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Abstract

The semantics of left and right provide an efficient heuristic to understand and organize political information. Most studies on the left–right schema have focused on established democracies, but the anchoring function that it serves for party systems may be particularly relevant in new democracies where partisanship has not taken root. This article investigates the heuristic value of left and right in East Asian democracies by examining survey data from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Data from Australia and New Zealand are also included for comparative purposes. These countries offer useful contrasts for hypotheses testing because they cover a wide range of democratic experiences and party-system stabilization. The following questions will be addressed: (1) Are publics in East Asian democracies familiar with the left–right dimension? (2) Can the publics locate the positions of political parties and consistently rank them on the left–right spectrum? (3) To what extent do the publics' left–right self-placements affect their party preference? Left–right cognition, consistency of party rankings, and correlations between self-placements and attitudes toward parties for each of the six cases are presented and discussed in detail. Similarities and differences between older and newer democracies in patterns of cognition and party ranking are also discussed.

Keywords

Left–right schema, Party preference, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Polarization

Introduction

The semantics of left and right have characterized or even defined party systems in many countries, because they provide an efficient way to understand, order, and store political information, reducing the complexity of politics and serving the functions of both orientation for individual voters and communication for the political system (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1989; Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976). In short, they establish an important link between voters and parties. The left–right schema can be seen as an "amorphous vessel" carrying meanings that vary with political and economic conditions in different societies (Huber and Inglehart, 1995: 90) or "a universal solvent" absorbing

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all major political conflicts (Barnes, 1997: 131). This capacity to assimilate new cleavages maintains the utility of the left–right dimension for elites and mass publics alike in the face of changes in salient political issues.

The anchoring function that the left–right schema provides for party systems may be particularly relevant in new democracies, where the development of partisan attachments has been stunted (Dalton and Weldon, 2007). In countries where parties change, merge, split, or disappear frequently, left–right identification may have greater heuristic value, since party identification is likely to be weak (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976; Pierce, 1981). A higher proportion of voters capable of left–right identification and choosing parties closer to their own positions on the spectrum (Downs, 1957) enhances stabilization of party systems based on programmatic competition.

Most research on the components and implications of the left–right schema focus on western societies, both comparatively (for example, Castles and Mair, 1984; Hellwig, 2008; Huber, 1989; Inglehart, 1984; Klingemann, 1979a, 1979b; Knutsen, 1999; Sigelman and Yough, 1978) and in single-country studies (for example, Butler and Stokes, 1969; Lambert et al., 1986; Middendorp, 1989; Pierce, 1981; Stróm and Leipart, 1989). The end of the cold war created opportunities to explore the role of the left–right dimension in post-communist countries (Colton, 1998, 2000; Evans and Whitefield, 1993, 1998; Kitschelt et al., 1999; Markowski, 1997; Tworzecki, 2002). Latin America has also commanded similar scholarly attention (Mainwaring, 1999; Moreno, 1999). Yet with few exceptions (Dalton and Tanaka, 2007; A.-R. Lee, 2007), examination of the left–right schema in East Asia has been relatively scarce.

This article contributes to filling this gap by examining survey data from the four East Asian democracies of Japan, South Korea (Republic of Korea), Taiwan (Republic of China), and the Philippines. These countries offer useful contrasts for hypotheses testing because they cover a wide range of democratic experiences and party-system stabilization. The following questions will be addressed: (1) How familiar are the publics in East Asian democracies with the left–right schema? (2) Can the publics locate the positions of political parties and consistently rank them on the left–right scale? (3) To what extent are the publics' left–right self-placements associated with their party preference? The first question probes left–right consciousness at an individual level; the second does so at an aggregate level; and the third investigates whether the two levels are linked.

This article begins with a literature review on the concepts of left and right, the recognition thereof among mass publics, and how this relates to vote choice. This is followed by background on the party system of each country pertinent to the development of left–right awareness. Section four presents data and hypotheses for testing. Section five discusses left–right cognition and how this is linked to education and political interest. Section six addresses the question of the consistency of party location along the left–right scale by voters supporting different parties. Section seven examines the relationship between self-placements and party preference. The last section summarizes the findings and suggests directions for further research.

Literature on Left and Right

Utility and Meaning of the Left–Right Schema

The concepts of left and right permeate political discourse because they form a continuum containing a center position, can be visualized, and are thus understandable and translatable across cultures (Laponce, 1981: 24–7). According to Inglehart, "The Left-Right image is an oversimplification, but an almost inevitable one, which in the long run tends to assimilate all important issues" (1990: 292).[1]

While political conflicts may encompass multiple cleavages, "the left-right dimension is more often than not used by political elites and mass communication to label the most *important* issues of a given era" (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976: 244, original emphasis). Sigelman and Yough even assert that "party systems throughout the world can meaningfully be profiled in terms of polarization along the left-right continuum" (1978: 356).[2]

In addition to the utility of left and right, one must establish that these semantics are meaningful. In a seminal article, Inglehart and Klingemann (1976: 260) find that party affiliations exert a greater impact than issue preferences on one's left–right self-placement, though in a later study Fuchs and Klingemann (1989: 232) contend that publics increasingly understand the left–right schema in value-related rather than partisan terms.[3] Empirical evidence shows that while left–right self-placements reflect both party ties and reaction to current issues (Inglehart, 1984: 63), they "are related to, but cannot be equated with, partisan preferences" (Pierce, 1981: 133; see also Holm and Robinson, 1978; Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976; Laponce, 1970).[4]

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) trace the origins of cleavages in Western Europe to historical development, particularly societal divisions during the initial period of party formation and mass participation. Given different historical trajectories in East Asia and Western Europe, including both the timing of democratization and patterns of economic growth, the proposition that "social cleavages in the emerging democracies in East Asia ... should be generally similar if Lipset and Rokkan were correct that they present the potential bases of social division" (McAllister, 2007: 228) is subject to debate. In some of the cases analyzed below, the developmental state model might have constrained the emergence and politicization of owner–worker divisions. Also, authoritarian rule in Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines restrained ideological differences lest they undermine regime legitimacy. One expects these factors to influence both the applicability of left and right in East Asia and the meanings these labels entail.

Recognition of Left and Right among Mass Publics

To what extent do mass publics comprehend and utilize concepts of left and right? Both Converse (1964) and Klingemann (1979a) find that most members of the public possess a low level of conceptualization with regard to comprehending what left and right entail.[5] Yet one should keep in mind that voters do not require an in-depth knowledge of what left and right encompass to render this schema meaningful to them; understanding a selection of elements would be sufficient (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1989: 207). Thus, even in the absence of ideological sophistication, when presented with labels of left and right a considerable proportion of the public can recognize these concepts and explain them in ideological terms (Dalton, 1988: 25).[6]

One criticism regarding voters' self-placement is that those who locate themselves in the center may merely conceal unfamiliarity with the scale. Converse and Pierce argue that a center self-placement "is an obvious selection for a person who is neutral, uncommitted, and even thoroughly indifferent to or ignorant about this generic axis of dispute," because centrist respondents were less likely to offer ideological definitions distinguishing left and right (1986: 128–9). However, Knutsen demonstrates that those identifying with center positions are not lacking in cognitive awareness, by showing that their frequency of political discussion and involvement is not lower than those who are located elsewhere on the scale (1998: 306–11).

Understanding of left and right may increase with reiterated usage, especially in newer democracies. For example, regarding Russia, Colton notes a "likelihood of ideology's assuming a greater role in mass politics in the future" as the more politically aware segment of the population grows

(1998: 189). This corroborates findings by Evans and Whitefield (1998), who report a significant crystallization of opinion as voters in Russia began to understand and identify with left and right. Comparing left–right positions in nine post-communist countries with more established democracies, McAllister and White find that "voters in the emerging democracies appear to understand the concept and to align themselves on it" (2007: 204).

Since many of the aforementioned findings are taken from studies of western democracies, one may question whether the utility of the left–right schema pertains to politics in East Asian societies, where historical legacies created social cleavage patterns different from the West. Dalton and Tanaka (2007) argue that the left–right schema does capture important political cleavages in East Asia, although it comprises more of cultural rather than of economic factors. They also find that cognition of left and right exceeds 90 percent in Japan and the Philippines, and Shin and Jhee (2005) note similarly high percentages in Korea. These figures suggest that East Asian countries are part of the aforementioned process of ideological learning in new democracies, and that left–right semantics can transcend cleavages rooted in western history.

The Left–Right Schema and Party Choice

In order for the left–right dimension to serve as a meaningful guide, voters must be not only capable of locating themselves along the continuum, but also able to match these self-placements to parties competing for their votes. Surveys have shown the ability of many western publics to do so (Laponce, 1970; Sani, 1974). Furthermore, these placements are accompanied by relatively low standard deviations, indicating a high degree of consensus among voters (Klingemann, 1972). These findings affirm that voters can clearly identify both their own position and the location of each party relative to all its competitors in left–right terms.

Since the left–right schema encompasses the most salient political conflicts of the day, one may infer that low levels of left–right cognition, inconsistent ranking of parties along the continuum, or mismatches between the locations of voters and their preferred parties could be interpreted as indicators of, and perhaps also contributors to, low party-system institutionalization. This is a particularly acute problem facing new democracies, where most parties have short histories, and therefore cannot rely on support created through generational transmission or past performance. In the absence of partisan attachments which develop primarily as a function of electoral experience (Dalton and Weldon, 2007: 187), labels of left and right may assume greater importance in influencing vote choice.

Particularly in new democracies, as the terms "left" and "right" come to serve as meaningful heuristics to voters, parties would be encouraged to develop programmatic appeals typical of structured party systems.[7] For example, A.-R. Lee (2007) stresses that the more social cleavages, values, and issues form the basis of party support, the more meaningful electoral choices become. Using an authoritarian–libertarian scale, she finds that electoral choices in Japan and Taiwan are clearer compared with the Philippines and Indonesia. Parties in East Asia, like their counterparts elsewhere, can be categorized into those with clear programmatic profiles and others that rely on charismatic or clientelistic ties. Voters could more easily distinguish the former on the left–right spectrum than the latter.

Finally, institutional design exerts an influence on parties' left–right locations by shaping their strategies of converging toward or diverging from the center (Cox, 1990). Majoritarian formulas provide a greater incentive for parties to converge toward the median voter than proportional representation (PR) systems. Reilly (2007) observes a trend toward adopting parallel mixed systems across East Asia, with most seats allocated by first past the post. This favors large parties, and at

the same time compels them to attract as much support as possible by moderating their issue stances. Consequently, one expects a narrower ideological space under majoritarian than PR rules. The same expectation holds for presidential (Korea, Philippines, and Taiwan) rather than parliamentary (Australian, Japan, and New Zealand) systems, since the former is majoritarian by definition.

Party-System Context and Left–Right Identification

The previous section focused on the demand side of left–right cognition and party ranking, but there is a supply side as well. Whether mass publics can locate parties along the left–right spectrum depends not only on their level of ideological sophistication, but also on the parties' ability to project clear programmatic profiles. Both the evolution of democracy and patterns of political competition in each country influence whether parties adopt a pragmatic or dogmatic approach in pursuit of their objectives – or whether they have well-defined programs at all. This is especially pertinent in new democracies, where many voters lack partisan attachments (except regarding the successors to ruling parties under the old regime) forged by habit. The basis upon which parties in new democracies distinguish themselves determines if voters are given meaningful choices in accord with their left–right preferences.

Japan offers an example of blurring left–right competition as a consequence of party-system change. After the postwar US occupation, two large parties emerged, representing each side of the left–right dimension and sharply demarcated on issues of security and constitutional revision (Otake, 1990). The conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) controlled the reins of government for nearly four decades, while the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) remained in permanent opposition. The appearance of smaller parties, located between the two large parties on the left–right spectrum, during the 1960s and 1970s did not threaten the LDP monopoly. Decades of seeming stasis was broken dramatically by a split in the ruling party in the early 1990s, followed by a non-LDP coalition that enacted electoral reform with the aim of creating a two-party system with regular government alternation (Christensen, 1994). After a series of party splits and mergers throughout the 1990s, the newly founded Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) gradually established itself as the LDP's main challenger (Reed, 2005), though a number of smaller parties (such as the religiously based *Komeito*, remnants of the JSP, and the communists) retained core supporters among the electorate.

The end of the cold war in combination with party-system transformation have rendered left–right divisions along traditional axes of contention less salient, not least because the DPJ began as an eclectic grouping comprising both conservatives and socialists. The DPJ's stance on various issues often fails to distinguish it sufficiently from the LDP (Miura et al., 2005), and provokes internal disagreements. This was so even as the party made steady gains in most elections during the 2000s.[8] While the new electoral system encourages parties to conduct policy-centered instead of clientelistic campaigns, whether the public perceives clear programmatic differences between the two main parties and, hence, whether left–right placements structure party support are still subject to debate.

The case of South Korea illustrates how parties that emerged after democratic transition mostly failed to make programmatic appeals to the electorate, so competition was not structured by clearly differentiated issues identifiable on a left–right dimension. Instead, "political parties have consciously avoided taking positions on socioeconomic issues and have relied instead on the charisma of party bosses to mobilize mass support" (Kim, 2000). Constant mergers and splits led to frequent reconfigurations of the party system, especially around election time.[9] This lack of programmatic

competition is reinforced by two factors rooted in history. First, political and economic developments in Korea blurred distinctions in social structure (for example, those between rural and urban areas), and potential political divides such as religion and class did not emerge as cleavages structuring party competition.[10] Second, the mode of democratic transition, involving compromises between the authoritarian regime and the opposition, did not mark a clean break with the past (S. Lee, 2007),[11] thus obscuring the pro-authoritarian versus anti-authoritarian divide.

During decades of authoritarian rule, a right-wing ideological consensus based on hostility toward North Korea prevented parties from differentiating themselves within a truncated ideological spectrum. The consequent pattern of voter mobilization based on non-programmatic appeals such as regionalism and personality (Kong, 2000) persisted in the aftermath of transition, even as longitudinal survey data show that democratization led to a broadening of the left–right spectrum, "freeing [the public] from the rightist ideology of anticommunism and allowing them to explore ideas from the left" (Shin and Jhee, 2005). Recent presidential (2002 and 2007) and National Assembly (2004 and 2008) elections provide evidence of both weakening regionalism and greater policy differentiation between the two major parties, the Grand National Party (GNP) on the right and Uri (and its successor, the United New Democratic Party, renamed the Democratic Party in 2008) on the center-left.

Left–right differentiation may be deterred not only by parties' evasion of clear stances on issues, but also by their selection of issues on the basis of which they appeal to voters, as exemplified by the case of Taiwan. Similar to Korea, Taiwan lacks historically rooted class or religious cleavages,[12] and left-leaning views were suppressed under the pretext of anticommunism by the authoritarian Nationalist Party (KMT) government. The focus of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) on democratization and the need for a competitive party system (Cooper, 1998) clearly distinguished it from the KMT in the initial post-transition elections, but civil liberties and human rights were quickly eclipsed as salient topics by new issues such as national identity,[13] social welfare, political corruption, and crime.

While it is an encouraging sign for democracy that elections in Taiwan involve debates over policies (Fell, 2005), one must note the nature of issues that parties compete over. Labels of left and right serve as meaningful shortcuts for vote choice only when parties adopt distinct positions, but are less useful if parties profess similar goals.[14] "Relative stability of the national identity cleavage underpin[ning] the party system" (Hsieh, 2002) has characterized competition between the KMT-led pan-Blue coalition and the pan-Green coalition led by the DPP since the 1990s, as evidenced by the fact that even debate over remedies to the faltering economy in the 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections centered around the identity-related issue of strengthening economic ties with China. This raises doubts about the pertinence of left–right semantics as heuristics for party and issue preferences, since questions of national identity are less likely to be assimilated to a left–right continuum than other types of political conflict (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976: 247). One may even extend this argument to hypothesize that an entrenched national identity cleavage leads to the paradoxical scenario of greater polarization accompanied by lower left–right identification.

If Korea and Taiwan present suitable case studies for how left–right orientations are affected by party-system change and continuity, respectively, the Philippines offer a rarer scenario in which one has difficulty observing any party system at all. For three decades after gaining independence in 1946, political power in the Philippines alternated between the liberals and the *Nacionalistas*. Reiterated contests did not induce either party to distinguish itself through policies, and the ease and frequency with which politicians switched between the two parties testified to their similarity. Political contest, in the decades after the "People Power" revolution of 1986 overthrew Marcos's

plutocratic dictatorship, was organized neither around a regime divide separating supporters and opponents of authoritarian rule, nor along the lines of owner–worker or center–periphery status. Rather, parties consisting largely of clientelistic groups, many of them dominated by wealthy families that supported and benefited from the Marcos dictatorship, have "little organizational or doctrinal cohesion" (Landé and Waxman, 1996), and run non-programmatic, candidate-centered campaigns (Putzel, 1999).

The absence of policy debates reinforces patron–client ties that serve as the main means of mobilization of Philippine voters (Kerkvliet and Mojares, 1991), and the desire to obtain tangible benefits from those in power generates a bandwagon effect after each election as politicians flock to join the winner's party. Ethno-linguistic and regional identification also guide voting behavior (Rood, 2002), though these ties do not lend themselves to anchoring left and right. In a country marked by a wide poverty gap, class became an important cleavage only with Estrada's appeal to poor voters in his successful presidential campaign of 1998, and his ouster three years later may have deepened this divide. If class comes to structure left–right identification, this process must have taken place in a context characterized by the irrelevance of parties.

Data and Hypotheses

Data for this article are taken from surveys in two waves of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES).[15] Seven surveys are used in the analysis below: two each from Japan (1996 and 2004), Korea (2000 and 2004), and Taiwan (1996 and 2001), and one from the Philippines (2004).[16] Two Australian (1996 and 2004) and two New Zealand (1996 and 2002) elections are also included for the purpose of comparison with "western" democracies. All elections are parliamentary contests.[17] The CSES datasets are chosen because the questionnaires contain items on both self-placement along the left–right scale and the placement of each party contesting the election, thus allowing one to investigate whether supporters of each party give consistent left–right rankings to all parties. The availability of two modules from most countries also permits comparisons between the positions of publics and parties longitudinally. Question wordings are provided in Appendix 1.

On the question of whether publics are familiar with left and right, the literature review suggests a higher proportion of the population to be cognizant of the left–right schema in established than in new democracies. While democratic transitions often broaden the spectrum of ideological choices, one can expect greater experience with democratic politics in general and party competition in particular to inculcate and reinforce awareness and understanding of left and right.[18] One also expects education and political interest to raise awareness of the spatial schema. A smaller percentage of respondents in new democracies may locate themselves in the center, since political contestation during and following transition often involves debates over fundamental issues, such as institutional arrangements, and publics are likely to be more polarized.

The publics' ability to identify parties on the left–right scale is hypothesized to vary as a function of both the length of time a party has been active on the political stage and the level of a party's support among voters. In other words, publics are more likely to locate parties that (1) have long, continuous histories and (2) garner larger vote shares. Voters are more likely to express familiarity with parties that can be identified with past performances and records, and older parties also have more time to develop loyalties (or antipathies) liable to generational transmission.[19] Vote share usually reflects a party's prominence in various channels of political communication, so voters should be more familiar with the left–right positions of parties winning higher vote percentages. More "don't know" answers are expected regarding newer and smaller parties.

The match between voters' self-placements and locations they assign to their preferred parties shows the degree to which the left–right dimension functions as a guide to vote choice. A high proportion of matches from aggregate samples indicates the importance of the spatial schema in political discourse, and the same from groups voting for each party shows the extent to which a party's support is based on left–right (both partisan and ideological) considerations. Inconsistent left–right rankings indicate that party competition may involve personalities or fixed characteristics (for example, gender, ethnicity, and religion) rather than being susceptible to incorporation into a continuum that presumes the possibility of movement. Where party systems in new democracies revolve around a divide pitting defenders against opponents of the former regime, such a cleavage does not necessarily overlap with, but may take precedence over, voters' sociological traits or economic interests in structuring left–right orientations.

Findings: Left–Right Cognition

Table 1 lists the percentages of respondents who placed themselves on the left–right scale in the six countries under examination,[20] the proportions among this group who chose the center position (5 on a 0–10 scale), along with averages from two groups of countries for which data are available from both waves of CSES surveys, one representing established democracies and the other comprised of ex-communist countries that transitioned during approximately the same period as the new East Asian democracies.[21] While one expects a plurality among the cognizant public to place themselves in the center, the sizeable percentages who chose this position (ranging from one-third in Korea in 2004 to nearly 60 percent in Taiwan in 1996) may raise doubts about whether this partially conceals nonresponse. It is also notable that, except for New Zealand in 1996, center placements in all cases exceed averages found in both old and new democracies in other regions.

Table 1. Left–Right Self-placement

	Left–right cognition (%)	Center placement (%)*
Japan 1996	87.4	44.4
Japan 2004	91.1	36.9
Korea 2000	81.7	37.5
Korea 2004	82.7	33.0
Taiwan 1996	40.3	57.7
Taiwan 2001	48.4	51.6
Philippines 2004	94.2	41.5
Australia 1996	86.1	41.7
Australia 2004	82.2	37.8
New Zealand 1996	80.1	19.3
New Zealand 2002	76.2	31.9
Established western democracies** (wave 1)	87.5	28.3
Established western democracies** (wave 2)	90.6	27.8
Ex-communist new democracies** (wave 1)	78.8	34.4
Ex-communist new democracies** (wave 2)	77.2	27.5

Note: * 5 on a 0–10 scale. ** See note 21.

Japan, Australia, and New Zealand share both long histories of democracy and relatively high levels of left–right cognition,[22] suggesting a linkage between these two features. Indeed, figures from Australia and New Zealand fall below the averages found in other established democracies. Contrary to expectations, Korean and especially Philippine respondents display a much greater willingness or capacity to place themselves on the scale in comparison with those in Taiwan, even though these three countries democratized during the same period and share a history of right-wing authoritarian regimes bolstered by strident anticommunism. A greater proportion of Koreans and Filipinos gave self-placements on the left–right scale than the publics in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, while the percentages in Taiwan lag conspicuously behind.

Examining the relationship between length of democracy and levels of left–right cognition using the sample of countries covered by Table 1 offers further insight. The former variable is calculated by the log of the number of years between a country's attainment of democracy[23] and the survey year. The bivariate correlation is 0.511 in the first wave of the CSES and 0.519 in the second, presenting further evidence that the longer the history of democratic governance, the more familiar citizens become with the left–right schema, since democracy by definition entails free political competition. Correlations between the age of democracy and the proportion of center placements are negative, but insignificant.

In Korea, political discourse has come to focus on conventional left–right issues (as well as on attitudes toward North Korea, with the right advocating a more hard-line stance while the left favors conciliatory measures), particularly as the "era of the three Kims"[24] draws to a close and its concomitant regional cleavages become less salient. As discussed above, the most important political divide in Taiwan involves questions of national identity, which the left–right schema does not easily accommodate. This probably explains the low numbers for Taiwan in Table 1 (considering the high proportion of center self-placements, the actual percentage may be even lower). Considering the prevalence of transient alliances and clientelistic ties, and the absence of programmatic party appeals, in Philippine elections, left–right cognition is surprisingly high. Levels of left–right cognition did not change significantly in any country between the two surveys.

On the question of how cognition varies among different segments of the public, Klingemann (1979b: 268) demonstrates that education and political interest exert independent effects in determining left–right conceptualization. In the absence of survey items measuring interest, response to the question "Are you close to any party?" is used instead. Table 2 reports logistic regression results with left–right cognition as the dependent variable, while socio-demographic controls of age, gender, income, and urban or rural residence are included as independent variables alongside education and closeness to a party.

In line with the expectation that cognitive capacity increases left–right cognition, highly educated citizens are more likely to offer a left–right self-placement in all countries, regardless of the length of the democratic experience (except in the Philippines). Male and higher income respondents are also generally more cognizant. It is notable that older cohorts in established democracies, having observed political competition for decades, show greater familiarity with left and right than younger generations. Their counterparts in new democracies, however, have not benefited from this accumulation of experience, so age has no impact (in fact, coefficients in all three new democracies are negative, though far from significant).

If Kumlin's (2001) argument is correct that usage of ideological schema is not distinguished by socio-demographic profile where party systems are firmly rooted, because even the least sophisticated voters can identify with it, then one can infer either that party systems in East Asia (as well as Australia and New Zealand) have yet to become established in voters' minds, or that voters have

Table 2. Factors Influencing Left–Right Cognition

	Japan 1996	Japan 2004	Korea 2000	Korea 2004	Taiwan 1996	Taiwan 2001	Philippines 2004	Australia 1996	Australia 2004	New Zealand 1996	New Zealand 2002
Age	0.045***	0.009	−0.005	−0.002	−0.011	−0.008	−0.016	0.015**	0.011*	0.047***	0.040***
Gender	−0.467	−0.494	−0.656**	−0.360	−0.333*	−0.496***	−0.737*	−0.516**	−0.055	−0.617***	−0.481**
Education	0.316**	0.209	0.205**	0.243***	0.351***	0.320***	0.114	0.200**	0.182**	0.458***	0.372***
Income	0.329***	0.363**	0.156	0.401***	0.186**	0.080	0.084	0.193**	0.167**	0.136***	−0.099
Urban/rural	N/A	0.109	0.088	0.059	0.044	0.187**	−0.180	−0.014	−0.012	0.075	0.058
Political interest	−0.085	0.837**	0.441*	0.310	0.289	0.303**	0.476	0.238	0.276	0.731***	0.358*
Constant	−1.486	0.364	1.083	−0.190	−1.212	−1.352	4.213	0.439	−0.267	−3.002	−1.785
Nagelkerke R square	0.110	0.103	0.078	0.109	0.217	0.203	0.048	0.051	0.038	0.218	0.164

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; gender: 1 = male, 2 = female; education: 1 = lowest, 8 = highest; income: 1 = lowest, 5 = highest; urban/rural: 1 = most rural, 4 = most urban; political interest: 1 = close to party, 0 = not close to party.

difficulty identifying parties in spatial terms. While the latter possibility will be tested in the following section, it is plausible to suggest that parties' ideological positions may appear uncertain to voters not only in new democracies where party systems have only emerged in recent years (or have not emerged at all, as in the Philippines), but also in established democracies where significant new parties have entered the electoral arena (as in Japan and New Zealand, in both cases due to electoral reform).

The proposed linkage between political interest and left–right cognition finds only partial confirmation. While this variable attains statistical significance in a majority of countries on at least one occasion, its effect is inconsistent, except in New Zealand. One potential explanation is that closeness to party is a far from ideal proxy, due both to the growing number of independents who are highly attuned to politics but do not affiliate with any party, and also to those who profess partisan attachment due to personal or organizational factors rather than policy preference or ideological proximity. Another possibility is that parties themselves do not make appeals that can be encapsulated by the left–right dimension.

Findings: Party Locations

To establish that the left–right schema provides meaningful heuristics, publics should be able to identify not only themselves, but also the parties competing for their support in spatial terms. To see which parties enjoy greater recognition and more well-defined left–right positions among the public, and whether this is associated with their length of history or level of electoral support, Table 3 lists average party position in all six countries, based on combined responses from both voters and nonvoters. The percentage of respondents who identified each party on the left–right scale is listed, along with standard deviations, the parties' year of founding, and vote share.[25]

The LDP in Japan, GNP in Korea, and KMT in Taiwan consistently receive the highest levels of left–right recognition from respondents in their respective countries, but this is likely attributable to their prominence as large parties rather than their longer histories compared with their competitors. Both the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) were founded earlier than the Liberal Democratic Party, but are less recognized in left–right terms. The long-standing Liberal Party (LP) in the Philippines also receives less recognition than its more recently established competitors. A sizeable majority of Korean respondents was able to identify the left–right positions of parties running in 2000, despite none of these parties having contested the previous election. Correlations between length of party history (natural log) and recognition are low, except in Taiwan in 1996 and New Zealand in 2002, and in two cases are negative (Japan in 2004 and Korea in 2004). In contrast, vote share is more closely associated with recognition, with bivariate correlations ranging from 0.81 to 0.98. This relationship is particularly robust in Taiwan, the Philippines, and Australia.

The standard deviations listed in Table 3 refute suggestions that either electoral success or long tradition offer the electorate a clearer perspective on where a party stands in left–right terms. Nor do more "ideological" parties, such as the JCP, enjoy a more distinct profile than "catch-all" parties, such as the LDP. There is no discernible relationship between the standard deviations shown for each party and its specific left–right location.[26] While electorally successful parties always enjoy greater recognition regardless of how long they have been in the political arena (in each election the top two vote winners are invariably most readily identified on the left–right scale), for smaller parties a longer history appears to help boost familiarity in voters' minds.

Table 3. Recognition of Parties' Left–Right Locations

Political party	Left–right position	Voter recognition (%)	Standard deviation	Year of founding	Vote share (%)
Japan					
1996					
LDP	7.60	74.2	2.05	1955	38.6
NFP	5.91	68.9	2.28	1994	28.0
DPJ	5.20	61.8	1.98	1996	10.6
JCP	2.41	68.1	2.30	1922	12.6
SDPJ	4.67	65.4	1.88	1945	2.2
2004					
DPJ	5.31	86.2	1.73	1996	37.8
LDP	7.30	89.2	2.07	1955	30.0
Komeito	6.20	80.3	2.01	1964	15.4
JCP	2.83	80.7	2.39	1922	7.8
SDPJ	3.92	80.6	2.02	1945	5.2
Korea					
2000					
GNP	5.66	80.8	2.39	1997	39.0
MDP	5.44	79.6	2.20	2000	35.9
ULD	6.56	76.4	2.29	1998	9.8
DPP	5.70	60.0	2.12	2000	3.7
2004					
Uri	3.72	85.8	2.29	2003	38.3
GNP	7.33	87.1	2.30	1997	35.8
DLP	3.23	80.6	2.49	2000	13.0
MDP	6.25	83.1	2.32	2000	7.1
ULD	7.16	78.9	2.59	1998	2.8
Taiwan					
1996					
KMT	5.80	42.0	2.05	1894	49.6
DPP	4.44	40.3	2.32	1986	29.8
NP	5.11	37.3	2.26	1993	13.6
2001					
DPP	4.65	45.9	2.40	1986	33.4
KMT	5.91	46.1	2.20	1894	28.6
PFP	5.33	43.0	2.21	2000	18.6
TSU	4.23	40.2	2.61	2001	7.8
NP	5.20	40.0	2.61	1993	2.6
Philippines					
2004					
Lakas	5.47	77.3	2.88	1992	35.9*
NPC	4.97	73.4	2.72	1992	18.4*
LP	4.88	71.4	2.67	1946	13.6*
LDP	5.18	72.6	2.67	1987	3.3*
AD	4.96	69.2	2.59	1998	0.5*
Australia					
1996					
Labor	4.33	78.4	2.33	1901	38.7
Liberal	6.49	80.0	2.35	1944	38.6

Table 3. *(Continued)*

Political party	Left–right position	Voter recognition (%)	Standard deviation	Year of founding	Vote share (%)
National	6.54	74.9	2.49	1920	8.2
Democrat	4.7	74.2	1.78	1977	6.7
Green	3.83	74.1	2.42	1992	1.7
2004					
Liberal	7.04	83.0	2.44	1944	40.5
Labor	4.31	80.5	2.25	1901	37.6
Green	3.21	76.9	2.47	1992	7.2
National	6.59	76.3	2.48	1920	5.9
Democrat	4.41	75.9	2.04	1977	1.2
One Nation	5.94	75.6	3.49	1997	1.2
New Zealand					
1996					
National	7.68	78.1	2.24	1936	33.8
Labour	3.83	78.2	2.09	1916	28.2
NZ First	5.44	72.3	1.93	1993	13.4
Alliance	2.68	72.8	2.19	1992	10.1
ACT	8.03	64.1	2.26	1995	6.1
Christian Coalition	6.67	52.6	2.76	1995	4.3
2002					
Labour	3.96	73.5	2.61	1916	41.3
National	6.85	70.7	2.38	1936	20.9
NZ First	6.48	63.1	2.29	1993	10.4
ACT	7.29	62.3	2.76	1995	7.1
Green	2.65	64.2	2.34	1990	7.0
United Future	5.58	57.9	2.07	2001	6.7
Progressive	3.1	54.1	2.32	2002	1.7
Alliance	2.82	60.8	2.19	1992	1.3

Notes: * Seat share (vote share not given in the dataset).
Vote shares do not add up to 100 percent due to the exclusion of smaller parties from the table.
The acronyms of political parties are explained in Appendix 2.

In an institutionalized party system one expects to observe not only a high level of recognition of parties' spatial locations, but also a consistent left–right ranking from supporters of each individual party. Remarkably, in an Italian survey, the same ordering of all parties along the left–right continuum was offered by groups supporting each of the eight parties, including ones with very small *N* (Sani, 1974: 196). Tables 4a–f replicate this method.[27] The rows in Tables 4a–f represent the parties being evaluated, while the columns are the parties that respondents voted for. For example, in Japan (Table 4a) the average Liberal Democratic Party voter in 1996 located the DPJ at 5.24 and her own party at 7.62. Minor parties that have less than 10 voters in the surveys are not represented by a separate column; nevertheless, their left–right positions as identified by the supporters of larger parties are reported. Figures in the last column include scores given by abstainers.

One may question whether public perceptions of party placement accurately reflect where parties are actually situated, but for the purpose of this exercise, public perceptions are reality because

Tables 4a–f. Left–Right Ranking of Parties

Table 4a. Japan

Party evaluated	Party voted for					
	JCP	SDPJ	DPJ	NFP	LDP	All
1996						
JCP	**1.84**	1.79	2.71	2.66	2.18	2.41
SDPJ	4.34	**5.13**	4.52	5.01	4.38	4.67
DPJ	5.74	5.82	**4.76**	5.10	5.24	5.20
NFP	6.40	7.04	6.05	**5.47**	5.78	5.91
LDP	7.60	8.45	7.65	7.53	**7.62**	7.60
	JCP	SDPJ	DPJ	Komeito	LDP	All
2004						
JCP	**3.25**	2.68	2.44	3.56	2.89	2.83
SDPJ	4.38	**4.29**	3.54	4.76	3.98	3.92
DPJ	5.70	6.03	**5.33**	4.56	5.22	5.31
Komeito	6.14	7.33	6.07	**5.21**	6.29	6.20
LDP	7.04	7.85	7.42	6.57	**7.42**	7.30

Note: The acronyms of political parties are explained in Appendix 2.

Table 4b. Korea

Party evaluated	Party voted for				
	MDP	GNP	DPP	ULD	All
2000					
DLP	4.13	4.24	4.38	5.00	4.21
NKPH	5.43	5.26	4.63	5.29	5.36
MDP	**5.14**	5.59	5.00	5.64	5.44
GNP	5.66	**5.44**	5.82	5.68	5.66
DPP	5.55	5.72	**5.55**	5.92	5.70
ULD	6.61	6.47	6.55	**6.68**	6.56
	DLP	Uri	MDP	GNP	All
2004					
DLP	**3.19**	3.44	3.23	3.48	3.23
Uri	3.57	**3.64**	4.21	3.95	3.72
MDP	6.52	5.65	**5.71**	5.16	6.25
ULD	7.62	6.44	5.50	6.71	7.16
GNP	7.60	7.09	5.21	**7.09**	7.33

Note: The acronyms of political parties are explained in Appendix 2.

Table 4c. Taiwan

Party evaluated	Party voted for				
	DPP	NP	KMT	All	
1996					
DPP	**5.26**	3.72	4.14	4.44	
NP	4.48	**6.20**	4.80	5.11	
KMT	5.76	5.90	**6.04**	5.80	
	TSU	DPP	PFP	KMT	All
2001					
TSU	**3.20**	3.68	3.47	5.02	4.23
DPP	3.79	**4.25**	4.45	5.44	4.65
NP	6.25	5.42	5.89	4.45	5.20
PFP	6.02	5.66	**5.74**	4.58	5.33
KMT	6.30	6.40	6.25	**5.37**	5.91

Note: The acronyms of political parties are explained in Appendix 2.

Table 4d. The Philippines

Party evaluated	Party voted for				
	Lakas	NPC	LP	LDP	All
2004					
LP	4.91	4.19	**5.41**	4.70	4.88
AD	5.02	4.30	5.19	5.10	4.96
NPC	5.13	**4.76**	4.43	5.64	4.97
LDP	5.41	4.85	5.23	**5.50**	5.18
Lakas	**5.87**	5.31	5.39	5.46	5.47

Note: The acronyms of political parties are explained in Appendix 2.

Table 4e. Australia

Party evaluated	Party voted for					
	Green	Labor	Democrat	Liberal	National	All
1996						
Green	**3.83**	3.63	4.07	4.12	3.51	3.83
Labor	4.63	**3.72**	4.58	5.06	3.57	4.33
Democrat	4.70	4.63	**4.92**	4.87	4.08	4.70
Liberal	5.19	6.79	6.33	**6.26**	6.26	6.49
National	6.14	6.52	6.95	6.53	**6.51**	6.54

(Continued)

Table 4e. *(Continued)*

Party evaluated	Party voted for					
	Green	Labor	Democrat	National	Liberal	All
2004						
Green	**3.17**	3.51	4.27	2.21	3.02	3.21
Labor	4.92	**4.72**	4.50	3.79	3.87	4.31
Democrat	4.76	4.62	**5.36**	3.76	4.25	4.41
One Nation	7.63	6.41	5.60	5.45	5.30	5.94
National	7.27	6.72	6.00	**7.28**	6.38	6.59
Liberal	7.44	6.89	6.87	6.95	**7.10**	7.04

Note: The acronyms of political parties are explained in Appendix 2.

Table 4f. New Zealand

Party evaluated	Party voted for						
	Alliance	Labour	NZ First	Christian Coalition	National	ACT	All
1996							
Alliance	**3.06**	2.35	3.12	2.46	2.95	1.52	2.68
Labour	4.34	**3.70**	3.96	3.46	3.73	3.59	3.83
NZ First	5.84	5.35	**5.51**	5.47	5.43	5.05	5.44
Christian Coalition	7.56	6.04	6.19	**6.54**	7.19	6.47	6.67
National	8.28	7.74	7.67	7.74	**7.57**	7.53	7.68
ACT	8.58	7.61	7.97	8.07	8.18	**8.27**	8.03
	Green	Labour	United Future	NZ First	National	ACT	All
2002							
Green	3.21	2.87	1.92	2.80	1.92	1.51	2.65
Alliance	3.08	3.08	2.65	2.78	2.09	1.53	2.82
Progressive	3.89	3.46	2.84	3.04	1.97	1.68	3.10
Labour	3.88	4.07	3.28	4.07	3.20	3.79	3.96
United Future	6.42	5.62	6.04	5.23	5.34	5.35	5.58
NZ First	7.00	6.42	6.94	6.30	6.62	6.06	6.48
National	7.01	6.86	7.18	6.74	7.45	6.36	6.85
ACT	7.51	7.32	7.84	6.81	7.53	8.11	7.29

Note: The acronyms of political parties are explained in Appendix 2.

they form the basis of voter attitude and behavior. Moreover, exact party placements are less important than their left–right ranking. Since all surveys were conducted immediately after the election, respondents are unlikely to have forgotten or misreported their vote choice.

The Japanese cases shown in Table 4a provide consistent left–right rankings in each column (with the sole exception of Komeito voters in 2004[28]), evidence that the left–right dimension is not only widely recognized, but meaningful in partisan terms. The LDP is placed furthest to the right, the JCP furthest to the left, and the DPJ near the center (interestingly, supporters of the two left-wing

parties tend to perceive the DPJ as a right-wing party). The locations of all parties (along with the public) remained relatively stable between the two surveys, except in the case of the SDPJ, which moved to the left. This creates a firm divide between two parties on both the left and right, with a center party (the DPJ) in a position to seek allies on both sides. Yet the consolidation of a two-party system consisting of the Liberal Democratic Party and DPJ is a reminder of the weakness of the left.[29] The width of the left–right space occupied by the parties in 2004 was narrower than in 1996, but not so drastically as to suggest a centripetal trend.

Left–right party rankings in Korea (listed in Table 4b) display less consistency than in Japan. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that large portions of the electorate failed to recognize where parties stood. In 2000, voters perceived a very congested center-right space, featuring four parties (including the GNP and the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), the two largest parties) within a span of less than 0.5 on an 11-point scale. Parties outside this narrow range (the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and the United Liberal Democrats (ULD)) were consistently identified as being on the left and right ends of the party space, respectively. In contrast to 2000, in 2004 voters saw each party as clearly being on the left (DLP and Uri) or right (MDP, ULD, and GNP). Party rankings are mostly consistent, the notable exception of MDP voters probably being attributable to a small *N* (DLP supporters ranked the ULD and GNP in the same position). The most remarkable feature here is a significant extension of the party space due to parties' centrifugal movements and a concomitant "hollowing out" of the once-crowded center, confirming the trend toward greater ideological differentiation among Korean parties noted earlier.

Rankings in Taiwan show the least consistency, as evidenced in Table 4c. In addition to low left–right cognition, the figures in this table raise questions about whether many respondents who did indicate party locations on the scale accurately understood either left–right semantics or each party's position. For example, the New Party in 1996 was perceived as leftist by Democratic Progressive Party supporters, centrist by KMT supporters, and rightist by its own voters. There is also a large gap between the Democratic Progressive Party's location according to its own supporters and according to those voting for its opponents in 1996. KMT voters in 2001 scored both the left-wing Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) and center-left Democratic Progressive Party above 5.0, while placing the centrist New Party and center-right People First Party on the left. Furthermore, whereas supporters of all other parties saw wide differences between the Democratic Progressive Party and KMT (conflict between coalitions built around the two parties has indeed dominated all electoral contests), KMT supporters hardly detected any difference at all. While average party rankings point to centripetal competition, glaring inconsistencies imply a disordered rather than centrist party space.

A remarkably narrow ideological spectrum is readily discernible from party rankings in the Philippines (shown in Table 4d). In fact, all party averages fall within a range between 4.5 and 5.5. The Lakas coalition is generally placed furthest to the right and the LP furthest to the left (with the conspicuous exception of LP voters themselves). Rather than an exaggerated case of parties strategically converging toward the median voter, however, a more plausible explanation for this lack of party differentiation lies in the non-programmatic nature of electoral competition. Instead of clear stances on issues, most parties are organized around personalities and clientelistic networks dominated by a small group of elites. Furthermore, many parties participate in shifting alliances, for example the K-4 coalition consisting of Lakas, the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), the LP, and two other parties that jointly backed the reelection of the incumbent president. Even when such coalitions hold together, voters may have difficulty distinguishing among their constituent parties in terms of left–right profiles, and parties themselves are quite ready to abandon ideology (if they have any) for marriages of electoral convenience.

For comparative purposes, the rankings of Australian parties are reported in Table 4e. These figures largely conform to familiar depictions of the party space, including an overall right-of-center tilt of the electorate, as the coalition parties are further from the center than Labor. If one accepts that the Liberal and National parties in 1996 and Labor and the Democrats in 2004 virtually occupied identical points on the left–right scale, party rankings are largely consistent. The spectrum widened in 2004, as the Greens' turn to the left was matched by the Liberals' rightward shift. In practical terms, this moved the political center of gravity slightly to the right, since the Liberal-led government returned to office with an increased majority (only Labor and the Coalition parties won seats in the House of Representatives). Interestingly, Pauline Hanson's One Nation, often portrayed as an extreme anti-immigrant party, is not seen as a far-right force (except by Green voters), suggesting that the left–right schema in Australia is defined not by immigration or other "cultural" issues, but rather by the traditional economic dimension.

Party rankings in New Zealand (reported in Table 4f) contain two notable features. First, as the only country examined here with a proportional electoral system,[30] a wider ideological spectrum compared with all other cases (except Japan) comes as no surprise. Second, left–right rankings are largely consistent, a remarkable fact considering the large number of parties respondents were asked to place. Labour and the Alliance are clearly classified as leftist (joined by the Greens and Progressives in 2002) and the National Party and ACT as rightist (plus New Zealand First in 2002). Parties considered as centrist, namely New Zealand First in 1996 and United Future in 2002, had realistic prospects of joining coalitions on either side. Governments formed following both elections (a National–New Zealand First coalition in 1996 and a Labour–Progressive coalition supported by United Future and the Greens in 2002) consisted of ideologically adjacent parties (the Christian Coalition in 1996 and the Alliance in 2002 did not win any seats). It is noteworthy that the reduced polarization in 2002 is entirely attributable to a movement toward the center by parties on the right.

The width of a country's ideological spectrum cannot necessarily be measured by the difference between its left- and right-most parties, since one or both of these parties may receive miniscule support and play little role in shaping policy debates. Since we focus on public perceptions of where parties stand rather than on parties' positions as determined by experts or manifesto coding, a suitable alternative measure is offered by Van der Eijk et al. (2005).[31] Replicating this method, Table 5 lists indicators of polarization for the six countries examined. A clear distinction emerges

Table 5. Left–Right Polarization

	Indicator of polarization
Japan 1996	32.22
Japan 2004	24.34
Korea 2000	11.91
Korea 2004	34.06
Taiwan 1996	11.54
Taiwan 2001	10.05
Philippines 2004	3.93
Australia 1996	20.01
Australia 2004	26.52
New Zealand 1996	35.74
New Zealand 2002	27.93

Note: See note 31 for calculation of the indicator of polarization.

between Japan, Australia, and New Zealand as cases with higher left–right polarization, on the one hand, and Taiwan and the Philippines with considerably lower figures, on the other. Korea belongs to the latter group in 2000, but dramatically shifts to the former in 2004. Except for Korea in 2004, length of democratic experience seems to distinguish these two groups of countries.

The fact that electoral rules used in most countries contain a strong majoritarian character (in the form of parallel mixed systems with most seats allocated by plurality in Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, and preferential voting in Australia) hampers exploration of how electoral systems affect individual party placements and the overall width of ideological space, though the New Zealand cases suggest a link between proportional representation and a wider left–right spectrum. Taiwan would be a counterexample to this proposition, however, since all its parties are congregated near the center despite a semi-proportional single nontransferable voting system used in the two elections covered here.[32] Regarding constitutional structure, one observes a clear distinction between presidential and parliamentary systems. With the singular exception of Korea in 2004, most parties in presidential regimes (Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines) converge toward the center, while those in parliamentary systems (Japan, Australia, and New Zealand) are more widely distributed along the spectrum.

Findings: Left–Right Locations and Party Preference

Examination of voter and party left–right positions would only be meaningful if publics' placements affect their party preference. Merely identifying a position along the scale does not necessarily imply that such a response influences attitudes toward parties. We expect that the more institutionalized a party system is, the stronger the link between left–right locations and party preferences should be, since this means voters assess parties according to how closely each party's position matches their own. In contrast, where parties mobilize supporters through nonprogrammatic means, no relationship between voters' left–right self-placements and party preferences is expected. Furthermore, the correlations are hypothesized to be higher for parties located toward both ends of the spectrum, because they are more likely to generate stronger sentiments.

Table 6 displays correlations between respondents' left–right locations and likeability ratings for each party.[33] The likeability scale is used instead of the more direct question of which party respondents voted for as an indicator of party preference, because in multiparty systems voters may have favorable opinions toward more than one party, since party sympathy is not necessarily exclusive. In addition, this measure allows assessment of the relationship between left–right placement and attitudes toward small parties that only a few respondents voted for and also permits the inclusion of nonvoters' views. Therefore, this measure offers a more complex indicator than the exclusive and dichotomous vote question.

Correlations for all parties in Australia and New Zealand are significant, meaning that voters' left–right self-placements are strongly associated with their party preferences. This implies that, from the voters' viewpoint, parties present distinct positions on the most salient political issues, thus allowing meaningful choices. Both Japan and Korea moved toward this state of affairs in 2004, with voters perceiving those parties with previously indistinct ideological profiles as assuming clearer policy stances. One should note that this trend implies greater clarification, but not necessarily greater polarization, of party competition.

Results from Japan, Australia, and New Zealand validate the hypothesis that assessment of parties located further from the center is more highly correlated with voters' self-placements; this is true for parties on both the right (the LDP in Japan, Liberals and Nationals in Australia, and the National Party and ACT in New Zealand) and left (the JCP in Japan, Labor and the Greens in

Table 6. Left–Right Self-placements and Party Preferences

Japan	1996	2004	Korea	2000	2004
LDP	0.42**	0.40**	GNP	0.13**	0.47**
NFP	0.15**		MDP	–0.02	0.14**
DPJ	0.03	–0.09**	ULD	0.07*	0.16**
JCP	–0.29**	–0.18**	DPP	0.09*	
SDPJ	0.03	–0.10**	DLP	–0.06	–0.27**
Komeito		0.12**	NKPH	0.06	
			Uri		–0.33**
Taiwan	**1996**	**2001**	**Philippines**	**2004**	
KMT	0.10*	0.15**	Lakas	0.25**	
DPP	–0.05	–0.06	NPC	0.12**	
NP	0.08	0.08*	LP	0.05	
PFP		0.17**	LDP	0.10**	
TSU		–0.09**	AD	0.06	
Australia	**1996**	**2004**	**New Zealand**	**1996**	**2002**
Labor	–0.36**	–0.41**	Labour	–0.47**	–0.43**
Liberal	0.46**	0.57**	National	0.63**	0.50**
National	0.44**	0.47**	NZ First	–0.14**	0.19**
Democrats	–0.12**	–0.20**	ACT	0.47**	0.43**
Green	–0.20**	–0.41**	Alliance	–0.53**	–0.36**
One Nation		0.21**	Christian Coalition	0.21**	
			Green		–0.36**
			United Future		0.09**
			Progressive		–0.41**

Note: Bivariate correlations: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Australia, and Labour, the Alliance, Greens, and Progressives in New Zealand).[34] It is notable that in Japan the DPJ lacked a distinct ideological stance in the eyes of voters in the first election it contested (1996), but had assumed a clearer profile by 2004. Whereas in the mid-1990s the Japanese party system was still in flux, by the mid-2000s a two-bloc system had emerged, with all parties identified with one side or the other. This is also confirmed by changes in voter assessment of the SDPJ.

Korea offers the most dramatic example of a previously undifferentiated party system moving toward ideological clarity. Within a short period of time, voters came to see not only more distinct positions for all parties along the left–right spectrum, but greater dissimilarities among them (indicated by higher correlations in 2004 than in 2000). Voters in Korea perceived large differences between the left and right camps, reflecting Korean parties' centrifugal movement observed in Table 4b. Furthermore, whereas left-leaning respondents in 2000 did not have a preferred party, two such options became available in 2004. Left–right identification had the greatest impact on attitudes toward the GNP and Uri, because these two parties were the electorally dominant actors in 2004 and took markedly rightist and leftist positions, respectively.

Once again, patterns in Taiwan suggest a less institutionalized party system in terms of left–right differentiation. The relationship between voters' left–right placements and party preferences did strengthen between 1996 and 2001, but the Democratic Progressive Party's ideological profile

remained amorphous from the voters' perspective. While the TSU established a clear leftist stand, this party's vote share was quite small. Thus, unlike in Japan and Korea, left-leaning voters in Taiwan lacked an ideologically proximate major party they could support. This imbalance may be attributable to Taiwan's ethnic divide, a cleavage that the left–right schema cannot capture. While party-system stabilization does not require programmatically based competition, one may question whether political conflict that primarily revolves around ethnic lines offers voters meaningful policy choices at election time. No cross-time comparison can be made for the Philippines, but the prevalence of personalities and pork-barrel politics offers little prospect of issue-based elections in the near future.

Summary and Conclusion

After reviewing the literature on the utility and relevance of the left–right schema and how it relates to party preference, this article has tested the applicability of the spatial framework in East Asia, specifically investigating whether publics in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, as well as Australia and New Zealand, recognize the terms "left" and "right" with respect to themselves and the parties competing for their support and whether this schema has heuristic value in determining party preferences. This small sample includes countries covering a range of different historical experiences with democracy, as well as party systems in different degrees of flux, thus allowing an analysis of how these variations affect left–right cognition and assessment of parties.

Regarding left–right cognition among the public, respondents in more established democracies are more able to offer self-placements, as longer experience with policy debates and party competition would lead one to expect. Highly educated segments of the public display greater familiarity with the schema; the same is true for high-income and male respondents. While political interest is significantly linked to left–right cognition in some countries, the absence of a stronger relationship may be attributable to using closeness to party as a less than ideal proxy for interest.

Turning to cognition of parties' left–right positions, the important factor appears to be those parties' electoral success rather than length of history. Voters in Japan, with more than five decades of democracy, consistently rank parties from left to right. In the three new democracies, Korean voters show greater cognition of left–right positions for themselves and the parties competing for their support, despite an array of new parties and significant shifts in party positions; Philippine voters display an even greater level of familiarity with the semantics of left and right, in spite of non-programmatic party competition; voters in Taiwan are least cognizant of the left–right dimension in terms of both self-placement and party ranking.

Similar patterns are observed when the relationship between voters' self-placements and attitudes toward individual parties are examined. While the party systems in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are all moving toward greater ideological clarity in the eyes of the electorate, with parties assuming clearer profiles along the left–right continuum, this trend is most marked in Korea and least so in Taiwan. Exploring the content of left and right in these countries and comparing them with cleavages in both established and new democracies in other regions of the world are important topics for further research.

An important topic not analyzed in this article concerns the meaning of ideological labels. The crucial question of whether left and right carry the same connotations in East Asia as in advanced western democracies has not been addressed due to limitations imposed by the surveys used. According to Dalton (2006), spatial semantics are mainly anchored by attitudes toward gender roles and national pride in Asian democracies,[35] in contrast to both established western democracies

and ex-communist Eastern European nations, where views on government's role in the economy and religion define left and right. However, in view of considerable disparities in historical legacies as well as current political contexts within the region, country-specific analysis is likely to yield results concealed by regional generalizations.

Examining cases from Western Europe, Freire (2006, 2008) identifies social, value-based, and partisan components structuring the left–right schema. This framework can be usefully applied to exploring the structuring of left and right in democracies elsewhere, and the finding that the importance of value-based and partisan components increases with party-system polarization is particularly relevant in view of the figures shown in Table 5. Comparing value-based and partisan anchoring of left and right, Knutsen (1997) demonstrates that the former plays a stronger role in more advanced societies, while the latter is more important in countries with fewer parties as well as in less developed economies. Taken together, one may hypothesize that value-based factors exert most influence on left–right orientations in Japan and Korea, partisan factors in Taiwan, and that neither play a significant role in the Philippines. These expectations call for empirical testing.

With its acclaimed universality and absorptive capacity, the left–right schema serves the purposes of orientation and communication, offering the public shortcuts to understanding complex political discourses and parties tools to shape discussion and attract support. Utilization of left–right heuristics for voting may encourage party-system stabilization, particularly in countries where parties, and democracy itself, are relatively new phenomena. Even in established democracies, the quality of democracy would be enhanced by parties providing voters with clearly differentiated choices. Accordingly, even if its underlying components undergo changes as new issues and cleavages become salient, the left–right schema is likely to remain an important feature for both vote choice and party-system stability.

Appendix 1: CSES Questionnaire Wording

Left–Right Placement of Self and Parties

In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right? Now, using the same scale where would you place [party name]?

Close to Party

Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular political party?

1. No.
2. Yes.

Party Preference

I'd like to know what you think about each of our political parties. After I read the name of a political party, please rate it on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly dislike that party and 10 means that you strongly like that party. If I come to a party you haven't heard of or you feel you do not know enough about, just say so.

Appendix 2: Names of Abbreviated Political Parties

Japan

DPJ: Democratic Party of Japan
JCP: Japan Communist Party
JSP: Japan Socialist Party
LDP: Liberal Democratic Party
NFP: New Frontier Party
SDPJ: Social Democratic Party of Japan

Korea

DLP: Democratic Labor Party
DPP: Democratic People's Party
GNP: Grand National Party
MDP: Millennium Democratic Party
NKPH: New Korea Party of Hope
ULD: United Liberal Democrats

Taiwan

DPP: Democratic Progressive Party
KMT: Nationalist Party (Kuomintang)
NP: New Party
PFP: People First Party
TSU: Taiwan Solidarity Union

Philippines

AD: Aksyon Demokratiko
Lakas: Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats
LDP: Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino
LP: Liberal Party
NPC: Nationalist People's Coalition

Notes

1. Similarly, Butler and Stokes state that left and right "offer the only possibility" of organizing issues into a single dimension (1969: 204).
2. One of the sharpest critiques about the utility of the left–right continuum comes from Stokes (1963), who asserts that a spatial interpretation of party competition fails to meet the criteria of unidimensionality, stability of structure, ordered dimensions, and common references among elites and mass publics.
3. Knutsen (1995, 1999) extends these findings to demonstrate that these two components are compounded by showing high correlations between values and party choice.
4. Fuchs and Klingemann offer the insight that left–right self-placement is "different or perhaps more than a summary statement of many issue positions of the day," and also "different and perhaps less than ideological self-identification" (1989: 233).

5. Studies in Britain and Canada show no more than 40 percent of respondents able to correctly place parties along the spectrum of, and attach definitions to, left and right (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Lambert et al., 1986), while Mainwaring (1999: 135) cites a survey in which 60–80 percent of urban Brazilians did not know what the left–right distinction connotes.
6. Empirical evidence for public recognition of left and right can be found in surveys conducted in France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, in which about 70–80 percent of respondents were able to place themselves along the left–right continuum (Converse and Pierce, 1973; Klingemann, 1972; Sani, 1974).
7. McAllister and White report that the match between voters' left–right self-placements and the positions of the parties they voted for is much closer in established than in newer democracies (2007: 210). Dalton and Weldon cast the blame for this not on the lack of democratic aspirations and support on the part of publics, but instead on the failure of elites to create conditions that foster partisanship (2007: 192).
8. The DPJ improved on its previous vote and seat shares in the 2000 and 2003 House of Representatives (lower house) elections and in the 2004 and 2007 House of Councillors (upper house) elections. However, it suffered a serious setback in the 2005 lower house election.
9. For example, Kim Jong Pil's United Liberal Democrats (ULD) and Kim Dae Jung's National Congress for New Politics (which later became the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP)) were formed preceding and immediately following local elections in 1995, respectively.
10. The absence of a class cleavage is shown by Lee and Glasure (1995), who found that household income does not have a significant relationship to partisanship.
11. Two parties from the democratic opposition, Kim Young Sam's Reunification Democratic Party and Kim Jong Pil's New Democratic Republican Party, joined the governing Democratic Justice Party, which was the mainstay of authoritarian rule during the 1980s, to form the Democratic Liberal Party.
12. Yu's (2005) profiles of the sociopolitical bases of identification with three parties include the following factors: age, education, occupation, provincial origin, ethnic identity, and attitude on the question of unification or independence. Class and religion (or religiosity) are conspicuously left out.
13. Broadly speaking, the issue of national identity in Taiwan refers to attitudes on two questions: (1) whether Taiwan should move toward unification with mainland China or formal independence and (2) Chinese versus Taiwanese self-identification.
14. Regression analysis based on a postelection survey reveals that determinants of respondents' party evaluations include two valence issues (namely, corruption and public works) and only a single positional issue, namely national identity, despite voters wishing to downplay this cleavage (Hsieh and Niou, 1996).
15. These are available at http://www.cses.org.
16. Module 1 of the CSES includes the Thai election of 2001, but questions on self-placements and party left–right placements were not asked in this study.
17. Both Korea and Taiwan have unicameral legislatures. For Japan, the 1996 data refer to a House of Representatives (lower house) election, while the 2004 survey was conducted following a House of Councillors (upper house) election. The 2004 Philippines data refer to a House of Representatives (lower house) election. Where voters cast more than one ballot, party-list votes (in the Australian case, first preference votes) are used.
18. The effect of party-system stability may be less straightforward than it first appears: continuity in the identity of parties contesting one election to the next is expected to increase voters' familiarity with parties' left–right positions, yet some scholars suggest that it is precisely in countries where party labels alter most frequently that left–right orientations are important in guiding vote choice, in place of party identification.
19. The relationship between left–right recognition of a party and its length of history is unlikely to be linear, so the natural log of years since each party's founding is used in the analysis.
20. Dalton and Tanaka (2007) discuss left–right cognition and party placement on the left–right spectrum in a number of East Asian and Australasian countries. Figure 1 in their article provides a succinct visual summary of voters' average left–right placements and standard deviations. However, they do not address

the issue of whether parties' left–right positions are consistently ranked among supporters of each party (see next section).

21. The established democracies include Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the USA. The ex-communist new democracies include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia.
22. The terms "progressive" and "conservative" were used in place of "left" and "right," respectively, in the Japanese surveys.
23. That is when a country achieves a score of seven or higher on the ten-point democracy scale (and does not fall below this mark subsequently) according to the Polity IV dataset.
24. This refers to Kim Young Sam, Kim Dae Jung, and Kim Jong Pil, powerful party bosses with strong regional support bases who dominated the Korean political scene in the first decade and a half following democratization. The former two served as presidents in 1993–98 and 1998–2003, respectively.
25. Data on year of founding and vote share are based on information contained in the CSES datasets. The Social Democratic Party of Japan is listed as having been founded in 1996 in the 1996 survey, but 1945 in the 2004 survey. The latter date is used here. The party was simply renamed in 1996. Seat share is used for the 2004 survey of the Philippines because the dataset does not provide information on vote share.
26. Inglehart and Klingemann (1976: 254) have remarked that "standard deviations tend to be higher for the parties of the left" in their study of nine European countries, but similar patterns are not observed here. Note that the figures cited by these authors involved supporters for each party only, whereas the numbers shown in Table 3 are calculated from the entire sample.
27. Instead of party preference (not available in many cases), the party for which respondents cast their ballots is used. This necessarily excludes nonvoters from Tables 4a–f.
28. Komeito voters' placing of the SDPJ to the right of DPJ is not insignificant, since supporters of all other parties (as well as expert coding) detected a relatively large distance between these two parties. It is also notable that Komeito supporters perceived the political spectrum as narrower than did other groups.
29. The DPJ did coordinate candidate selections with the SDPJ (and the People's New Party, a small splinter from the LDP) in the 2007 upper house elections, defeating the LDP–Komeito coalition in a landslide by Japanese standards.
30. Similar to the four East Asian cases examined in this article, New Zealand also uses a mixed system. The key difference is that the majoritarian and proportional components of the system are linked in New Zealand, so that seat allocation reflects each party's vote share.
31. Left–right polarization is measured as follows:

$$\Sigma(|LRm - LRpx| * EPpx / LRm * 100$$

where LRm = the numerical center of the left–right scale (5), $LRpx$ = the position of party x on the left–right scale as perceived by voters (first column of Table 3), and $EPpx$ = the vote share of party x (Van der Eijk et al., 2005: 185).

32. A parallel mixed system with most seats allocated by first past the post was adopted in 2005 and used for the first time in the 2008 legislative election.
33. Assessment of parties is based on the question asking how much respondents like each party on an 11-point scale (0 = strongly dislike and 10 = strongly like).
34. The Australian left–right spectrum seems to be comprised mainly of the economic dimension. A value dimension would probably see One Nation placed at the extreme right, but this is beyond the scope of the present article.
35. In addition to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, Dalton (2006) also includes India and Turkey in this category.

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