

When Does the Left-Right Dimension Have Meaning in an Election?

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Prepared for delivery at the workshop entitled “What were the Elections about? How Do We Know It?” October 24, 2010, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel.

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Determining how meaningful any attribute of an electoral campaign is to the decision of voters is quite complex. It is even more so in cross-national research. Most are content to take an evidence-based, use-validity approach. That is, if it is a variable (or variables) with a statistically significant coefficient in a reasonably well-formulated vote choice equation, then it must have been meaningful to a sufficiently large part of the electorate to be a part of the “story” of the election. In that light, there are dozens and dozens of variables that contribute to the “meaning” of an election. These add up to far too many to provide “the meaning” of it.

Among these variables, however, is the measure that is the subject of this paper, a “left-right” scale. Unlike many of those dozens of variables with significant coefficients, it is a variable that is often considered as at least a part of the story of the election. It is so considered by pundits, political scientists, politicians, and, possibly, even by the public. It is therefore a serious candidate for consideration of those factors that provide some of the meaning to an election.

In this paper we argue that determining the meaningfulness of such a scale as the left-right dimension is complex and multi-faceted. And in this paper, we offer evidence about the first of a series of steps that should be taken to assess the meaningfulness of the left-right scale to voters and thus to elections. In particular, in this paper, we assess a set of necessary conditions that such a variable should be held to meet before we can assert that the left-right scale is meaningful to voters. We hasten to add that these are but a set of necessary conditions and are

clearly not sufficient conditions. Further, these are a set of necessary conditions for us to be able to judge the scale was meaningful for the voter, which is well short of, and perhaps even a different thing than, assessing the meaningfulness of ideology in an election. But, it is the first set of steps to be taken.

In the following sections, we develop these necessary conditions for the left-right scale to be meaningful to a voter, and examine them through the use of data from CSES, in particular the data from module II. The evidence, we show, provides an interesting set of cross-national comparisons. As noted, however, these are but a first step in developing a larger set of necessary (and, perhaps at some point, sufficient) conditions for such an ideological scale to be a meaningful part of an election. Therefore, we conclude by considering some of the next of those remaining steps to take.

Theory: Criteria for Casting a Vote on the Basis of a Left-Right Scale

To determine the “meaning” of an election, we believe, requires understanding what is meaningful to the actors involved in the election. We begin, therefore, at what we believe to be the fundamental starting point, determining what is meaningful to voters. It is certainly possible that an election could have meaning that is independent of and distinct from what was meaningful to the voters as they cast their ballots. Candidates, parties, and media, for example, are also core actors in elections, and assessing the meaning of their actions is also fundamental. And, of course, the assumption we make here, that meaning comes from what the actors believed to be meaningful, does not exhaust the entire set of considerations for the “meaning” of an election. The collective consequences may well differ from the intentions of any or even all

individuals involved. And, that the part of the meaning of the 2000 U.S. presidential election was that it set in motion forces that led to war with Iraq is certainly true, even if it were the case that no one involved in the 2000 presidential election acted as they did with the idea that war with Iraq might result. (That is, the 2000 election had that war as its consequence, whether or not Bush and Chaney intended to go to war if elected). Still, what the voters (and others) intended to achieve by their actions is certainly a part of the meaning of any election. And, we take it to be among the most important aspects of democracy that the meaning of an election is, at least in substantial part, dependent upon the decisions of its citizens.

Measurement of the Criteria

The idea that a left-right dimension of ideology is a strong candidate for a part of the meaning of any election is widely held; it is a very common way for analysts to interpret an election and its outcomes and consequences. If that is to be the case, we would want, at minimum, to investigate whether the left-right scale is one of those considerations that might have been meaningful to the voters. What, then, is necessary for a variable such as the left-right scale to be meaningful to the voter? This question was addressed in a very similar context by Campbell, et al. (1960), that is, in the classic study of voter behavior. They asked what the criteria were for a voter to cast a vote on the basis of an issue. They offered three criteria (1960: 178-79):

We may specify at least three conditions to be fulfilled if an issue is to bear upon a person's vote decision:

1. The issue must be cognized in some form.
2. It must arouse some minimal intensity of feeling.

3. It must be accompanied by some perception that one party represents the person's own position better than do the other parties.

As they noted (1960, 179): "These three conditions are entirely obvious ones. Yet their simplicity should not deceive us into assuming that they are generally fulfilled across the electorate." And, all of this is entirely relevant to our inquiry as well. Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde (1982; 2010) have applied these criteria to issues in a scale format very much like that employed in the CSES measure of the left-right scale. They report results for every 7-point issue scale asked in the American National Election Studies (ANES) since their wide introduction, that is, from the ANES 1972 survey through the 2008 survey. In this, they applied and extended the Campbell, et al., criteria. Our analogy, then, is that the 11 point CSES left-right scale has the same properties as a 7-point issue scale, at least in terms of the "issue voting" criteria. And, thus, we employ the Abramson, et al., criteria, which must be adapted from the two-party/candidate to the more general case (2010, p. 157):

The first criterion is whether respondents claim to have an opinion on the issue. This is measured by whether they placed themselves on the issue scale. Second, the respondents should have some perception of the positions taken by the candidates on an issue. This is measured by whether they could place both major-party candidates on that issue. Third, the voter must see a difference between the positions of the candidates. Failing to see a difference means that the voter perceived no choice on the issue. [The] fourth condition [is whether] the respondents accurately perceive the relative positions of the two major-party candidates.

Their evidence (aggregated to the average for 7-point issues scales asked in any given ANES survey, are reported in table 1. These will provide useful comparisons to our results.

[Table 1 about here]

The adaptation to the (potentially) multi-party context of the CSES leads to our definitions of the various necessary conditions.

1. The respondent must place themselves on the left-right scale.

This is the first point at which the necessity is clear. If the respondent does not respond with a position of their own, they cannot have “cognized it in some form.” Obviously, this is very minimal, and indeed, many might respond even if they do not have a true opinion or belief or preference. Hence, this cannot be a sufficient condition.

2. They must place at least two parties on the scale, otherwise they cannot be using it as a basis of choice.

We have two measures of this, as extended to the multi-party context. We first take the most minimal definition, which is whether they were able to place at least two, but any two, parties on the scale. The second measure, which is designed to provide a sense of measurement of knowledge, in addition to “meaning,” is whether they place the two largest parties on the scale. This measure could be taken as analogous to two-party systems such as the U.S., where there are actually more parties, but these two are dominant.

In future research, we hope also to measure this by the total number of parties they placed on the scale as a proportion of the total number of parties about which they were asked. As we will argue later, some portion of the reason that respondents might fail to place a party on the left-right scale is because the party offers little to no views on issues and other considerations on a left-right scale.

3. At least two of the parties must be placed at different points. If both or all parties are at the same place on the scale, then the scale cannot be being used as a basis of choice.

This general measure has the two specific versions corresponding to the two measures of the second condition (placing any two parties, or placing the two largest parties, at

different points). Future research will include a measure of the percentage of parties they place at different points on the scale, as a proportion of the number of parties about which they were asked.

It is, of course, possible that two parties (or even more) take the same position on the left-right scale. In addition, the finite number of points means that, as a methodological artifact, the respondent in a nation with many parties might be more nearly constrained to place parties at the same point, simply because there are only a small number of points making up the scale. Expert ratings make it possible for us to “control” for this, by modifying this third criterion to be a measure that asks if the respondent placed parties at different points, provided the expert did. This might be the strongest measure of this criterion for examining the “meaningfulness” of the scale. For using the scale to examine the extent of political knowledge or “sophistication” of the voter, one might want to include placing parties at the same point, if the expert also placed those parties at the same point on the scale.

4. In future research, we will add measurement of a fourth criterion, again having several possible indicators of satisfaction of it. The criterion assumed that the left-right scale can be a meaningful part of the voter’s decision calculus only if it leads them to use it effectively. Thus, we require that the respondent place at least the parties from criteria two and three on the scale in the correct order. This is the fourth criterion in Abramson, et al., as well. Here, however, we have the advantage that the CSES secured expert

evaluations, including expert placement of the parties on the left-right scale. Therefore, we have two potential criteria for “correct” placement. Did the respondent agree with order of placement of the parties induced by examining the average of all respondents (the Abramson, et al. procedure) and did the respondent agree with the ordering reported by the CSES expert rating?

Analysis

We offer in this section two kinds of analysis. The first is the reporting of these three criteria (with two specific measures of the second and of the third criteria) across the full range of nations and elections included in CSES, Module II. We were able to include 38 nations, of which two (Taiwan and Portugal) included the module of questions in two national elections. Thus there are 40 entries in table 2, below. Of these 40 nation-elections, two cases asked only self-placement (Belgium and Japan), while Kyrgyzstan did not include information to make it possible to ascertain the placement of the two largest parties (thus we have measures for it for all three criteria, but only one version of criterion 2 and criterion 3).

[Table 2 about here]

As Table 2 demonstrates, there is a very large range of satisfaction of these conditions. Criterion 1 (self-placement) varies from a high of essentially or actually 100% (several nations) to a low in the 40 percent range (both Taiwan elections and Kyrgyzstan. But such advanced democracies with long experience with democracy as Britain were relatively low in satisfaction of this condition (74%). Similarly, there are great ranges in satisfaction of the full range of conditions so far examined. Slovenia and the Philippines, for example, had very high rates of

self-placement, but ended with barely more than half the respondents seeing differences between the two parties. Conversely, Israeli Danish respondents remained at very high levels of satisfaction of all conditions (96% placing themselves on the scale, dropping only to the 92-93% range of those seeing a difference between the two largest parties).

Overall, an average (mean) of 85% placed themselves on the left-right scale. The typical drop-off in moving from the first to the second criterion was fairly slight, however. As the mean of 85% satisfying the first criterion declined only to 81% able to place any two parties on the scale or 79% placing the two largest parties, with averages of 77 and 75% seeing a difference between those two parties, respectively.

Compare also Tables 1 and 2. First note that the left-right scale and the 7-point issue scales appear to be rather different, even within the same nation. In the U.S., that is, the satisfaction of the first criterion is reasonably similar in the many issue scale cases as in the one illustration we have of the left-right scale. However, the proportion satisfying the second and, especially, the third conditions is higher in the case of the left-right scale than in the case of the average issue scale. To be sure, one has more options than the other, so that more may find it easier to place the parties at different points on the more generous left-right scale, but the evidence suggests that left-right, in 2004, may be more meaningful to the voter (at least through these three criteria of “meaning”) than the average issue. Further, this comparison seems to carry over to other nations as well. While there are certainly numerous and important exceptions, many of the European nations, especially, have degrees of satisfaction of these criteria that run ahead of the U.S. left-right case and therefore even further ahead of the issue scale comparisons in the U.S. This set of comparisons at least suggests that ideology may be at a more general

level and perhaps therefore at a more useful, if not actually more meaningful level for thinking about elections than are specific issue scales.

The second comparison, however, is suggested by the quick glance that suggests that there is important cross-national variation in the degree to which the left-right scale is meaningful to voters. To show this point, consider Table 3. In that table, we report averages across a number of variables that capture important cross-national institutional variations among democracies. We consider in the next section the nature of the hypotheses that led us to examine these particular variables.

[Table 3 about here]

We have two measures of the “age” of democracy. One is the length of time the nation has been classified as a democracy, divided into less than or more than 30 years. The other reports a similar division between old and new party systems. Here, we certainly would expect that those residing in systems that have been actively engaged in the practice of democracy longer will have had a better chance for the utility of a left-right designation to become more regular and meaningful, and that is just what we find – at first. Respondents, that is, seem to find it easier to place themselves on scales in the more established democracies. However, that difference wanes considerably as the criteria become more about the parties than about the respondents themselves. Similarly, consider the case of democracies with smaller numbers of parties (we report here effective number of parties, which coincides too closely with PR versus FPTP to be worth reporting both variables). Respondents from nations with smaller numbers of parties are more likely to report an ability to place themselves on the scale, but that reverses, such that respondents from systems with larger numbers of parties are more likely to place at

least two parties on the scale (and place the two largest) and to place them at different positions on the scale. Finally, we have three measures that tap whether the government is unitary, or there is important division of powers at the national level (presidential versus parliamentary systems) or division of powers in a federal system (those with state-level elections for legislature and/or executive). These differ from the more unitary systems in that the voter is exposed to campaigns for multiple offices, often at different times. As we discuss in the next section, we employ these as measures of institutional forces that might increase uncertainty about just what the party stands for, if voters hear one set of claims from one set of the party's candidates, and some other, differing, set of claims from the party. The results in Table 2 are interesting. Parliamentary systems score higher on all criteria than those from presidential systems. Systems without directly elected sub-national executives tend to have higher levels of satisfaction of the second and third criteria than those with them, although there is no difference in self-placement. While these tend to support the notion of a single signal about party position being most meaningful, the results for those nations with sub-national legislative elections yield the reserves. In those cases, the percentages satisfying each condition run higher than in those nations without such elections. We can, however, conclude that the institutional variables capture important (and in all cases except as noted, statistically significant) variation.

Further Necessary Conditions

In future versions of this paper, we will report one of the most important consequences of satisfaction of these conditions – does satisfaction of the three conditions so far examined have consequences for electoral choice? The authors of *The American Voter* did not examine that

question directly. However, Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde did (1982; 2010) for the case of voting on the basis of issues in a two-party contest (albeit with some important exceptions when there were three presidential candidates). They found that those who met the various conditions were quite likely to vote for the closer party on an issue-by-issue basis (typically around 3 in 4 did so). Those who did not satisfy the conditions voted approximately randomly (that is, averaged about 50% voting for the closer party, 50% not). That is to say that they found that satisfaction of these necessary conditions did translate into a credibly high degree of proximity voting.

We assume that something like that will apply here, as well. If so, that would suggest that possession of that knowledge helps make ideology a meaningful part of the voters' decision calculus. As with the definition of the criteria, the extension to voting on the basis of ideology is more complicated in the general, multi-party case. There might be more than one party that is quite similar in distance from the voter's optimal ideology, for example. And, it might well be the case that other considerations enter, of course (precisely the problem of having dozens of variables statistically significant in voting equations). One special consideration, even for those who might wish to vote exclusively along ideological lines, is that strategic voting might apply. That is, voters might choose – in light of ideological considerations – to vote for a less proximate party that might be strategically wiser to support, perhaps because it stands a better chance of winning.

We have been careful to say that satisfaction of the criteria for casting an ideological vote is a set of necessary but not sufficient conditions – even for ideology to be a meaningful attribute of the voting decision by the voter, let alone being a meaningful part of the election for the collectivity. The idea of the criteria, to this point, has been more about the voter – what she

knows, values, and perceives, and possibly how she acts upon that knowledge. Failure to vote on the basis of the ideological scale therefore might be due to the failure of the voter to be as informed as at least a textbook, civics-class view of the requirements of citizenship. While that might have been the idea of most at the time of the writing of *The American Voter*, numerous scholars (including Abramson, et al., 1982-2010) have rejected that simple a notion. The fault may well lie with the parties, for example, if they do not take a clear position on ideology, or if they are, in the Downsian sense, convergent (that is, adopt the same position as at least one other party). Having reached the point that the voter has sufficient awareness of what the offerings are, however, leads us to a second set of considerations, on the way to determining if ideology might be a meaningful part of the voters' decision making.

Voters might place the parties on the ideology scale, see a difference, and perhaps even place the parties in the “correct” order (such as the same order as given by expert raters for CSES). Even so, we might well imagine – correctly as it turns out – that there would remain considerable variation in perceptions. This remaining variation could have two sources. One is again the knowledge base of the voter, such that the better informed might be expected to be more likely to give precise placements of the parties, in effect approaching that of experts by virtue of becoming more nearly expert themselves on the politics of the party system. The other source is the nature of the democracy, its electoral systems, and indeed of the parties themselves. We already observed evidence consistent with this idea. The institutional variables found to have an effect on all criteria, but especially those related to party placements, suggest that there are differences among nations, electoral institutions, and party systems that affect how clearly or indistinctly parties are seen in ideological terms, above and beyond any “competencies” of the voter.

This question was examined by us in an earlier paper (Aldrich, Dorabantu, and Fernandez, 2009). We found precisely that pattern. Variation in placement of the parties on the left-right scale was, in approximately equal proportions, explainable due to variation in individual characteristics such as education and related indicators of political “sophistication,” and to national and party level variables, such as those we examined here. Table 4 reports the major findings in this regard, from our earlier paper. Note especially that age of the democracy/party system, PR versus FPTP (here measured via effective number of parties), and presidential versus parliamentary systems are all consequential variables in the analysis, just as here. Some of these are, therefore, cumulative, as the net effect of these variables is significant for placing the parties on the scale at all and then, conditional on such placement, for precision in the location of the party. This suggests that the meaning of an election, at least to the individual voters (and them taken as a whole) is a consequence both of their individual backgrounds and interest and involvement in politics and of the nature of the democratic and electoral institutions and the parties that form the party system.

[Table 4 about here]

In subsequent research, we hope to develop a deeper appreciation for when the voters find meaning in the election at least in part on the basis of ideology, and consider the consequences of that meaningfulness for the actions of the candidates and their parties and for the actions of the victorious parties and candidates when in office. Only at that point will we be approaching a full set of necessary conditions for any variable, here the particularly crucial variable of ideology, to be a meaningful part of the election and its aftermath.

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Table 1

(Table 6-4 in Abramson, et al. partial)

TABLE 6-4 Four Criteria for Issue Voting, 2008, and Comparisons with 1972-2004 Presidential Elections (percent)

| Average (# of scales) | Percentage of sample who | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | I Placed self on scale | II Placed both candidates on scale ^a | III Saw differences between Obama and McCain | IV Saw Obama more "liberal" than McCain |
| 2008 (7) | 88 | 78 | 61 | 51 |
| 2004 (7) | 89 | 76 | 62 | 52 |
| 2000 (7) | 87 | 69 | 51 | 41 |
| 1996 (9) | 89 | 80 | 65 | 55 |
| 1992 (3) | 85 | 71 | 66 | 52 |
| 1988 (7) | 86 | 66 | 52 | 43 |
| 1984 (7) | 84 | 73 | 62 | 53 |
| 1980 (9) | 82 | 61 | 51 | 43 |
| 1976 (9) | 84 | 58 | 39 | 26 |
| 1972 (8) | 90 | 65 | 49 | 41 |

Source: Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde (2010)

| | Percentage of sample who | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| | Placed self on Left- Right scale | Placed at least two parties on Left-Right scale | Saw a difference between at least two parties | Placed the two largest parties on the Left- Right scale | Saw a difference between the two largest parties |
| ALBANIA (2005) | 94.22903 | 89.42652 | 87.63441 | 88.53046 | 86.20071 |
| AUSTRALIA (2004) | 100 | 79.36687 | 73.26173 | 78.17976 | 75.80554 |
| BELGIUM (2003) | 90.76923 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| BRAZIL (2002) | 75.25855 | 73.30946 | 70.96261 | 65.75179 | 71.71838 |
| BULGARIA (2001) | 100 | 97.63833 | 88.86639 | 89.74359 | 79.1498 |
| CANADA (2004) | 100 | 79.51015 | 76.34409 | 79.15173 | 73.59618 |
| CHILE (2005) | 90.97938 | 91.66666 | 89.91666 | 89.25 | 86.83334 |
| TAIWAN (2001) | 48.46383 | 46.24134 | 39.61424 | 45.25222 | 39.26805 |
| TAIWAN (2004) | 44.34066 | 43.60944 | 34.77784 | 43.06089 | 33.95502 |
| CZECH REPUBLIC (2002) | 91.66666 | 92.827 | 91.87764 | 91.98312 | 91.13924 |
| DENMARK (2001) | 96.29813 | 95.75518 | 93.92892 | 93.28726 | 92.10267 |
| FINLAND (2003) | 90.38461 | 93.47826 | 91.7224 | 91.55518 | 80.26756 |
| FRANCE (2002) | 98.06911 | 96.8 | 96 | 90.7 | 84.9 |
| GERMANY (2002) | 97.28522 | 93.35098 | 92.78862 | 91.39927 | 87.56203 |
| HONG KONG (2004) | 76.73611 | 76.80412 | 70.79037 | 66.32302 | 71.8213 |
| HUNGARY (2002) | 91.51973 | 89.25 | 86.41666 | 87.91666 | 87 |
| ICELAND (2003) | 89.81995 | 82.98755 | 81.88105 | 80.63624 | 81.05118 |
| IRELAND (2002) | 77.94677 | 76.17237 | 71.48289 | 72.58133 | 49.4719 |
| ISRAEL (2003) | 96.06365 | 97.0297 | 96.69967 | 96.36964 | 93.15182 |
| ITALY (2006) | 85.31338 | 82.76581 | 47.39402 | 80.82001 | 47.39402 |
| JAPAN (2004) | 91.09763 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| KOREA (2004) | 83.17694 | 86.13333 | 80.4 | 84.4 | 79.93333 |
| KYRGYZSTAN (2005) | 48.75 | 39.9 | 35.25 | n/a | n/a |
| MEXICO (2003) | 71.72276 | 74.53541 | 71.32095 | 73.27976 | 59.71873 |
| NETHERLANDS (2002) | 98.22109 | 97.6493 | 97.20457 | 94.28208 | 85.06989 |
| NEW ZEALAND (2002) | 79.11694 | 72.02757 | 68.9259 | 69.95979 | 68.17921 |
| NORWAY (2001) | 94.98051 | 93.46979 | 92.83626 | 92.93372 | 89.61988 |
| PERU (2006) | 82.62795 | 83.66142 | 81.49606 | 78.88779 | 75.34449 |
| PHILIPPINES (2004) | 100 | 78.16666 | 64.25 | 71 | 53.33333 |
| POLAND (2001) | 77.53501 | 85.89744 | 85.22854 | 71.85062 | 85.61873 |
| PORTUGAL (2002) | 85.34152 | 90.09977 | 88.87183 | 88.87183 | 82.88565 |
| PORTUGAL (2005) | 83.89861 | 83.7201 | 82.75616 | 81.79221 | 76.07997 |
| ROMANIA (2004) | 66.28333 | 64.08782 | 62.41505 | 61.47412 | 59.06952 |
| RUSSIA (2004) | 67.21088 | 72.3262 | 69.78609 | 67.98129 | 68.38235 |
| SLOVENIA (2004) | 100 | 56.48703 | 52.69461 | 52.49501 | 49.6008 |
| SPAIN (2004) | 87.94385 | 93.23432 | 92.32674 | 92.9868 | 90.51155 |
| SWEDEN (2002) | 96.03773 | 93.77358 | 93.30189 | 92.92453 | 92.73585 |
| SWITZERLAND (2003) | 95.34556 | 91.32581 | 90.47955 | 87.58815 | 87.58815 |
| GREAT BRITAIN (2005) | 74.08284 | 71.04651 | 65.5814 | 70 | 64.30232 |
| UNITED STATES (2004) | 86.02251 | 84.14634 | 77.95497 | 83.6773 | 77.39212 |

Table 2 Criteria for Voting on Left-Right Scale by Nations, CSES Module II

Table 3
Criteria for Voting on Left-Right Scale
and its Relationship to Institutional Variables

| Institution | Percentage of sample who | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| | Placed self on Left- Right scale | Placed at least two parties on Left-Right scale | Saw a difference between at least two parties | Placed the two largest parties on the Left- Right scale | Saw a difference between the two largest parties |
| Presidential system | 75.34795 | 76.51357 | 73.48643 | 72.44259 | 70.62167 |
| Parliamentary system | 86.97005 | 81.77525 | 78.2065 | 79.62327 | 73.73618 |
| State-level legislative elections | 86.07658 | 81.83009 | 78.19413 | 79.05925 | 74.13056 |
| No state-level legislative elections | 75.28281 | 75.16187 | 72.45109 | 72.43685 | 68.77979 |
| State-level executive elections | 83.76445 | 77.00591 | 72.19398 | 74.41922 | 67.80376 |
| No state-level executive elections | 82.84621 | 83.06085 | 81.00741 | 80.13809 | 77.45144 |
| New democracy | 78.38194 | 79.5844 | 76.68345 | 75.77409 | 73.23764 |
| Old democracy (30+ years) | 87.97849 | 80.6129 | 76.74194 | 78.85663 | 72.28674 |
| New party system | 79.87717 | 82.67807 | 77.23125 | 78.31028 | 75.18223 |
| Old party system (50+ years) | 84.89849 | 78.90479 | 76.47012 | 76.9015 | 71.60883 |
| Effective number of parties < 3.5 | 85.31363 | 78.2227 | 75.12811 | 76.43507 | 69.70167 |
| Effective number of parties \geq 3.5 | 81.56038 | 81.7308 | 78.07355 | 78.13831 | 75.36726 |

Table 4: Sources of Variation in Placement of Parties on the Left-Right Scale

| | (1) ALL PARTIES | (2) ALL PARTIES | (3) MAJOR PARTIES | (4) MAJOR PARTIES |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| AGE | -0.00264*** (-6.24) | -0.00276*** (-6.80) | -0.00259*** (-4.72) | -0.00273*** (-5.20) |
| GENDER | -0.0770*** (-11.76) | -0.0807*** (-13.00) | -0.0908*** (-10.29) | -0.0961*** (-11.41) |
| EDUCATION | -0.0660*** (-30.75) | -0.0676*** (-32.94) | -0.0703*** (-24.08) | -0.0706*** (-25.22) |
| HOUSEHOLD INCOME | -0.0516*** (-19.65) | -0.0502*** (-20.24) | -0.0532*** (-15.05) | -0.0538*** (-16.03) |
| URBAN RESIDENCE | -0.0187* (-2.56) | -0.0189** (-2.74) | -0.0277** (-2.76) | -0.0247** (-2.60) |
| VOTED IN ELECTION | -0.103*** (-10.23) | -0.101*** (-10.51) | -0.0969*** (-7.26) | -0.0927*** (-7.26) |
| CONTACTED POLITICIAN | 0.0290** (3.03) | 0.0290** (3.27) | 0.0200 (1.54) | 0.0248* (2.05) |
| PARTICIPATED IN PROTEST | 0.0127 (1.21) | | 0.0178 (1.22) | |
| WHO IS IN POWER MATTERS | 0.00251 (0.90) | | 0.00553 (1.46) | |
| VOTING MATTERS | 0.00473 (1.62) | | 0.00759 (1.92) | |
| AGE OF PARTY | 0.000393 (0.49) | 0.000537 (0.70) | -0.000701 (-0.67) | -0.000663 (-0.65) |
| LEFT-RIGHT IDEOLOGY | -0.133* (-2.25) | -0.142* (-2.54) | -0.174 (-1.58) | -0.177 (-1.71) |
| PERCENTAGE VOTE | -0.000532 (-0.28) | -0.000829 (-0.45) | -0.000155 (-0.05) | -0.000315 (-0.10) |
| AGE OF DEMOCRACY | -0.00340** (-2.59) | -0.00338** (-2.66) | -0.00278 (-1.82) | -0.00283 (-1.92) |
| AGE * AGE DEMOCRACY INTERACTION | 0.0000343*** (7.63) | 0.0000342*** (7.83) | 0.0000345*** (5.99) | 0.0000356*** (6.38) |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| PRESIDENTIAL | 0.536 ^{***} (4.40) | 0.535 ^{***} (4.46) | 0.558 ^{***} (4.00) | 0.559 ^{***} (4.08) |
| FEDERALISM | 0.139 (1.21) | 0.130 (1.18) | 0.237 (1.76) | 0.232 (1.79) |
| PLURALITY | 0.429 ^{***} (3.83) | 0.432 ^{***} (3.93) | 0.378 ^{**} (2.77) | 0.383 ^{**} (2.87) |
| Constant | 2.301 ^{***} (20.46) | 2.355 ^{***} (21.71) | 2.327 ^{***} (14.07) | 2.393 ^{***} (15.15) |
| Ins1_1_1 Constant | -1.397 ^{***} (-8.63) | -1.409 ^{***} (-8.87) | -1.303 ^{***} (-7.41) | -1.318 ^{***} (-7.66) |
| Ins2_1_1 Constant | -1.268 ^{***} (-21.00) | -1.285 ^{***} (-21.89) | -1.274 ^{***} (-14.12) | -1.295 ^{***} (-14.68) |
| Insig_e Constant | 0.314 ^{***} (187.16) | 0.305 ^{***} (189.83) | 0.314 ^{***} (138.96) | 0.306 ^{***} (140.71) |
| Observations | 178000 | 194350 | 97915 | 105913 |

Source: Aldrich, Dorabantu, and Fernandez (2009).