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The Asymmetrical Structure of Left/Right Disagreement: Left-Wing Coherence and Right-Wing
Fragmentation in Comparative Perspective

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Abstract

The left/right semantic is used widely to describe the patterns of party competition in democratic countries. This paper examines the patterns of party policy in Anglo-American and Western European countries on three dimensions of left-right disagreement: wealth redistribution, social morality, and immigration. The central questions are whether, and why, parties with left-wing or right-wing positions on the economy systematically adopt left-wing or right-wing positions on immigration and social morality. The central argument is that left/right disagreement is asymmetrical: leftists and rightists derive from different sources, and thus structure in different ways, their opinions about policy. Drawing on evidence from Benoit & Laver's (2006) survey of experts about the policy positions of political parties, the results of the empirical analysis indicate that party policy on the economic, social and immigration dimensions are bound together by parties on the left, but not by parties on the right. The paper concludes by outlining implications of left/right asymmetry for unified theories of party competition.

Key Words: left-right classification; policy goals; economic issues; social issues

The categories of left and right underlie a language of political disagreement that is used the same way in a wide range of countries to describe the opinions of voters, the preferences of activists, and the policies of political parties across a number of issues. These categories describe opposing positions in debates surrounding wealth redistribution, gay and lesbian rights, women's rights, immigration, cultural diversity, the separation of church and state, the use of military force, and, more recently, environmental policy. The left/right division applies widely across time. Noberto Bobbio (1996, 60) notes that the left/right semantic has been used for more than two centuries to describe what he calls the enduring ideological conflict between "equality" and "inequality". The left/right division applies widely across countries. Alain Noel and Jean-Philippe Thérien (2008, 19) describe the left and the right as two "contrasting worldviews," a debate about the meaning of equality that applies in virtually every country in the world. Indeed, the language of left and right is so pervasive that Alford, Funk and Hibbing (2005, 153) wondered recently, in their provocative article in the *American Political Science Review*, if the left-right division is not inherent to humans as humans, a manifestation of genetically underpinned ideological cleavages that shape in similar ways the lines of political division across issues, across countries, and across time.

Not everybody has always been comfortable with the dominant view that the left/right divide represents overarching conflicts between bipolar ideologies (Conover & Feldman 1981; Kerlinger 1967). Pamela Conover and Stanley Feldman (1981), for example, argued that liberals and conservatives – the American equivalent of left/right – did not hold opposing views about the same things, but, rather, they held views about altogether different things. According to Conover and Feldman (1981, 624) "...liberal and conservative labels have meanings which are not structured in a bipolar or dimensional fashion. Instead, those concepts associated with a positive evaluation of one term are likely to differ considerably from those central to determining a positive evaluation of the other (Conover & Feldman 1981, 624). This basic line of argument, however, attracted little support in the literature. First, there was an apparent empirical problem. Jean Laponce (1981) had found that left-wingers and right-wingers did tend to emphasize the same issues, that the left was the opposite of the right. Second, there was an apparent matter of logic to consider. Conover and Feldman were criticized explicitly on this point by Paul Sniderman, Richard Brody and Philip Tetlock. According to Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock (1991, 146), "liberalism and conservatism are alternatives [because] to favour one is to oppose the other. To support a liberal policy implies one should oppose the conservative alternative..."

This paper builds from the view that Conover and Feldman were by and large correct, but that their argument, and the subsequent debate, missed a critical point about ideology. Ideology is not just about the issues that people care about. And ideology is not just about the opinions that people take on issues. At its core, the concept of ideology is about the big ideas, the "psychological constraints," that bind opinions about multiple issues into coherent clusters of political viewpoints (Converse 1964, 210). In other words, ideology is about how and why individuals organize their opinions the way that they do, about multiple issues. From this perspective, it makes sense to conjecture that the *organization* of policy preferences is likely to vary at the same level of analysis as the *content* of those policy preferences. People who think about the same issue from the standpoint of altogether different "big ideas" are not only likely to disagree in terms of their opinions about that issue, but they are also likely to disagree about how that issue fits together "logically" with other issues in the political environment. Indeed, the

main argument of this paper is that left-wingers and right-wingers derive from different “big ideas”, and therefore organize in different ways, their opinions about policy. More specifically, left-wingers tend to think of economic and social policies as if they belong to a single domain of consideration; right-wingers tend to think of economic and social policies as if they are separate domains of consideration. The language of left and right may be single-dimensional and symmetrical, but ideological disagreement is neither of those things. What are the implications for party policy?

I. Ideology and Party Policy

The traditional spatial model of party competition treats political parties as ideologically flexible vote-seeking organizations that appeal strategically to the preferences of voters. Thus, Downs (1957) reasoned that the political parties in a two-party system tend to converge toward the position of the “median voter;” the position, by definition, that is closer than any other position to the preferences of the largest share of the electorate. Despite this core prediction of the median voter model, there are systematic and enduring differences in the policy positions of political parties. Indeed, these differences exist even in the two-party American system where the conditions are especially favourable for the hypothesis of party convergence (Fiorina 2006; McClosky, Hoffman & O’Hara 1960, 410, 426).

Political scientists turned attention to the role of party activists as ideological anchors against the centralizing pressures of party strategy in a competitive electoral environment. There are a number of theoretical reasons to expect that party activists tend to be more ideological than voters in the electorate (Aldrich 1983a; 1983b; Converse 1964; Cross & Young 2002; Moon 2004). First, the high personal costs associated with party activism mean that people with especially strong commitments to a party agenda are likely to be over-represented among party activists. Citizens who are indifferent between parties, or otherwise apathetic, are unlikely to get involved as party activists (Aldrich 1983a; 1983b). Second, citizens with high levels of formal education and political interest are more likely than others to participate in a political party. These citizens are also more likely than others to think ideologically about political issues (Converse 1964, 213; Sniderman, Brody & Tetlock 1991). For both of these reasons, then, we might expect that party activists will tend to think in ideological terms about politics.

The empirical evidence bears out these theoretical predictions (Constantini and Valenty 1996; Fiorina 2006, 17; Zaller 1992). McCloskey, Hoffman & O’Hara (1960) found that political leaders in American political parties tended to be more polarized ideologically than rank-and-file members. And Fiorina (2006, 17) found more recently that policy disagreements tended to be more pronounced between delegates to the Republican and Democratic conventions than between party identifiers in the electorate. This core finding has been replicated in the Canadian context as well (Cross & Young 2002; Marvick 1983). Cross and Young (2002, 859) find, in the Canadian case, “...clear patterns of differentiation between parties in terms of their members’ views, and that within each party there is considerable agreement among party members.”

Ideologically-charged activists are likely to affect party policy in a number of ways. First, as Aldrich (1983a, 985) observes, party leaders are likely to be drawn from among a base of committed party activists. To the extent that party activism is ideologically motivated, political leaders are likely to carry with them the core ideological convictions of the party from which they emerged. Second, however, even purely office-seeking politicians are likely to be

influenced, in important ways, by the political activists in their party. As Coleman (1972, 334) points out, politicians typically have to win nominations within their own party before they can compete in a general election against the candidates from other parties. Successful politicians therefore have to appeal strategically to the activists within their own party, “the base”, as well as to the voters in the electorate as a whole. This constraint is especially tight in circumstances where candidates have to win re-nomination by their party, and re-election by the public, in subsequent elections. A candidate who defects from the position of party activists to pursue a more strategic position in a general election is likely to be hampered by the “memory” of this defection in subsequent re-nomination campaigns (Aranson & Ordeshook 1972, 299). For these reasons, the manoeuvrability of even the most strategically minded candidates is likely to be constrained by an “activist pull” that tugs away from the median voter and toward ideological extremes (Miller & Schofield 2008, 488).

What, then, is the shape of this ideological pull by party activists? The answer to this question, typically, has been that the activists within left-wing parties pull their parties “to the left,” while the activists in right-wing parties pull their parties “to the right” (Aldrich 1983a; 1983b; Aranson & Ordeshook 1972, 307). This answer, however, rests on simplifying assumptions about the nature of political ideology. The first of these assumptions is that ideological disagreement is single-dimensional. This assumption manifests itself most clearly in the notion of a single left-right continuum; an assumption that has been challenged and defended on empirical grounds (e.g., Conover & Feldman, 1981; Klingemann, Volkens, Bara, Budge & McDonald, 2006; Stokes, 1963; Weisberg, 1980). The second assumption is that ideological disagreement, even if it is not single-dimensional, is at least symmetrical (Miller & Schofield 2008). This notion is the political science equivalent of Newton’s third law of motion: for every set of opinions there is an equal and opposite set of opinions. From either of these standpoints, the ideological pull by party activists on the left is simply the mirror image of the ideological pull by party activists on the right.

This paper builds from a less ordered conceptualization of ideological disagreement. The core assumption is that there are no inherent or normative connections between opinions or policies about any two issues. The organization of policy preferences is a dependent variable worthy of its own hypotheses (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1987). On this point, the evidence indicates that while people may be born with predispositions, they are not born with ready-made opinions (Alford, Funk & Hibbing, 2005; 2008). Opinions are formed through interactions of individual-level factors like personality, religiosity, partisanship and rationality (i.e., self-interest) and social factors like family upbringing, religion, party membership and socioeconomic class (Hatemi, Medland, Morley, Heath & Martin, 2007). Each of these influences generates a distinctive intersection of opinions for individuals and groups by affecting simultaneously more than one opinion. There are distinctive consequences for different configurations of influences. And each person is often subject to influences that push in opposing directions about exactly the same issues.

Conceptualizing opinions as intervening variables—that is, as ideas that do not exist *a priori*—limits the empirical prospects of mirror-image symmetry for three reasons. First, some of the best known influences on public opinion fail to generate comprehensive bundles of opinions about the universe of politically salient issues. Whatever the innate propensity toward religiosity, the dominant religious traditions in Western countries proscribe homosexuality and abortion but say little to nothing about tax policy and government spending initiatives. Thus, there is no guarantee that the complete preferences of any two individuals cover the same range

of issues. Individuals may agree on some issues and disagree on others, but it is also possible that there could be no agreement or disagreement of any kind in cases where two or more sets of preferences plough altogether parallel seigneuries of ideational terrain.

Second, diametrically opposing levels of exposure to a particular influence do not generate opposing opinions. Non-exposure should have no effect on opinions rather than an equal and opposite effect on the same range of opinions. Strongly pro-choice positions on abortion do not stem from “non-religion”, even though non-religion may underlie indifference and non-opinions about the issue. Conversely, strongly pro-life positions on abortion do not emerge from non-feminism, even though a non-commitment to gender equality may also underlie non-opinions and indifference about abortion. In short, different opinions about precisely the same issue stem nonetheless from different sources.

Third, two individuals can share the same opinion about the same issue, but for entirely different reasons. These different reasons can in turn underlie opposing opinions about some other issue. A highly religious citizen and a xenophobe may share an identical opinion about gays and lesbians, but they may part company in their opinions about abortion and immigration. Thus, the extent to which two individuals share common cause across multiple dimensions of political disagreement is not simply contingent on their agreement on a single issue, but also on the reasons for their agreement on that issue.

Taken together, there are few reasons to expect that symmetrical opposition across multiple dimensions of political thought is a characteristic of real-world political disagreement. If party policy reflects the effort by politicians to balance the sometimes competing demands of policy-seeking activists, on the one hand, with the strategic pressures toward office-seeking positions on the other (Conger & McGraw, 2008; Miller & Schofield, 2008), then the way that party activists organize their policy preferences across multiple dimensions of political disagreement is likely to affect in important ways how this balancing act plays out. On this point, there are few reasons to expect that the ideological pressures on the left are the same as the ideological pressures on the right. Left-wing and right-wing activists derive their policy preferences from different “big ideas.” These different big ideas, in turn, apply to different sets of policy issues. People who think about the same issue from the vantage point of an altogether different idea are likely to disagree not only in their opinion about that issue, but also in terms of how that issue fits together “logically” with other issues in the political environment. As a result, left-wing and right-wing activists are likely to disagree about how multiple policy issues fit together into “coherent” clusters of opinions. Left-wingers and right-wingers derive from different sources, and therefore structure in different ways, their opinions about policy. In multidimensional space, the “activist pull” on the left is likely to look quite different than the “activist pull” on the right.

II. Postulates and Hypotheses

There are at least four distinct ideological orientations that play key roles in shaping left-right opinions on the economic, social, and immigration dimensions. These ideological orientations are equality (Bobbio, 1996), free-market materialism (Inglehart, 1977; 1990; 1997), religion and out-group intolerance (Laponce, 1981). The theory adopted here proposes that political disagreements emerge when different ideologies push in opposing directions on opinions about the same issue. While a commitment to the principle of equality may underlie

support for same-sex marriage (Bobbio, 1996; Matthews, 2005), it does not follow that a commitment to “inequality” is what drives opposition to same-sex marriage. Rather, opposition to same-sex marriage may well stem from altogether different ideologies, like religion or out-group intolerance. This distinction is more than pedantic. It opens the possibility of fundamental differences between leftists and rightists in the way that they structure their opinions about the political world. These asymmetries are likely to manifest themselves at the level of party policy via the influences of core beliefs and values on the policy-seeking positions of party activists (Aldrich, 1983; Chappell & Keech, 1986; Wittman, 1983).¹

According to Bobbio (1996), the ideological underpinning of the political left is the abstract commitment to equality. Equality binds together for left-wing activists their opinions about the economy, social morality, and immigrants. Political activists who support wealth redistribution, despite their own socioeconomic security, are likely to adopt left-wing positions on the social and immigration dimensions. As a result, left-wing parties that are far removed from the center on any one of these policy dimensions are likely to be far-removed from the center on the other policy dimensions as well. Thus, the first expectation, H_1 , is that political parties with left-wing positions about the economy will also tend to hold left-wing positions about social morality and immigration.

The expectations are somewhat different when it comes to religion, free-market materialism, and out-group intolerance. These ideological influences do not transcend to the same extent as equality the multiple dimensions of left-right disagreement. Religions tend to generate right-wing opinions about social morality, but they are not systematically one-sided when it comes to wealth redistribution and immigration (Laponce, 1981). Free-market materialism may well generate right-wing opinions about the economy, but free-market materialists are probably indifferent when it comes to “post-material” debates surrounding immigration and social morality (Inglehart, 1997, 109). And those who harbour out-group animosity are likely to express negative opinions about people who are different, including, typically, gays, lesbians, racial minorities, and immigrants, but there is little reason to suppose that out-group intolerance affects opinions about wealth redistribution (Ivarsflaten, 2005), at least insofar as that redistribution does not benefit disproportionately people from undesirable out-groups (Gilens, 1995; 1996).

More formally, then, the second hypothesis, H_2 , is that political parties with right-wing positions on social morality will not necessarily adopt right-wing positions on the economic and immigration dimensions. The third hypothesis, H_3 , is that parties with right-wing opinions on the economic dimension will not necessarily have right-wing opinions on the social and immigration dimensions. And the fourth hypothesis, H_4 , is that parties with right-wing opinions on the immigration dimension will tend to have right-wing opinions on the social dimension, but they will not necessarily have right-wing positions on the economic dimension. The core point in the case of H_4 is that the people who dislike out-groups are probably more likely to express negative opinions about immigration and homosexuality. In effect, then, H_2 and H_4 combine to suggest that anti-immigrant parties are socially conservative, but socially conservative parties are not necessarily anti-immigrant.

III. Empirical Findings

To test these hypotheses, the analysis turns to data from Benoit and Laver's (2006) survey of experts about the policy positions of political parties. Benoit and Laver (2006) surveyed a total of 993 political scientists and national political experts from Western European and Anglo-American countries. Each expert was asked to locate the positions of the political parties in their country on a common battery of policy dimensions. These data are useful in research designs where it is necessary to treat the policies of a political party as potentially different than the opinions of the party's supporters in the electorate. The current analysis focuses in particular on party positions in 21 countries along three dimensions of left-right disagreement: "taxes versus spending", "immigration" and "social liberalism".² The cross-national breadth includes the twenty-one Western European and Anglo-American countries that were covered in Benoit and Laver's (2006) survey. And the analysis includes all of the political parties that received at least some (i.e., > 0.0%) of the popular vote in a national election.³

Overall, the political parties are distributed somewhat unevenly across the immigration and social dimensions. About sixty percent of the parties are to the left of the center (i.e., <10.5) on each of these dimensions. On the economic dimension, the parties divide symmetrically to the left and right of the centre. There are 81 parties on the economic left (53%); 72 parties on the economic right (47%). Nevertheless, party policies on the economic, social and immigration dimensions are firmly intertwined. The correlations (Pearson's r) between positions on the economic dimension and positions on the social and immigration dimensions are .59 and .73, respectively. The correlation between party policies on the immigration and social dimensions is even stronger: .82. These relationships can be illustrated in another way: moving ten points to the right on the economic dimension is associated, on average, with a seven point increase in social conservatism and an eight point increase in anti-immigration. Similarly, there is a nine point increase in social conservatism that accompanies each ten points rightward on the immigration dimension.

A closer inspection of party policies reveals that the strength of the linkages between party policies on the economic, immigration and social dimensions varies systematically across the political spectrum. Figure 1 plots the positions of parties on the economic (x-axis) and immigration (y-axis) dimensions. Political parties that combine their policy positions into "left-left" packages are in the bottom-left quadrant of the plane; parties with "right-right" packages are in the top-right quadrant. Thus, the axis of "left-right" disagreement runs diagonally from the bottom-left to the top-right corner in the graph. Linear (OLS) regression estimates of the magnitudes of the relationships are provided underneath the Figure.⁴ Notice how the positions of political parties—the dots in the graph—appear to trend diagonally from the bottom-left to the upper-right. The OLS estimates confirm this observation: the line of best fit begins at 2.4 on the y-axis when tax/spend is at one (i.e., $1.53 + 1(.878) = 2.4$), and it slopes upward to 19.1 on the y-axis when tax/spend is at twenty (i.e., $1.53 + 20(.878) = 19.1$). Yet, note as well that the parties on the economic left are clustered together, and the parties on the economic right are comparatively dispersed. As positioning on the economic dimension moves from left to right, the distance between the points in the graph increases substantially. The interpretation is straightforward. Immigration and economic policies are bundled tightly by parties on the left. But the immigration policies of political parties on the economic right are spread more evenly across the left-right continuum.

Figure 1 about Here

The results summarized in Figure 2 reflect a more pronounced version of the same pattern. Party positions on the economic dimension are summarized along the x-axis, and the y-axis corresponds to policy positions on the social liberalism dimension. Notice, first, that the regression line runs from the southwest to the northeast quadrant: the line begins at 3.1 on the social liberalism scale when tax/spend is at one (i.e., $2.36 + 1(.721) = 3.081$), and it ends at 16.8 on the social liberalism scale when tax/spend is at twenty (i.e., $2.36 + 20(.721) = 16.78$). In this case, however, the discrepancy between the coherence of the economic left, on the one hand, and the fragmentation of the economic right, on the other, is even more striking. The left-wing parties are huddled together in the bottom left quadrant. But the social policies of economically conservative parties are strewn across the left-right continuum. Indeed, of the twenty-eight parties on the far economic right (i.e., ≥ 15), forty percent of them are to the left of center in their social policies. By comparison, not one of the thirty parties on the far economic left (i.e., ≤ 5) is to the right of center in its social policies. There is, in short, a clear left-left pattern, but there is no right-right pattern. More formally, the magnitude of the relationship between the economic and social dimensions declines as economic policies move from left to right.

Figure 2 about Here

To this point, one plausible explanation for the fragmentation of the right is that there are, in effect, two rights: an economic right and a non-economic right. Parties on the economic right adopt right-wing positions on taxation and spending; parties on the non-economic right take up right-wing positions on social liberalism and immigration. A direct implication of this line of argument is that measuring the fragmentation of economically conservative parties by looking separately at their positions on the social and immigration dimensions is tantamount to double-counting: right-wing parties are not twice fragmented in their social and immigration policies, but singularly fragmented between an economic and a non-economic right.

The evidence in Figure 3 provides little support for this line of reasoning. Figure 3 plots the positioning of political parties on the immigration and social dimensions. On the whole, the connection between policies on the immigration and social dimension is very strong. The trajectory of the regression line slopes upward from left to right: it begins at 2.0 on the social dimension when immigration policy is at one (i.e., $1.163 + 1(.878) = 2.04$), and it ends at 18.7 on the social dimension when immigration policy is at twenty (i.e., $1.163 + 20(.878) = 18.7$). Indeed, the variation on the immigration dimension explains 66% of the variation on the social dimension. Even so, the magnitude of the relationship is not distributed evenly across the left-right continuum. The results indicate a great deal of left-wing coherence. Notice the cluster of parties in the bottom-left corner of the graphic. Of the 32 political parties on the far pro-immigrant left (i.e., ≤ 5), 100 percent are to the left of the center on the social dimension. And of the 44 parties on the far social left (i.e., ≤ 5), all but one of these parties (98%) are to the left of center on the immigration dimension.

Figure 3 about Here

The distribution of parties on the right, however, is more spread out. There is no single “non-economic” right. But there is a caveat. Far-right anti-immigration parties are socially conservative, but socially conservative parties are not opposed to immigration. Of the 27 political parties on the far anti-immigrant right (i.e., ≥ 15), all but three (89%) of these parties are

to the right of center in their social policies. Despite the social conservatism of anti-immigration parties, 13 of the 43 political parties (30%) on the far social right are actually to the *left* of center in their immigration policies. In short, the fragmentation of the right is somewhat uneven. There appears to be little about social conservatism that generates opposition to immigration, but something about opposition to immigration that generates social conservatism. There is an unrequited relationship, it seems, between the anti-immigrant right and the socially conservative right.

Taken together, the results of these analyses indicate that party policies on the economic, immigration and social dimensions are organized coherently among parties on the left, but not among parties on the right. These findings differ in a few ways from the kinds of expectations that arise from the “economic-left/social-left” and the “economic-right/social-right” dichotomies (e.g., Conover & Feldman 1981, 618; Miller & Schofield 2008, 433). There is little evidence of a distinction between an “economic left”, on the one hand, and a “non-economic left” on the other. The political parties that are on the economic left are simultaneously on the immigration and social lefts. Indeed, there are 30 political parties on the far economic left (i.e., ≤ 5); 100 percent of these parties are simultaneously to the left of center on the immigration and social dimensions. In effect, there is only one left on these issues; not two. H₁ is therefore confirmed.

The evidence for a distinction between the “economic” and “non-economic” right is similarly tenuous, but for precisely the opposite reason: there appear to be three rights, rather than two rights. There is an economic right, a social right, and an anti-immigrant right. As a result, the political parties that occupy the “right-wing” on a single-dimensional left-right continuum are in fact scattered, in multiple dimensions, across the political landscape. Socially conservative parties are not invariably committed to right-wing positions on the economic and immigration dimensions. H₂ is therefore confirmed. Fiscally conservative parties are flexible in their positions about social issues and immigration. H₃ is therefore confirmed. And anti-immigrant parties are systematically conservative in their positions on social issues, but they are spread quite evenly across the economic dimension. H₄ is therefore confirmed as well.

IV. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the discrete ideological underpinnings of left-wing and right-wing ideas generate asymmetries between the left and the right in the ways that ideologues bundle together their opinions across multiple dimensions of political disagreement. Party policies reflect these asymmetries as differences between left-wing and right-wing parties in the cross-national consistency of their positions on the economic, social and immigration dimensions. In particular, the positions of left-wing political parties are bound across multiple dimensions by the tendency of left-wing activists to organize around the principle of equality their opinions about wealth distribution, social morality and immigration. The same level of constraint does not apply for political parties on the right. The influence of various right-wing ideologies is not spread as extensively across the multidimensional space of political disagreement.

The core argument has implications for theories about the internal dynamics of political parties. Left-wing parties are more likely than are their right-wing counterparts to resemble an assemblage of like-minded individuals. Right-wing parties, by contrast, look more like a pragmatic coalition of different groups, particularly when these parties run on right-wing agendas across multiple policy dimensions. Simply, economic, social and immigration positions

do not fit together as naturally on the right as they do on the left. This same finding emerges in the opinions of voters (Cochrane 2010a), the preferences of activists (Cochrane 2010b), and in the policies of political parties.

These internal configurations may turn out to be mixed blessings for right-wing and left-wing parties. On the one hand, the ideological coherence within left-wing parties may render them less susceptible to fragmentation, at least on those policy dimensions that are within the reach of egalitarian frames. On the other hand, however, the concerted multidimensional pull of left-wing activists may make it more difficult for pragmatic politicians to manoeuvre these parties toward the political center. In mixed right-wing parties, for example, social conservatives are likely to work alongside party pragmatists for office-seeking positions on the economic dimension (e.g., Conger & McGraw 2008, 261). And fiscal conservatives are likely to work alongside party pragmatists for office-seeking positions on the social dimension. Presumably, neither the fiscal conservatives nor the social conservatives will want to jeopardize their party's shot at political power for the sake of ideological purity on policy dimensions that they care nothing about. In effect, then, right-wing pragmatists may be able to pit ideologues against each other in a way that the pragmatists on the left cannot. As a result, the "electoral pull" may be stronger vis-à-vis the "activist pull" in multidimensional right-wing parties than it is in multidimensional left-wing parties (Miller & Schofield 2008, 435). Even so, the activist pull that drives left-wing parties leftward, drives right-wing parties apart. In this respect, left-right differences in the origins and organization of opinions pose unique challenges for left-wing and right-wing parties.

Appendix A

Sample sizes and response rates

| | n | Rate (%) |
|----------------|-----|----------|
| Australia | 15 | n/a |
| Austria | 16 | 33.3 |
| Belgium | 23 | 16.8 |
| Canada | 104 | 17.0 |
| Denmark | 26 | 48.1 |
| Finland | 33 | 33.3 |
| France | 51 | 29.5 |
| Germany | 98 | 18.7 |
| Iceland | 12 | 52.2 |
| Ireland | 53 | 75.7 |
| Italy | 54 | 29.7 |
| Luxembourg | 4 | 5.8 |
| Netherlands | 23 | 29.5 |
| New Zealand | 21 | 28.8 |
| Norway | 21 | 56.8 |
| Portugal | 21 | 28.8 |
| Spain | 76 | 20.7 |
| Sweden | 67 | 27.5 |
| Switzerland | 51 | 25.9 |
| United Kingdom | 57 | 39.3 |
| United States | 167 | 23.0 |
| Total | 993 | 25.3 |

Notes: (1) Australia not included in the total response rate calculations.

Source: Benoit and Laver (2006, 158-159)

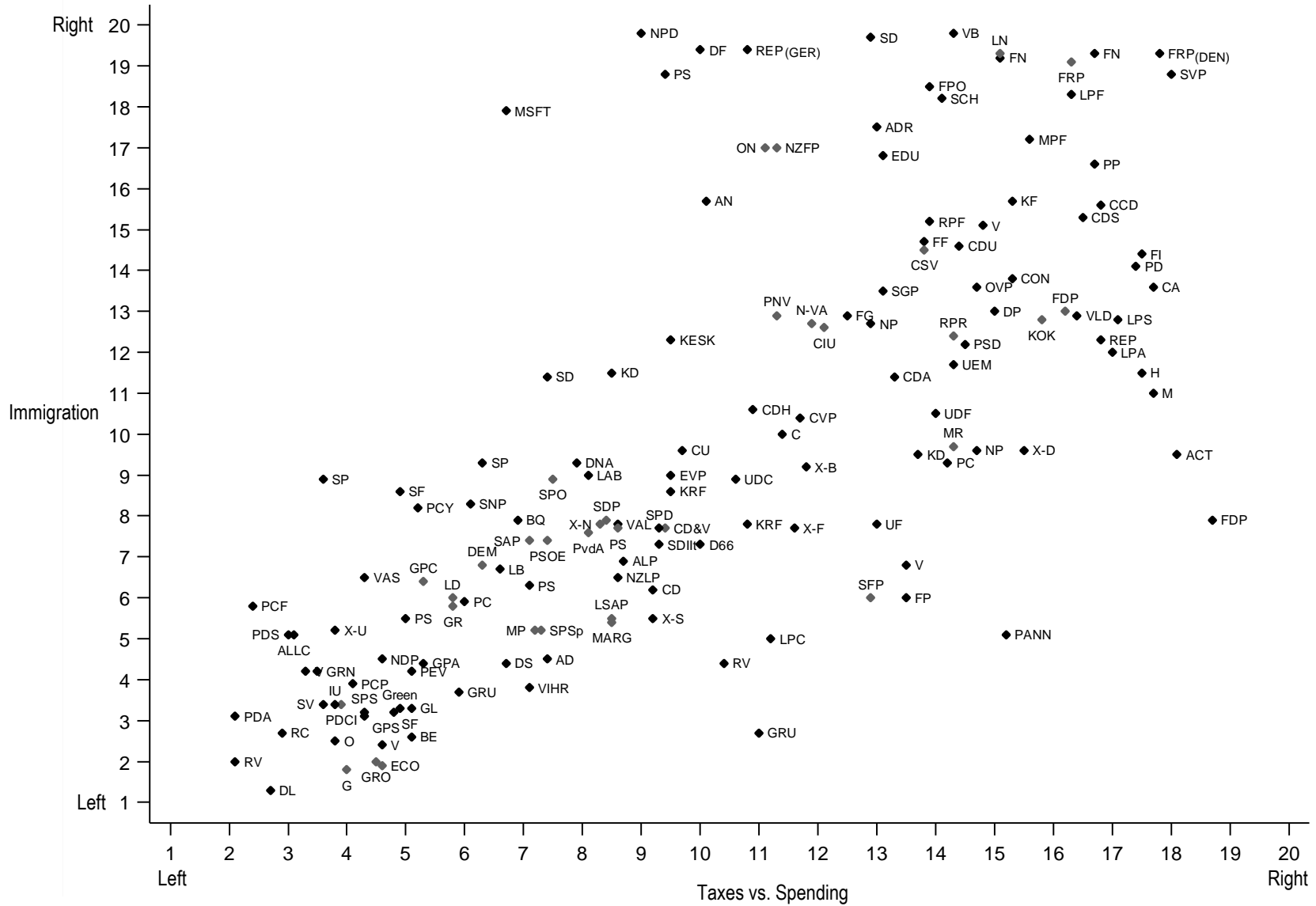
Appendix B

Party names and abbreviations, by country

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Australia</u> | | SDP | Social Democrats | LN | Lega Nord | SV | Soc. Left Party |
| GRN | Greens | SFP | Swedish People's | DS | Dem. di Sinistra | SP | Centre Party |
| AD | Democrats | KD | Christ. Democrats | Green | Fed. dei Verdi | <u>Portugal</u> | |
| ALP | Labour Party | KOK | Nat. Coal. Party | VAL | Lista di Pietro | PSD | Social Dem. Party |
| NP | National Party | PS | True Finns | MSFT | Mov. Soc. Fl. Tri. | CDS | People's Party |
| LPA | Liberal Party | VAS | Left Alliance | MARG | La Margherita | BE | Left Block |
| ON | One Nation | VIHR | Green League | PDCI | Comunisti Italiani | PCP | Communist Party |
| <u>Austria</u> | | <u>France</u> | | PANN | Lisa Pannella Bonino | PEV | Ecology Party |
| SPO | Social Democrats | UDF | Un. p. Dem. Fra. | RC | Rif. Comunista | PS | Socialist Party |
| GRU | The Greens | RPF | Ras. p. la France | SDI | Socialisti Democratici | <u>Spain</u> | |
| FPO | Freedom Party | RPR | Ras. p. la Repub. | UDC | Unione di Centro | PSOE | Soc. Workers' |
| OVP | People's Party | UEM | Union en Mouve. | <u>Luxembourg</u> | | CiU | Converg. & Union |
| <u>Belgium</u> | | FN | Front Nationale | CSV | Christ. Soc. People's | IU | United Left |
| VB | Flemish Block | MPF | Mouve. p. la FRA | DP | Democratic Party | PNV | Basque National. |
| PS | Socialist Party | PCF | Parti Communiste | ADR | Alt. Dem. Reform | PP | People's Party |
| N-VA | New Flem. All. | PS | Parti Socialiste | DL | The Left | <u>Sweden</u> | |
| GRO | Groen! | V | Les Verts | G | The Greens | SAP | Social Dem. Party |
| FN | National Front | <u>Germany</u> | | LSAP | Soc. Worker's Party | C | Centre Party |
| ECO | Ecolo | SPD | Social Dem. Party | <u>Netherlands</u> | | FP | Lib. People's |
| CDH | Hum. Dem. Center | GRU | Green Party | CDA | Christ. Dem. Appeal | KD | Christ. Democrats |
| CD&V | Christ. Dem. & Fl. | CDU | Christ. Dem. Un. | D66 | Democrats 66 | M | Moder. Coalition |
| SPSp | SP.A-Spirit | DVU | People's Union | VVD | Party for Fr. & Dem. | MP | Green Party |
| MR | Ref. Movement | FDP | Free Dem. Party | CU | Christian Union | <u>Switzerland</u> | |
| VLD | Flem. Lib. & Dem. | NPD | Nat. Dem. Party | GL | Green Left | CVP | Christ. Dem. Party |
| <u>Canada</u> | | PDS | Par. of Dem. Soc. | LPF | List Pim Fortuyn | FDP | Free Dem. Party |
| LPC | Liberal Party | REP | Republicans | PvdA | Labour Party | SPS | Social Dem. Party |
| BQ | Bloc Quebecois | SCH | Recht. Offensive | SGP | Ref. Political Party | SVP | People's Party |
| CA | Canadian Alliance | <u>Iceland</u> | | SP | Socialist Party | EDU | Fed. Dem. Union |
| GPC | Green Party | X-D | Indep. Party | <u>New Zealand</u> | | SD | Swiss Democrats |
| NDP | New Dem. Party | X-B | Progressive Party | NZLP | Labour Party | EVP | Evangel. People's |
| PC | Prog. Conservative | X-F | Liberal Party | PC | Prog. Coalition | GPS | Green Party |
| <u>Denmark</u> | | X-N | New Force | ALLC | Alliance | LPS | Liberal Party |
| K | Kons. Folkeparti | X-S | Social Dem. All. | ACT | ACT New Zealand | <u>United Kingdom</u> | |
| V | Liberal | X-U | Left-Green Mov. | GPA | Green Party | SNP | Scot. Nat. Party |
| CD | Center Democrats | <u>Ireland</u> | | NP | National Party | PCY | Plaid Cymru |
| DF | People's Party | FF | Fianna Fail | NZFP | NZL First Party | LD | Liberal Democrats |
| O | Red-Green Alliance | PDS | Prog. Democrats | UF | United Future | CON | Cons. Party |
| FRP | Progress Party | FG | Fine Gael | <u>Norway</u> | | LAB | Labour Party |
| KRF | Christ. People's | GRU | Greens | H | Conservative Party | <u>United States</u> | |
| RV | Radical Lib. Party | LB | Labour | KRF | Christian Dem. Party | REP | Republican Party |
| SD | Social Democrats | SF | Sinn Fein | V | Liberal Party | DEM | Democratic Party |
| SF | Soc. People's Party | <u>Italy</u> | | DNA | Labour Party | | |
| <u>Finland</u> | | FI | Forza Italia | FRP | Progress Party | | |
| KESK | Centre Party | AN | Allenza Nazionale | RV | Red Elect. Alliance | | |

Source: Benoit & Laver (2006)

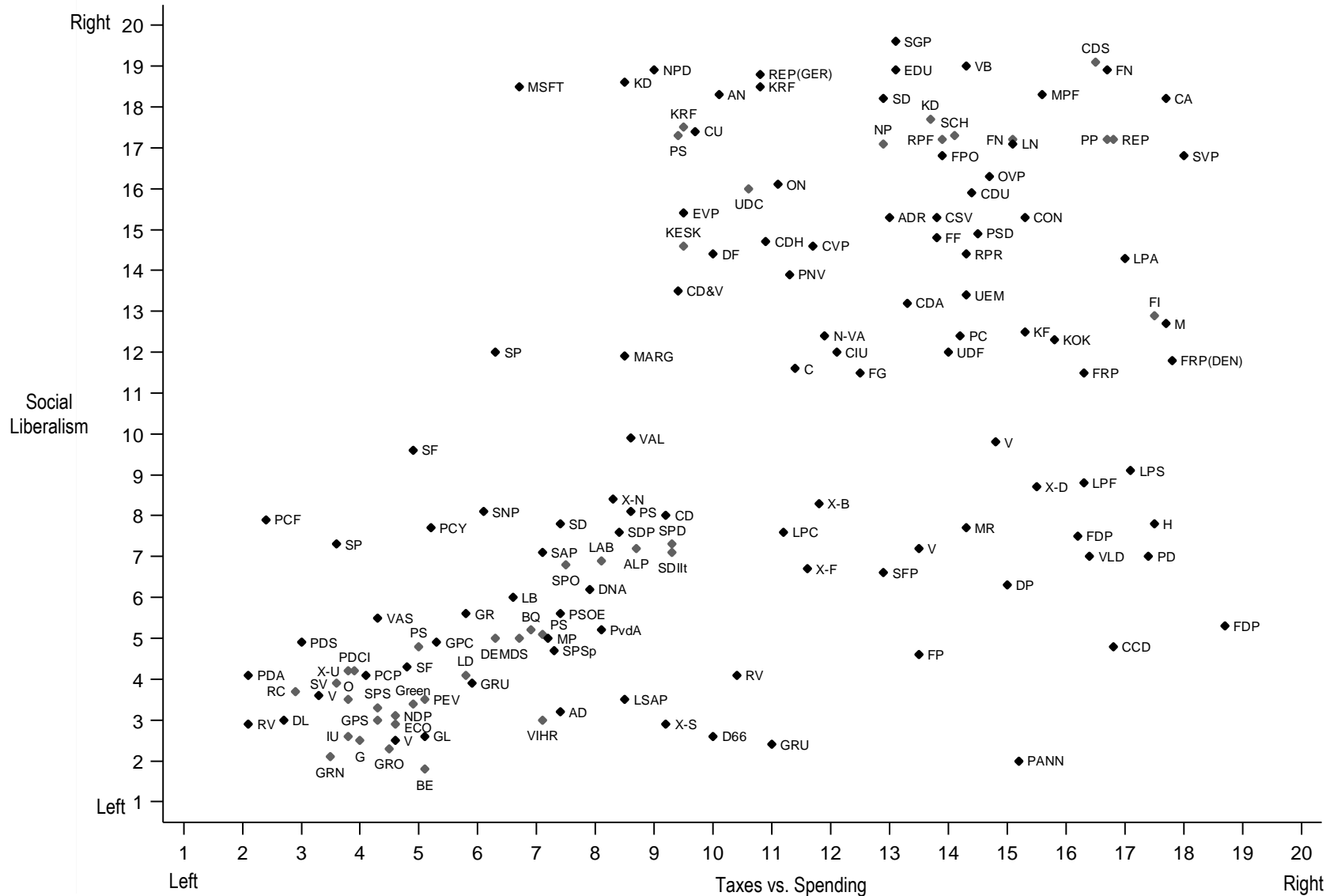
Figure 1: Party Policy on the Economic and Immigration Dimensions in Two-Dimensional Space



OLS estimates & diagnostics: obs. = 153, a = 1.527, b = .878, se = .052, t = 16.92, Adj. R² = .51, Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg $\chi^2 = 9.45$ (p < .01)

Source: Benoit & Laver 2006

Figure 2: Party Policy on the Economic and Social Liberalism Dimensions in Two-Dimensional Space



Notes: (1) New Zealand Missing on Social Liberalism

OLS estimates & diagnostics: obs. = 145, a = 2.356, b = .721, se = .082, t = 8.82, Adj. R² = .35, Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg $\chi^2 = 10.34$ (p < .01)

Source: Benoit & Laver 2006

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Notes

¹ There are key non-ideological influences on mass opinion, such as socioeconomic status, which operate at cross-purposes on aspects of left-right disagreement (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). As a result, many citizens support the political left on some dimensions and the political right on others (Iverson, 2005; Miller & Schofield, 2008). Even so, the highest levels of political activism are confined almost exclusively to segments of the population with high levels of socioeconomic status (Lindquist, 1964; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). Moreover, incurring the costs of political activism makes little sense from the narrow cost-benefit standpoint of private self-interest (Olson, 1965). The private incentives that politicians glean from electoral victory are virtually non-existent for rank-and-file activists (Downs 1957b). In this sense, it is not surprising that existing empirical research points toward ideological considerations, rather than self-interest, as the dominant source of motivation among political activists (Cross & Young, 2002). These ideological considerations are the focus of this paper.

² The experts were asked for each dimension to position the political parties in their country on a twenty-point scale ranging from 1 to 20. The placement criteria on the “taxes versus spending” dimension compares “promotes raising taxes to increase public services (1)”, on the one hand, to “promotes cutting public services to cut taxes (20)”, on the other. Experts were asked to position parties on the immigration dimension between “favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants integrate into [country name] society (1),” versus “favours policies designed to help asylum seekers and immigrants return to their country of origin (20).” And the social liberalism dimension is bounded between “favours liberal policies on matters such as abortion, homosexuality and euthanasia (1),” at one extreme, and “opposes liberal policies on matters such as abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia (20),” at the other extreme. The survey also includes a question about the “left-right” positioning of political parties in all of the countries except France. Thus, the data on left-right positioning for parties in France are derived from Lubbers’ (2004) survey of experts about the positioning of political parties in Western Europe.

³ See Appendix A for sample sizes and response rates. See Appendix B for party coverage, names, and abbreviations.

⁴ Estimates are provided for the intercept (a), slope (b), standard error (se), statistical significance (t), and the percentage of explained variance (R^2). For samples of this size, a t-value of 1.98 indicates a statistically significant relationship at the 95 percent level; a t-value of 3.35 indicates a statistically significant relationship at the 99.9 percent level. The Chi-Square of the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity gauges the extent to which the deviation of points from the slope varies across levels of x (i.e., the pattern of the residuals). A statistically significant result indicates that the observations deviate to different extents at different points along the regression line (i.e., that the error is heterogeneous).