

# Political ideologies within the opposition

*Voter opinions and preferences*

A REPUBLIKON INTÉZET ELEMZÉSE



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## SUMMARY

- In our analysis, we have examined opposition voters based on their worldviews, social background, party preferences and opinions on the political elite.
- We analyzed four different ideological groups: those with conservative and nationalist sentiments; social democrats and socialists; greens and environmentalists; and liberal opposition voters.
- With the exception of nationalists and conservatives, women are overrepresented in all opposition groups, especially among liberals and greens (55-55%).
- With regards to age, the oldest opposition ideological group is the socialist, social democratic (44%), while the youngest are those who identify themselves as liberal, followed by greens (44%, 42%).
- Results on respondents' place of residence show that liberal and green voters live predominantly in the capital (32%, 29%), while those who see themselves as socialist are more likely to live in a county seat (30%), and nationalists tend to live in smaller localities (29%).
- Within the ideological camps, nationalist and conservative opposition voters (44%) as well as greens (42%) would most prefer to vote for an outsider political force.
- Overall, nationalist conservative opposition voters have a more negative view on opposition politicians, while liberals approve of them most.
- Ferenc Gyurcsány is quite unpopular among green voters, while socialists disapprove of Ferenc Gelencsér and Péter Ungár.

## INTRODUCTION

By the 2022 elections, a tentative bloc formation within the Fidesz opposition had begun, and after the election failure, the opposition cooperation fragmented again. In a previous analysis by Republikon Institute, we showed that opposition voters voted in roughly equal proportions for the opposition coalition as a whole and for the common list because of their party's participation. Hence, the previous assumption that the conceptually opposition voter has emerged is only partially true. On the basis of their worldview and political values, those voting for the opposition form a heterogeneous group, what they only have in common is the rejection of the Orbán regime.

In the last part of our series on opposition voters, we are comparing different opposition groups with respect to their ideological self-identification. We are primarily interested in how consistent opposition voters' policy expectations and political preferences are in light of their ideological self-classification. The significance of the topic is that ideological self-identification may be more stable than party preference, especially in the context of the Hungarian opposition landscape that has been in constant flux since 2010.

## RESULTS

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate which ideology they most closely identify with. Among opposition voters, the most common worldview was socialist and social democratic, followed by liberal (Figure 1). These two ideologies covered 42 percent of the opposition sample. 14 percent of opposition voters have strong national sentiments and 4 percent are conservative, traditionalist. Thus, in light of the data, the opposition was able to appeal to voters with a more right-wing worldview, but left-wing, liberal and green self-identifications are of crucial importance. In the remainder of the analysis, the major ideological camps are examined. In order to do this, we have combined the categories of strong nationalist with conservative and traditionalist. Beside them, the socialist, liberal and green ideological groups were included in the analysis. The other categories have not been included in this analysis, as they are not explicitly political, rather self-classifications relating to attitude and behaviour.

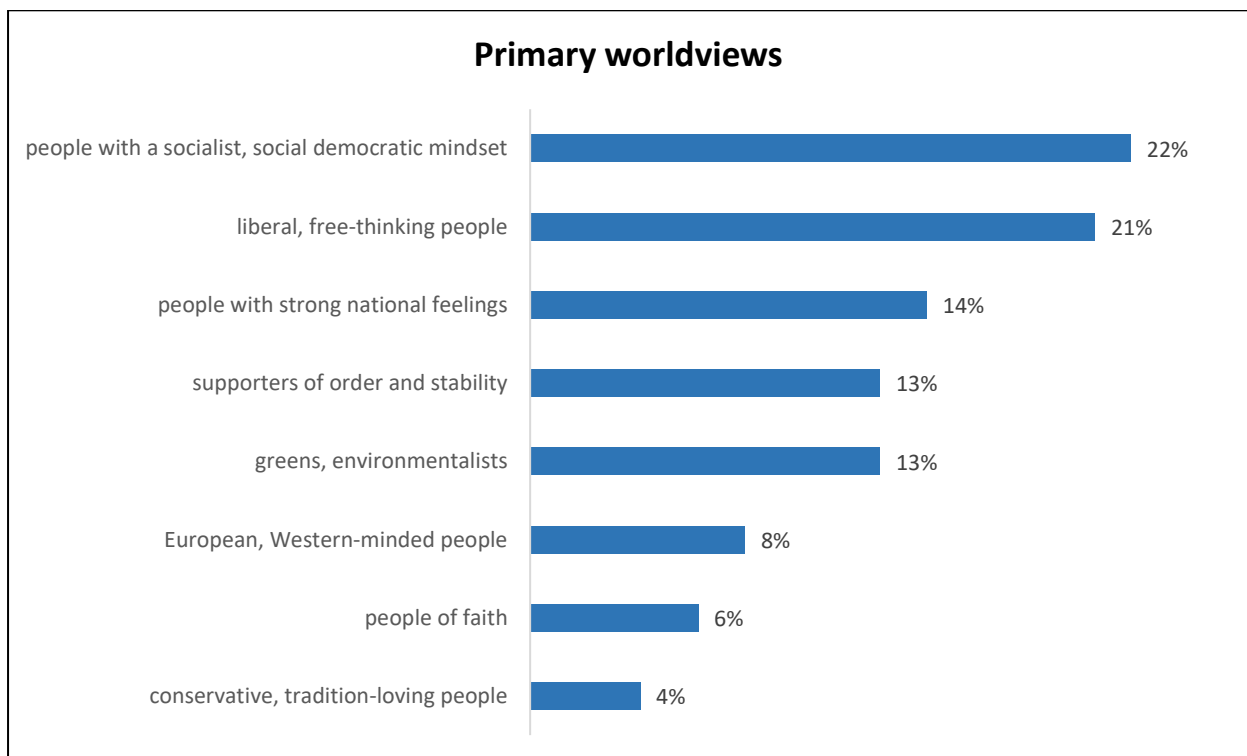
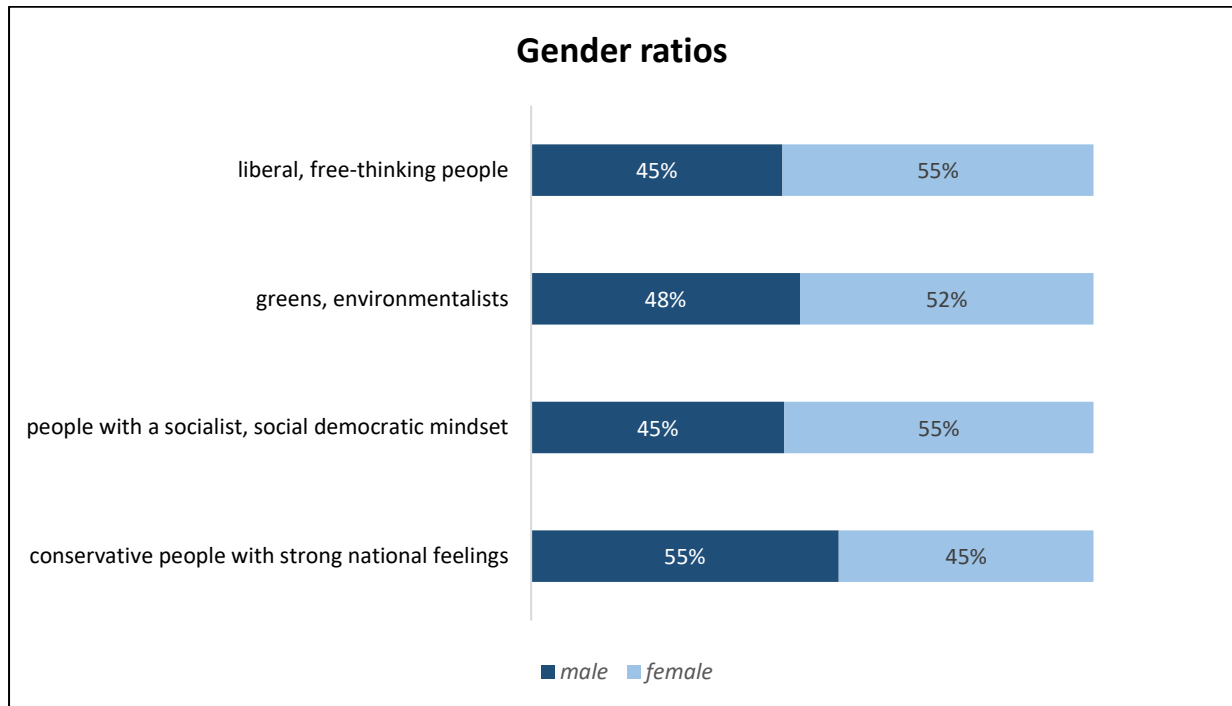


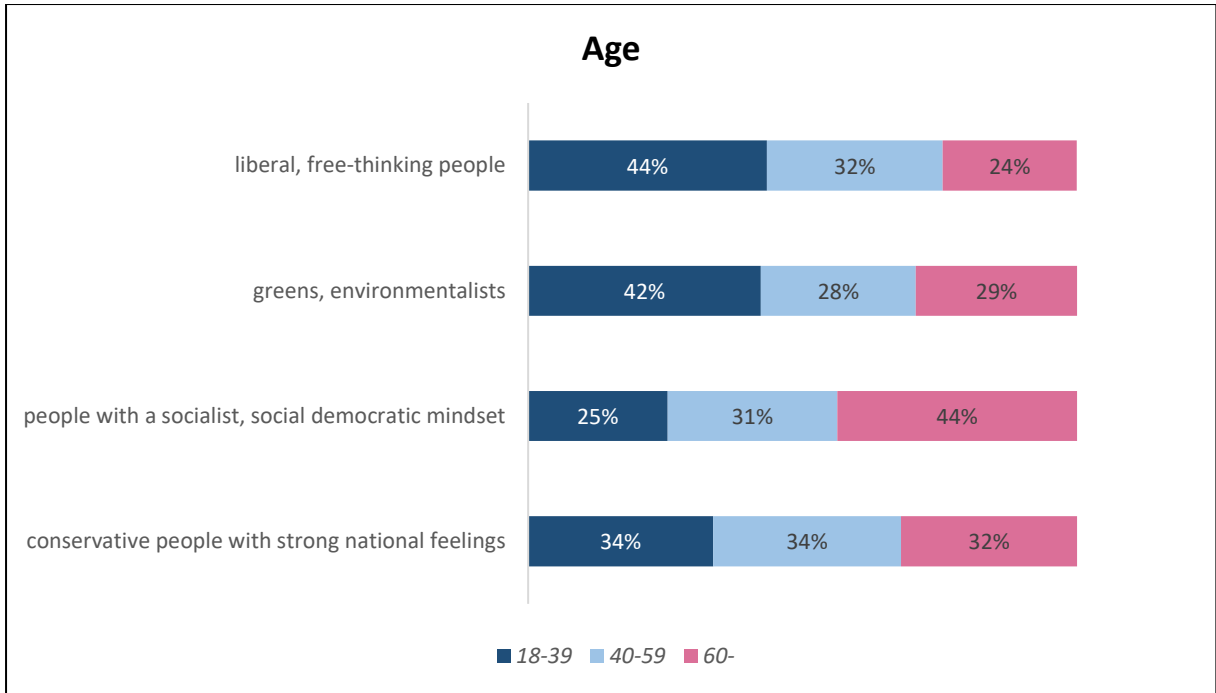
Figure 1. Primary ideologies.

In the analysis, we first looked at the demographic and sociological characteristics of each ideological camp. With the exception of nationalists and conservatives, in terms of gender, women are overrepresented in the opposition, especially among liberals and greens (55-55%) (Figure 2).



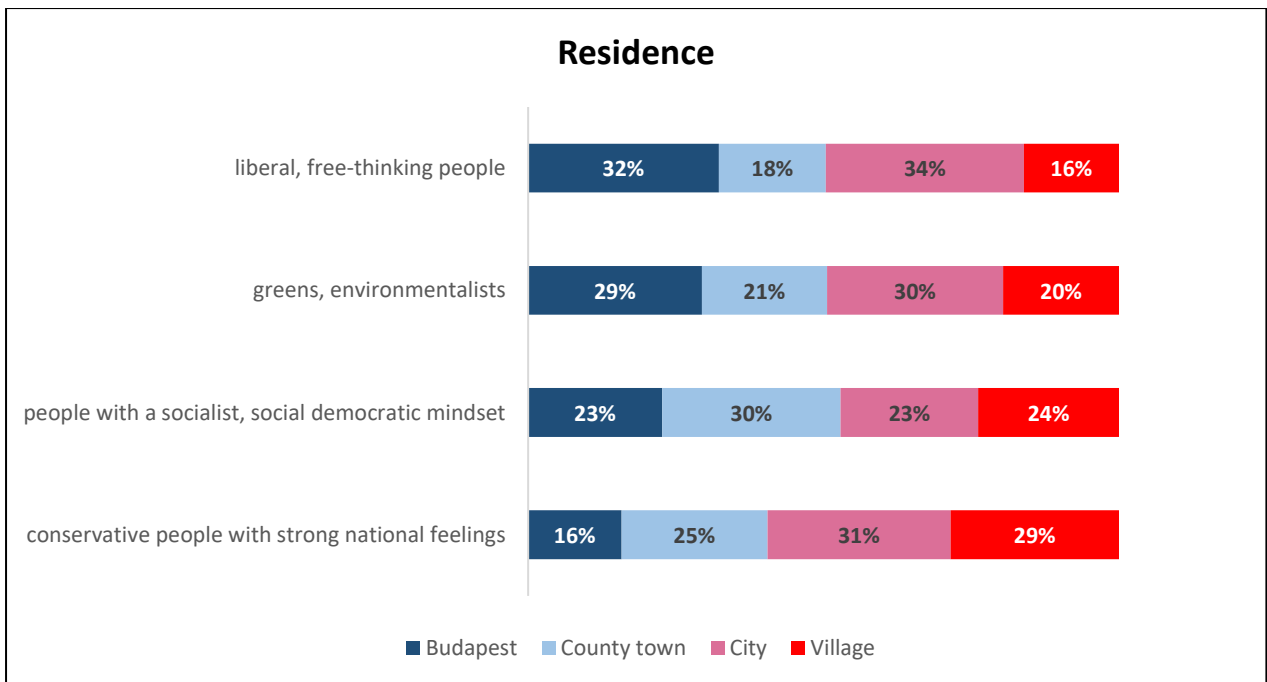
**Figure 2. Gender proportions.**

The socialist and social democratic group is the oldest opposition camp, with 44% aged 60 or over. The youngest are those who classify themselves as liberal, 44 percent of whom are between 18 and 39. Liberals are followed by greens, with 42 percent of the youngest voters. The nationalist conservative opposition electorate is balanced in this respect.



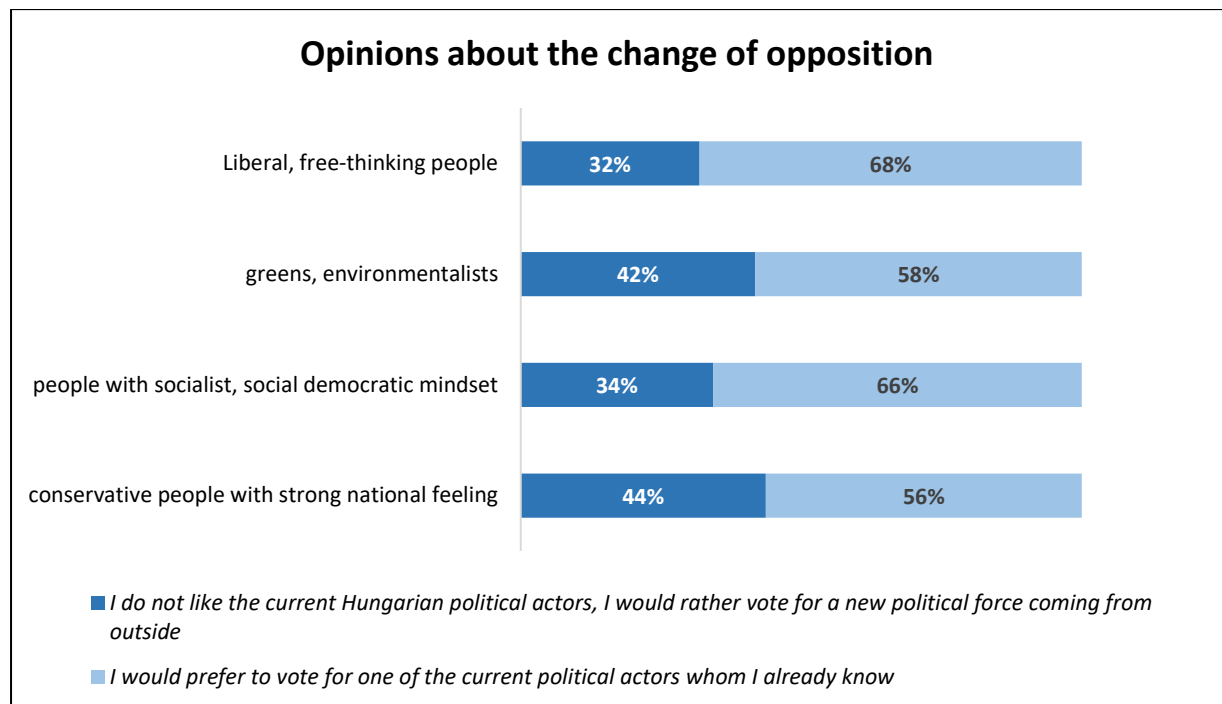
**Figure 3. Age.**

The results on respondents' place of residence indicate that the majority of liberal and green voters live in the capital (32% and 29% respectively), while the largest group of socialists, 30%, live in a county seat. Among nationalist and conservative opposition supporters, the majority live in smaller municipalities (29%) (Figure 4). These results confirm the general perspective on the electorate.



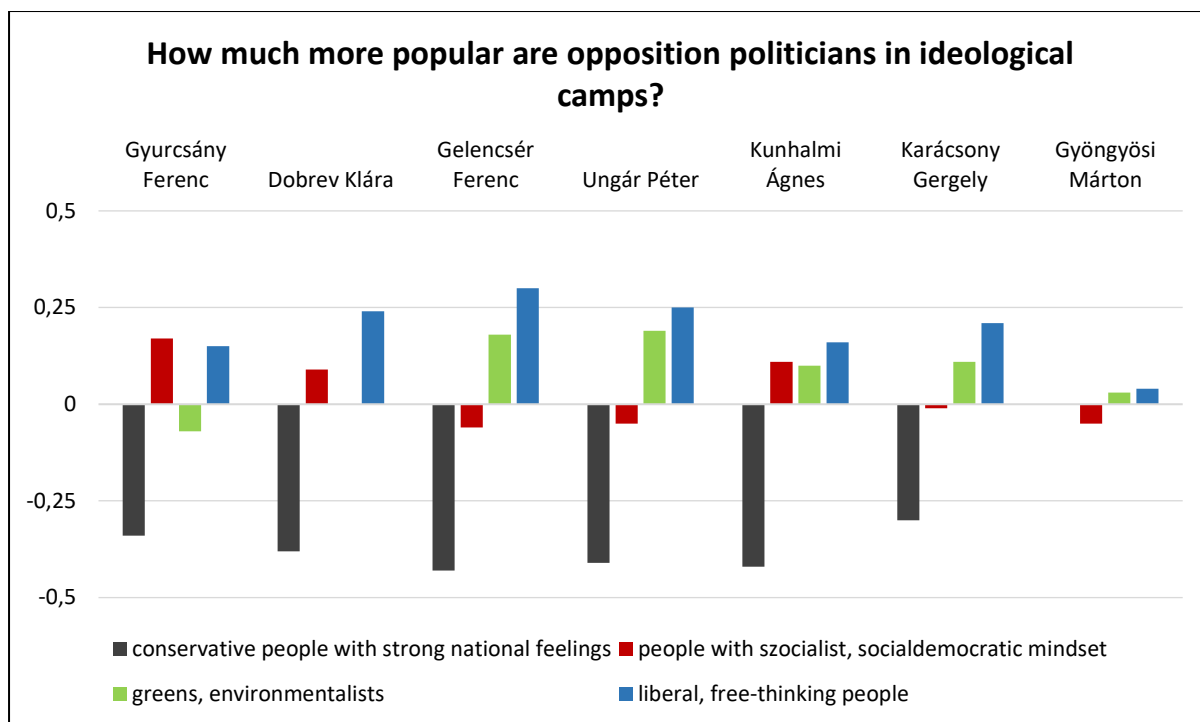
**Figure 4. Place of residence.**

The so-called "change of opposition" has also appeared as a political goal ahead of the 2022 elections. Despite the electoral defeat, the majority of opposition voters do not express such a desire (Figure 5). Within the ideological camps, conservative opposition voters (44%) and greens (42%) would most prefer to vote for an outsider political force.



**Figure 5. Opinions on the change of opposition.**

Finally, we looked at the popularity of opposition party leaders within each ideological camp (Figure 6). The results show that conservative opposition members disapprove of opposition politicians to a greater degree, while liberals have the highest esteem of opposition politicians. There is a sharper divide between ideological camps regarding party preference, but politicians' popularity seems to be less impacted. What is notable is Ferenc Gyurcsány's below-average popularity among green voters, and that of Ferenc Gelencsér and Péter Ungár among socialists.



**Figure 6. Politicians' popularity, deviation from the average given by opposition voters between 1 and 4 according to different ideological camps.**

Our earlier analysis of opposition voters showed that the opposition electorate is not very integrated, they are a heterogeneous group in terms of their ideology and political opinions, with their common ground being rejecting the Orbán regime as well as dissatisfaction with the state of the country and Hungarian democracy. They are also a diverse group of voters in terms of their ideological self-classification, with the most common socialist worldview reaching a mere 22%. Ideological self-assessment correlates with age and place of residence, and there is also a palpable trend regarding politicians' popularity. Overall, liberal opposition supporters are more satisfied with opposition parties and politicians, while those with a nationalist, conservative orientation are the least satisfied.



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