mindset.
- 54 percent of the respondents named the economic situation or the price of living as the most prominent problem in Hungary.
- The education demonstrations started at the time of the data collection, but the standard of education seems to concern the opposition voters less. In this regard the difference between the problem detection of the demonstrating crowd and the opposition voters is prominent.

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of political polls is often to survey the potential voters of a political party. A follow-up on elections, the survey of the voters of a specific party or block in a post-election period is rarer. The Republikon Institute carried out a large sample research during the autumn of 2022 among the people who voted for the opposition-coalition list (DK-Jobbik-LMP-Momentum-MSZP-Párbeszéd) or the Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt during the parliamentary elections of April 3rd, 2022. In the immediate post-election period, public opinion was concerned with the vote proportion of the opposition, which was even lower than prior expectations predicted.

In the following research, we are trying to answer the questions of who the voters of the opposition are, what characterises their social status, what kind of questions they are concerned with and what their expectations are when it comes to politics. We devote special attention to the question of how the opposition voters integrate and whether they form a community or not. The retrospective survey of the opposition voters can help us understand the reasons behind Fidesz winning once again in 2022 and helps us assess future opportunities for the mobilisation of the opposition.

The significance of our research is that it informs us of the political opinions of opposition voters beyond the narrow oppositional public. It is a common phenomenon, in the absence of empirical data, for the perception of political public opinion to be based on a 'bubble', on narrow social strata with better access to the public sphere. With a representative opposition sample, however, the discussion about voter expectations can become more nuanced.

The survey was carried out with the personal questioning of 2000 people between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2022. The participants were Hungarian citizens, who took part in the parliamentary elections of April 2022 and voted for the list of Egységben Magyarországért or MKKP. The survey is representative of the Hungarian opposition voters regarding gender, age, education and settlement

type. The margin of error is 2,2%, and the data collection was done by Závecz Research.

## RESULTS

Immediately after the elections, there was a perceptible apathy among the oppositional public, which is understandable in light of the 2/3rds majority win of Fidesz. The opposition voters, however, have not turned away from politics completely, 58 percentage is very interested or more interested than not (Figure 1.)

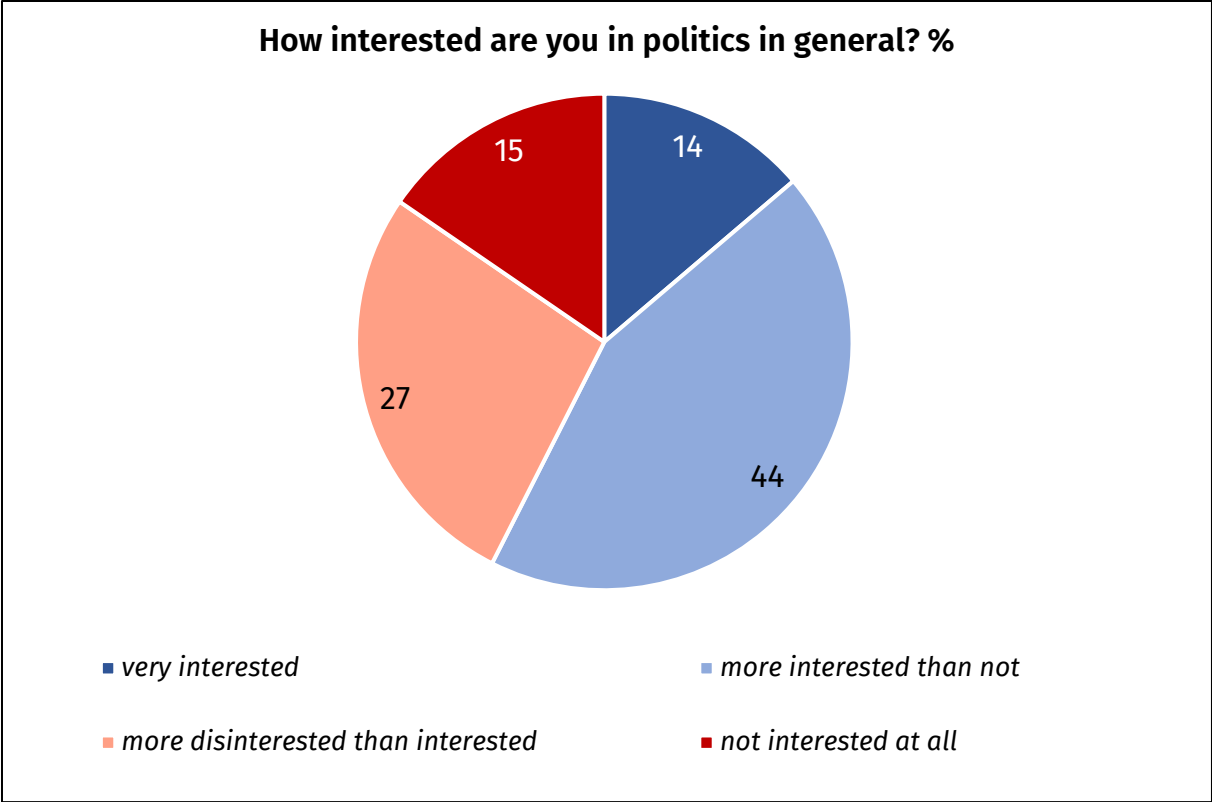
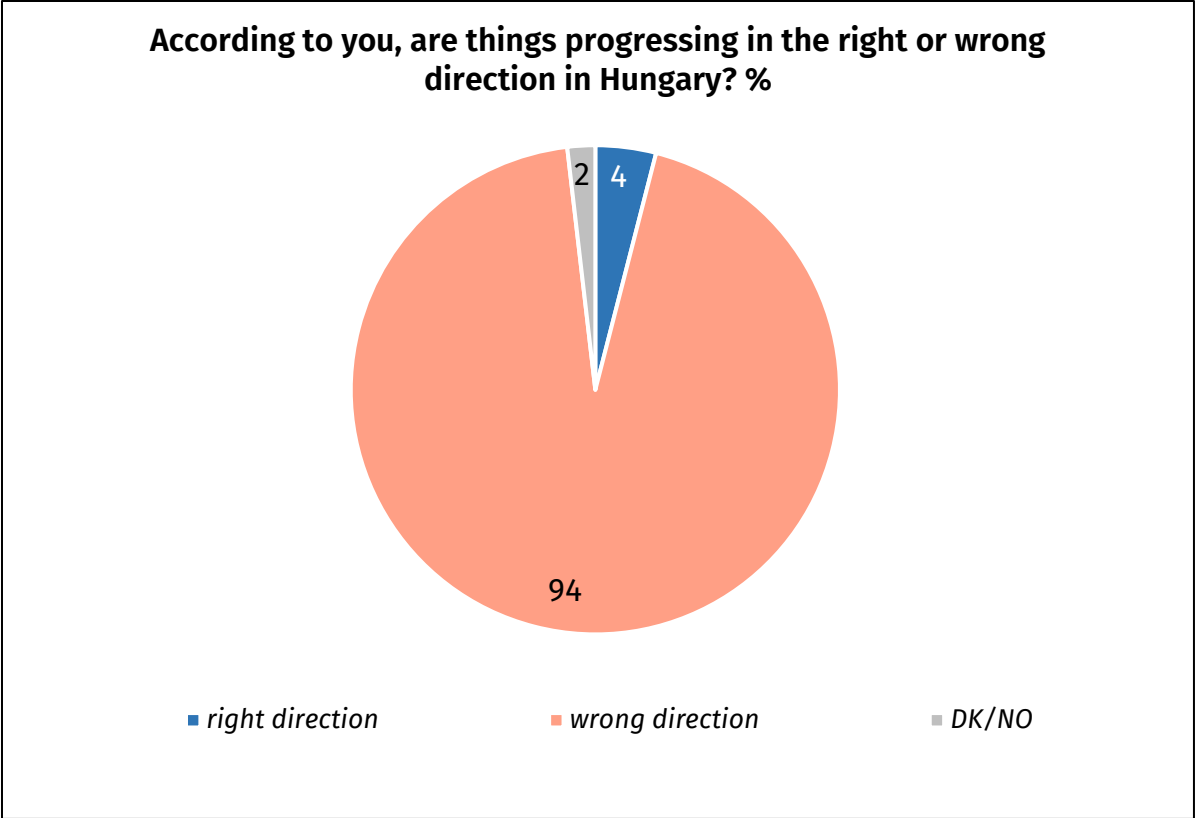


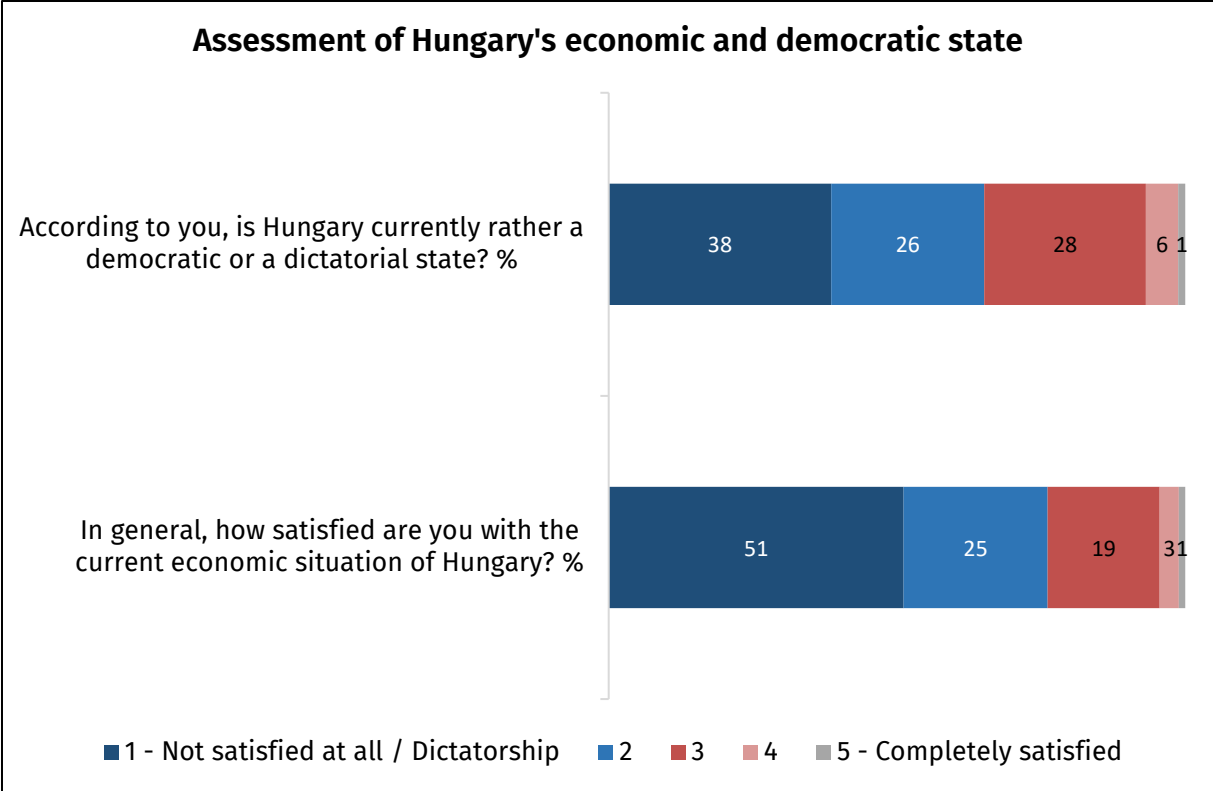
Figure 1: Political interest

The respondents are in general pessimistic with regards to the Hungarian political situation. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (94%) thinks that things are progressing in the wrong direction in Hungary (Figure 2.). The opposition voters still demands a change in the country’s leadership at the 2022 parliamentary elections, they did not reconcile with the thought, that Fidesz will govern for four more years.



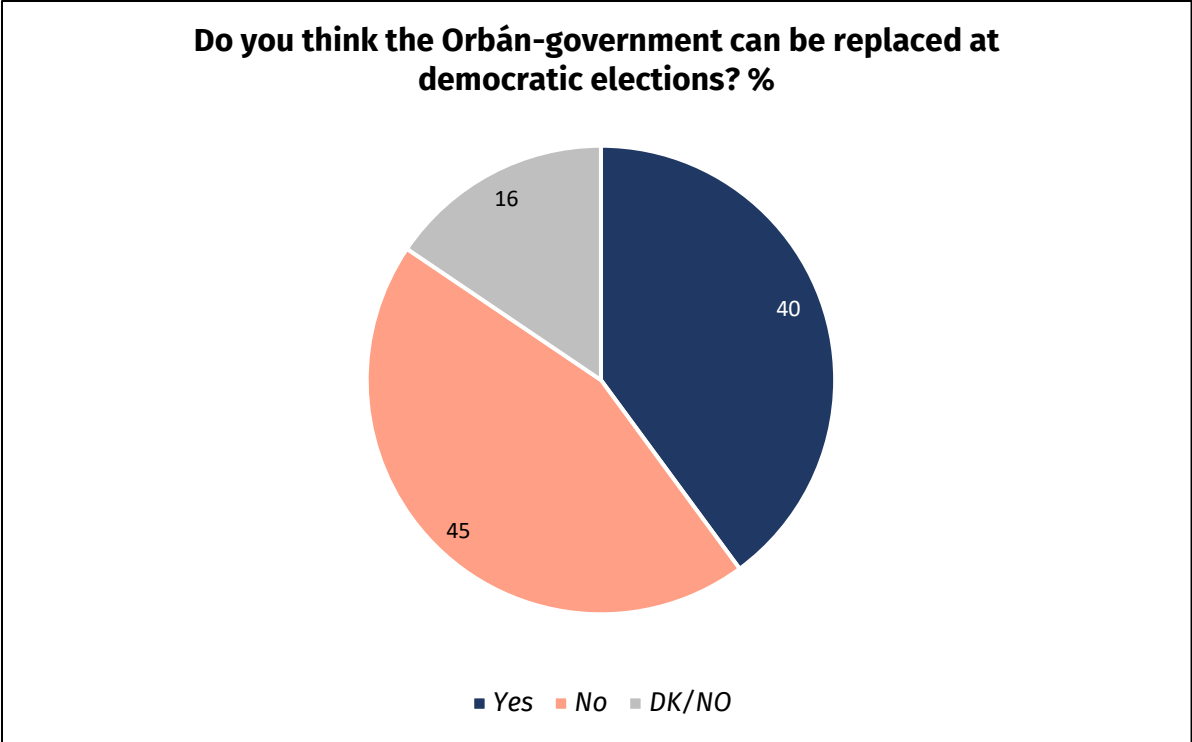
**Figure 2.: Assessment of Hungary’s situation**

More than three quarters of the respondents are dissatisfied with the economic situation, only 4 percent is satisfied (Figure 3.). The opposition voters, however, are not only dissatisfied when it comes to the economy. To the question of whether Hungary is a democratic country, only 1 percent of the respondents responded with an outright yes, 6 percent thinks that it is rather democratic and according to 66 percent it is a rather or completely dictatorial country.



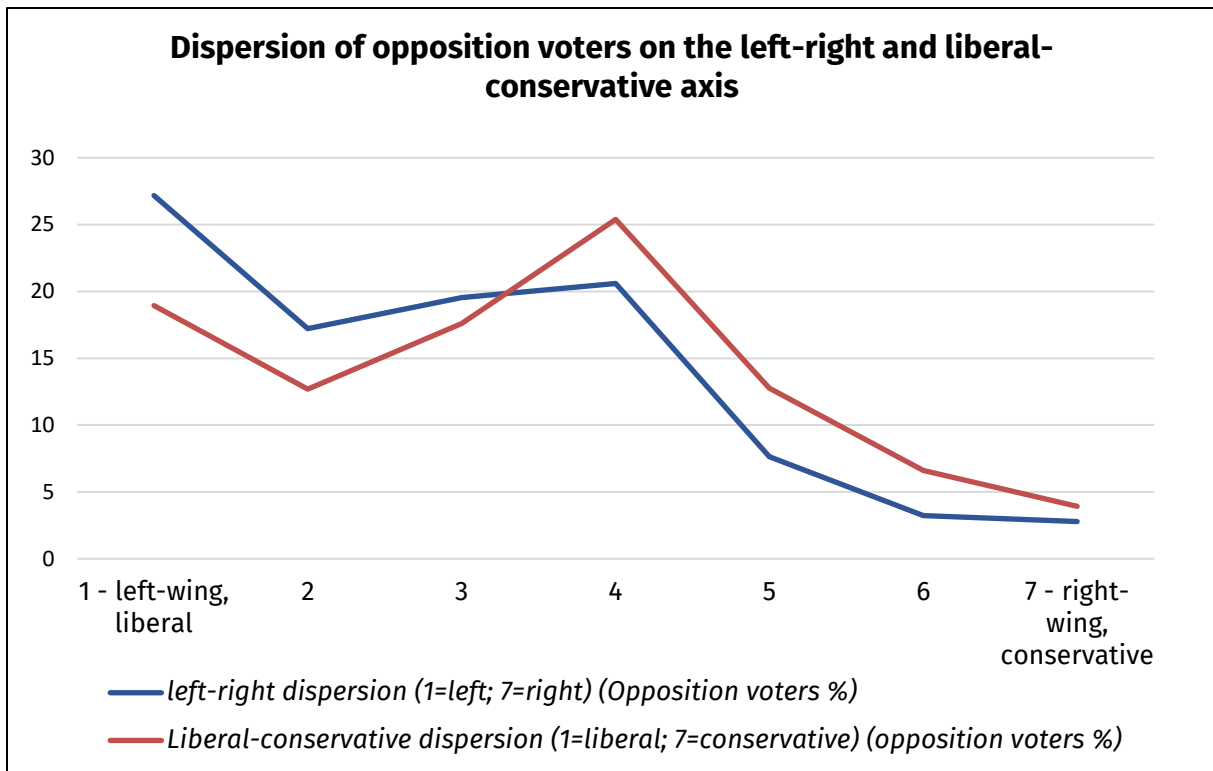
**Figure 3.: the economic and democratic assessment of Hungary**

The voters of the opposition, however, are not only dissatisfied with the country’s situation, but in accordance with their conviction, that Hungary is a dictatorial country, the relative majority (45%) thinks, that the Orbán-government cannot be replaced by democratic means (Figure 4.). This data is significant because it indicates how much trust opposition voters have in their party’s electoral success. The post-election data collection therefore in this regard shows the apathy of opposition voters. Combatting this hopelessness is indeed one of the challenges of the opposition parties.



**Figure 4.: The possibility of replacing the Orbán-government by democratic means according to opposition voters**

Based on the self-classification on the left-right and the liberal-conservative axis, it can be determined, that the respondents confess themselves more easily to be left-wing, than liberal, although the left-wing and liberal worldviews are equally popular (Figure 5.). The voters of the opposition have a stratum with a politically less defined character, who classify themselves in the centrum of both the left-right and liberal-conservative scale and a stratum with a more defined left-wing and liberal identity. In the whole population, it is characteristic for the majority of the respondents to classify themselves in the middle of the left-right and liberal-conservative scale, and in general, there is a more defined tendency towards the right.

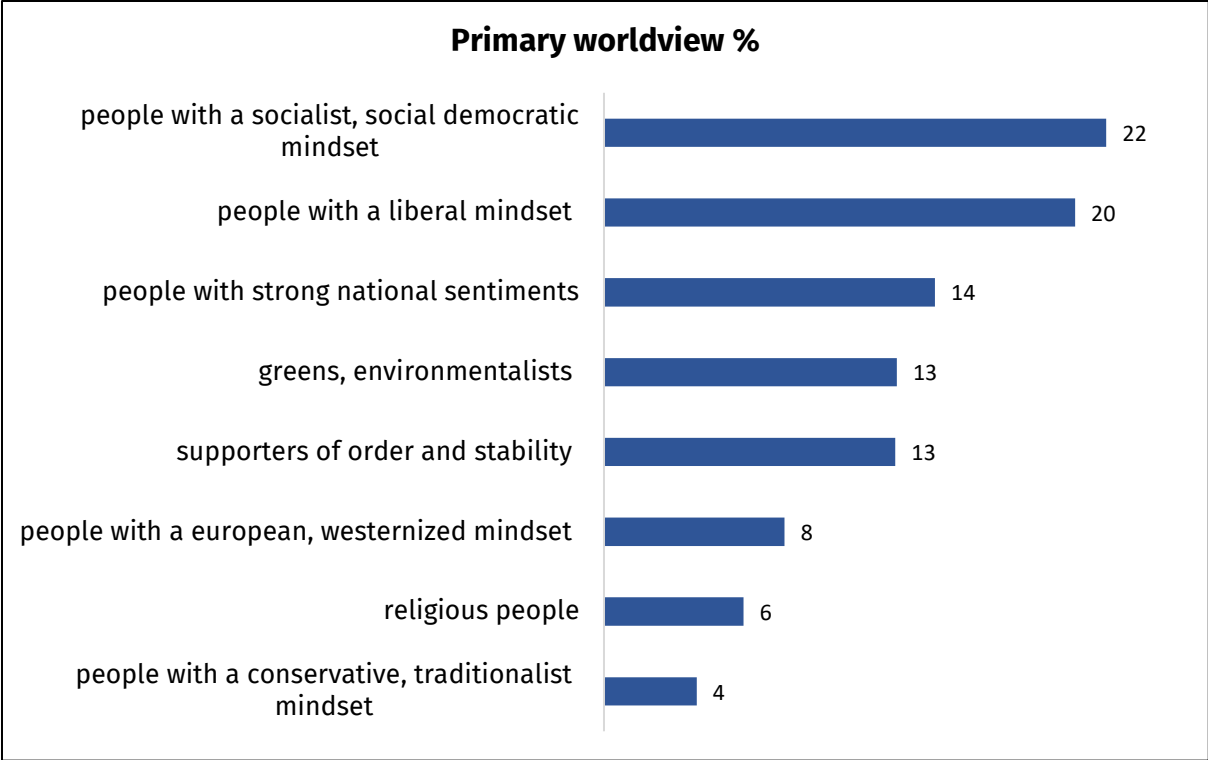


**Figure 5.: The dispersion of opposition voters on the left-right and liberal-conservative axis**

We asked the respondents to decide, which worldview is closest to theirs. The most popular worldview among opposition voters was the socialist, social democratic followed by the liberal mindset (Figure 6.). These two worldviews make up 42 percent of the opposition sample. 14 percent of the opposition voters have a strong national sentiment, and 4 percent of them are conservative, and traditionalist. In the light of this data therefore we can see, that the opposition was able to reach voters with worldviews associated with the right wing, but it is the voters who classified themselves as left-wing, liberal and green, who make up the significant majority. Similarly, to the left-right and liberal-conservative scale, the right-wing values are characteristic of the Hungarian society as a whole, so the “strong national sentiment” and “supporters of order and stability” categories.<sup>1</sup>

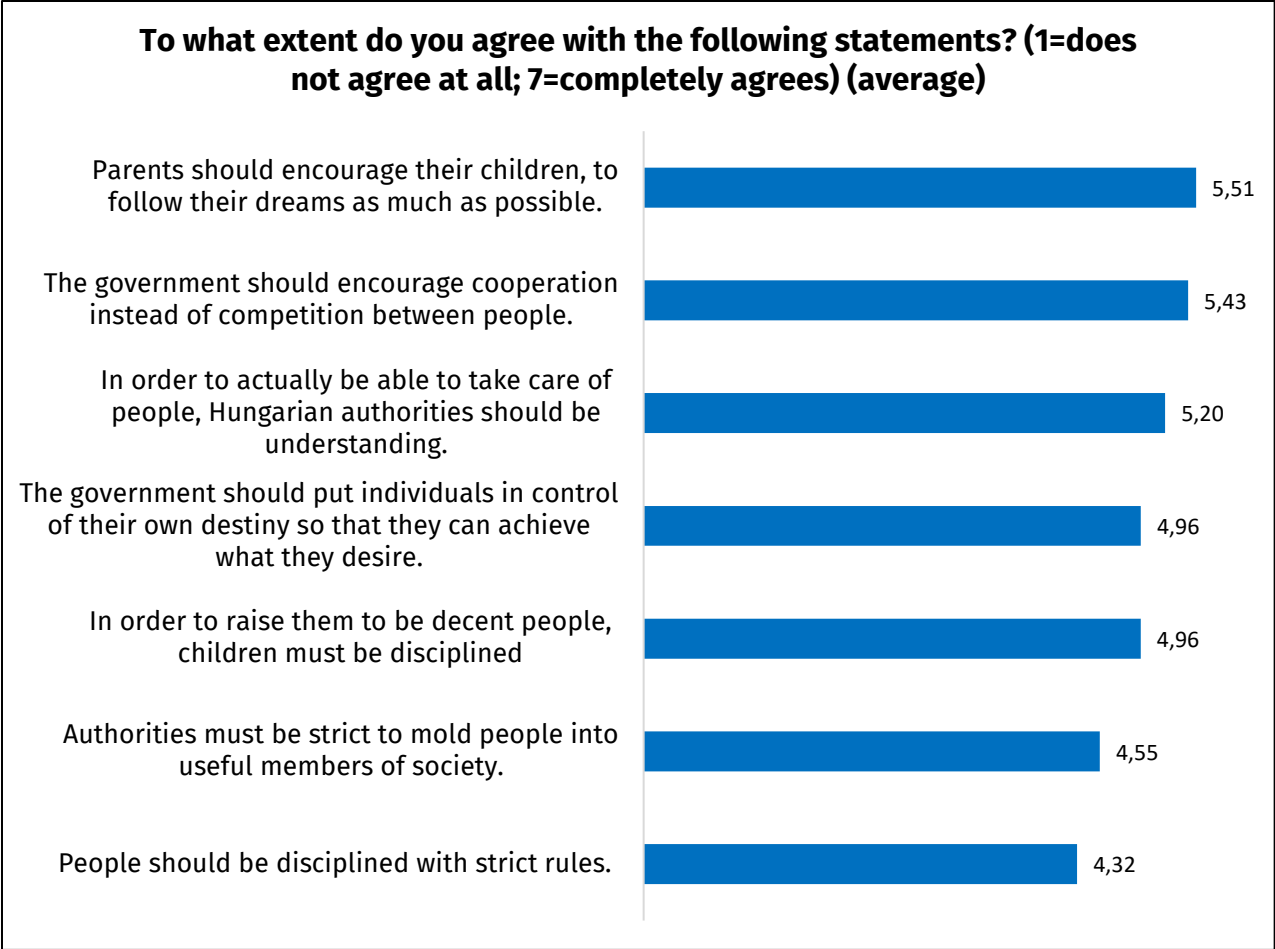
<sup>1</sup> Republikon Institute (2021): The demographic background of voting camps 2021. Budapest: Republikon Institute





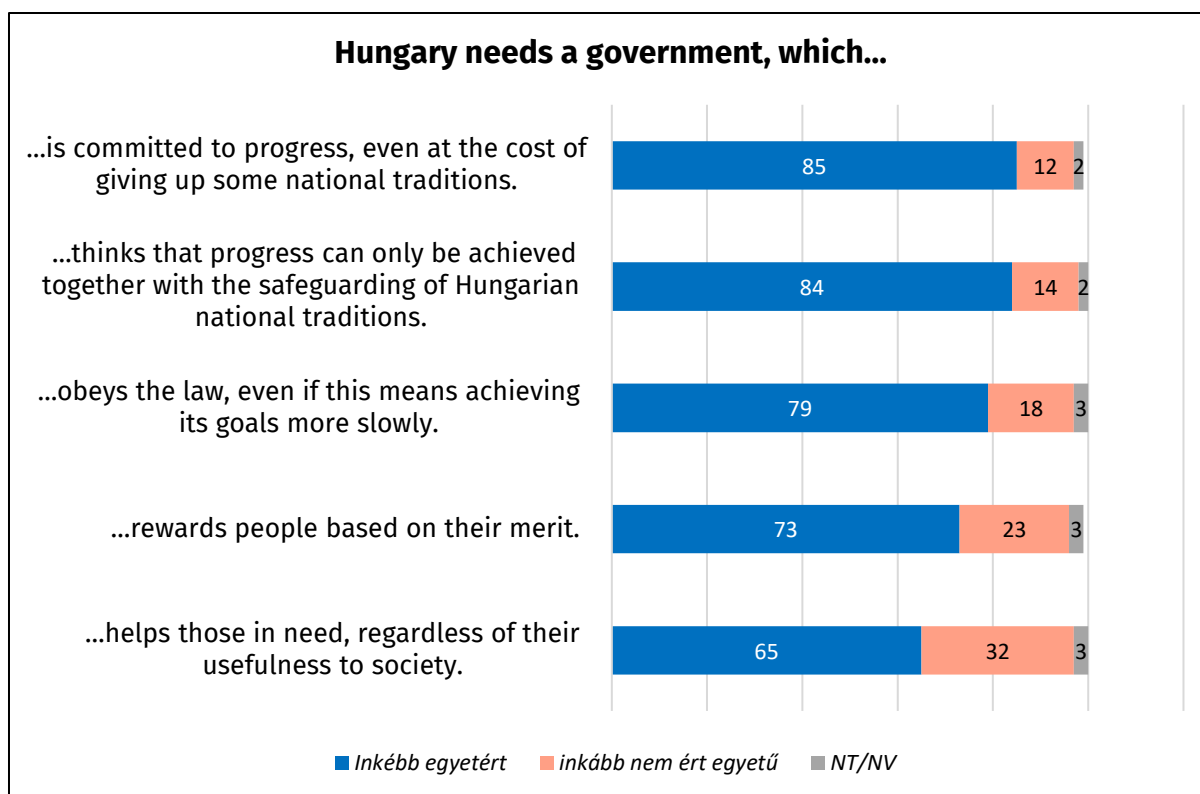
**Figure 6: Primary worldviews**

Beyond the self-classified worldview, the different political and social opinions also reflect an individual’s disposition. Figure 7. shows on a seven-point scale to what extent the respondents agree with specific statements. The results show that when it comes to child-rearing the liberal and when it comes to social policy the left-wing standpoint received the higher average. The opinions of the opposition voters, therefore, are consequent with their worldviews. All of this is nuanced by the fact that the stricter, pro-order opinions of the other side of the spectrum also received an average higher than 4. The voting camp of the opposition is therefore rather liberal and left-wing, but many of them agree with conservative, law-and-order attitudes.



**Figure 7: Political opinions**

While making the survey, we were also curious about the expectations the respondents have of the government (Figure 8.). In contrast with the previous results, the answers here were less consequent. While most of them (86%) agreed that it is the government’s responsibility to help those in need unconditionally, the contrasting opinion of rewarding based on merit was only one percent less popular. A similar contradiction can be seen relating to the statements of progress and national values. 79 percent of the respondents think that a government is needed that can achieve both at the same time, while 73 percent would give up some national traditions for progress.



**Figure 8.: Expectations relating to the government**

54 percent of the opposition voters named the state of the economy or the cost of living as the most pressing problem in Hungary (Figure 9.). This is not surprising in light of the high inflation and rising energy prices, however, questions related to the cost of living concern voters in calmer economic environments as well. Relatively many of them (17%) marked the low quality of the health care system as a problem, as a long-term policy deficiency of the Orbán-governments that is repeatedly referenced by oppositional forces as well. The education demonstrations started at the time of the data collection, but the standard of education seems to concern the opposition voters less. In this regard the difference between the problem detection of the demonstrating crowd and the opposition voters is prominent.

\*Figure 9\*

**Figure 9.: The problems deemed most pressing in Hungary**

Our results show, that around half of the opposition voters have a consistent left ring and liberal commitments. Based on their self-classified worldview and political opinions, however, they rather form a heterogenous multitude. Considering this it is not surprising, that the oppositional block (sans Mi Hazánk) is made up of multiple parties with distinct identities. The common ground is the rejection of the Orbán-regime and the dissatisfaction with the country's situation and with Hungary's democracy. The opposition voters are therefore characterised by a negative and not a positive integration.