Prof. Hans Geser
Online Publikationen

Universität Zürich
Soziologisches Institut

International Relations

Leftism and Ecologism in an International Comparative Perspective

Hans Geser

Zuerich, September 2011

Abstract

The association between leftism and ecologism is analyzed comparatively in a sample of 27 countries, based on data stemming from the fifth wave of World Values Survey (conducted 2005-2007). As a *first* major result, it is found that the Western countries (encompassing Western European, USA, Canada and Australia) stand out as a distinct group with a highly homogeneous political culture: in the sense that in all of them, ecologism shows a tight "vertical coupling" to the general ideological left-right scale on the one hand and considerable "horizontal couplings" to other leftist issue dimensions on the other. India and South Korea are the only nonwestern countries where a similar (however very moderate) correlation between leftism and ecologism can be found. *Secondly*, leftist ideologies are most pronounced within highly educated strata in Western countries. Very few other countries (Slovenia, India and Mexico) show a similar pattern. Thirdly, a comparative analysis of age cohorts provides very little evidence for major intergenerational change. In particular, there is no evidence that any interregional or even global diffusion of political ideology has taken place that would cause more transnational homogeneity among younger populations. To summarize, we may conclude that "leftist ecologism" is a specific feature of Western countries that unites Western Europe with North America and Oceania, but divides them from South America and Asia as well as from their neighboring countries to the East.

Contents

1. Research perspectives and hypotheses 2
2. Data and Methodology 7
3. Empirical Results 10
4. Conclusions 21
References 23

Bibliographic citation:

Geser Hans: Leftism and Ecologism in an International Comparative Perspective. . In: Prof. Hans Geser: Online Publications. Zuerich, September 2011. http://geser.net/internat/t_hgeser9.pdf

Prof. Hans Geser h@geser.net http://geser.net

1. Research perspectives and hypotheses

During the last decades, many empirical studies have shown that in a wide range of different countries, individual political attitudes as well as political party systems, policies and regimes are predominantly organized along a single dimension of left and right. (Castles & Mair 1984; Gross & Sigelman 1984; Janda 1980; Laver & Budge 1993; Warwick 1992; Colomer & Escatel 2003: 3; Geser 2008). Thus, most citizens in most countries have been shown willing and able to place themselves on the left-right dimension: a scale usually ranging from 1-10 or from 0-10 (Inglehart & Klingemann 1987; Colomer & Escatel 2003: 3). Like the vertical top-bottom model of social stratification, the LR-scheme is a simple spatial metaphor that has the characteristic of being adopted in very different human cultures: being used as the "Political Esperanto of our times" (Laponce 1981: 27).

Apart from this basic regularity, however, many more detailed issues need further clarification by widespread and continuing efforts of empirical research; issues concerning

1) the evolving semantics of "left" and "right" through time and space, and the changing associations between LR-placements and political issue positions;
2) the degree to which the LR-scheme is established (and "vertically coupled" with specific political issue positions) within different nations and geographic regions;
3) the unequal distribution of LR-thinking among different population segments within nations.

1.1 From socialism to feminism, pacifism and ecologism: the changing semantic of leftist ideology

It is astonishing to what degree the permanence of the left-right dimensions contrasts sharply with extreme variations of the meanings associated with these two terms across historic periods and between different cultures.

At the beginning 19th century, leftism was mainly associated with individualism, free enterprise, national independence and - following Rousseau - an endeavour to restore a more perfect form of human society as it had presumably existed in the past (Laponce 1981: 118ff.). Between about 1850 and 1960, it was almost exclusively amalgamated to socialist and communist ideologies associated with revolutionary movements, labour unions and reformist social democratic parties: thus giving priority to issues of economic governance, work organization, class relations and social welfare. During the Cold War, most - developed and underdeveloped - countries were highly affected by exogenous determinants of LR divisions. Leftism was essentially connected with political forces supporting the communism and the USSR, while "rightism" was a label given to explicitly "anticommunist" movements, personalities and political parties. Thus, the studies based on Eurobarometer 30 (1988) could show that in many European countries, rightism was strongly correlated with proudness of nationality as well as with nearness to fascist movements (Falter/Schumann 1992: 200).

Subsequently, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact countries has caused the solidified international system of leftist ideology to erode: replacing it with a manifold of leftisms deeply shaped by national and regional cultures. In the late Sixties, the civil rights movements and the student revolts gave rise to a new, more encompassing understanding of leftism (or: "leftist radicalism"): including the perspective of extending basic standards of human rights and welfare to all kinds of discriminated population segments (like non-whites, females, gays, starving poor in underdeveloped nations etc.). In a broader sense, there emerged potent movements of *"social liberalism"* directed against traditional values and habits that sought to prevent full individual self-determination (e.g. the feminist, gay and "pro-choice"-

movements). In addition, issues related to transnational solidarity, peace and justice have gained ground: manifested in various movements favoring military disarmament, development aid and free transnational migration. Within the same time period, *ecologist issues* gained increased prominence on political agendas and were incorporated in programs aiming to catalyze societal and economic change.

The relationship of ecologism (as well as social liberalism, feminism and pacifism) to the Left-Right axis has remained a controversial issue ever since. On the one hand, *ecologism* has often been declared to constitute a new ideological dimension less and less associated with conventional leftist radicalism. Thus, an early cross-national study (comparing the populations of England, Germany and the United States) has found that ecologist attitudes were not correlated .with standings on traditional left-right issues like governmental ownership and control (Kessel &Tischler 1984). In a similar vein, Ronald Inglehart presented convincing empirical data which showed that the attitudes of the general electorates of seven European countries toward "materialist" issues and toward "postmaterialist" issues are rather weakly correlated with each other. As correlations have been particularly low among younger age cohorts, it is concluded that intergenerational change may contribute to a growing independence of these two dimensions (Inglehart 1984, 25ff; Inglehart 1989: 372ff.). This converged with Clark and Lipset who supposed that rising affluence and intergenerational change would lead to a growing salience of "social value issues" which constitute *"a distinct political dimension from more traditional economic or fiscal issues."* (Clark/Lipset/Rempel 1993: 305).

On the other hand, there is also evidence that attitudes toward "old" and "new" political issues are significantly interrelated, and that this linkage has not been eroded by either socioeconomic development or intergenerational change.
1) Ecologism and social liberalism start from the basic premise that processes of socioeconomic development have resulted in a neglect of other important values and/or in enormous negative consequences that call for compensative and/or corrective actions (on the level of governmental legislation action as well as on the level of everyday life).
2) Both ideologies gave rise to "New Social Movements" very similar in terms of membership composition, rhetoric, tactical behavior and internal organization. Among other similarities, all these movements relied much on informal network structures and recruited their membership mainly from younger and more educated strata, particularly from social and cultural occupations (Kriesi 1989).
3) It cannot be denied that during the last 20 years, many Western countries (particularly in Europe) have seen the emergence of "red-green parties" which combine ecological and social liberalist standings with pronounced leftist positions in all traditional domains (e.g. in economic and social policy) (Poguntke 1987).

In a sophisticated empirical study, Weakliem (1991) has shown that the "materialist" and the "postmaterialist" dimension of political ideology show considerable values of interfactor correlations (between .40 and .60). This is quite consistent with Inglehart's findings that, at least for political elites, materialistic and postmaterialistic issue positions appear to remain more closely linked and to be components of an overarching left-right dimension encompassing economic as well as non-economic issues. (Inglehart 1984: 33).
All this conforms to Sani and Sartoris view that Left and Right are just "empty containers" that can be filled with various meanings by anybody (Sani & Sartori 1983). In her extensive study based on Eurobarometer data from 1999, Corrie Potter concludes that

> *"..The semantic container hypothesis is strongly supported. Postmaterialism values are significant predictors of left self-placement, while material values are strong predictors of right self-*

> *placement. Thus, the post-materialism/materialism cleavage seems to have been incorporated into the left right dimension in the understandings of Western Europeans. (Potter 2001: 7).*

Evidently, the LR-dimension has an astounding capacity to absorb new political values, issues and strategic goals (e. g. of social movements) However, these new aspects seem to complement and overlay the old ones without replacing them (Mair 1997:26; Inglehart 1984; Knutsen 1995).
In a recent comparative study on Swiss local parties, the author has demonstrated that the political attitudes of these groupings are characterized by a singe left-right dimension which combines classical socialist with more contemporary ecologist positions. Diachronic comparisons show that the "vertical coupling" of these issue-related attitudes (to the general left-right scale) as well as their "horizontal coupling" (= the correlations among themselves) have increased in the period between 1989 and 2002 (Geser 2009).
Most recently, however, some trends toward a growing dissociation between leftism and ecologism can be observed. Switzerland, for instance, currently (summer 2011) sees the rise of a "Green Liberal Party" (GLP, founded in July 2007) which combines strict support for ecological policies with conservative positions in social welfare and fiscal issues. On the other hand, the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima has promoted the spread of antinuclear standings to parties of the middle and even to the right: particularly in Germany where the conservative-liberal cabinet lead by Angela Merkel has formally decided upon the definitive early shut down of all nuclear plants (in May 2011).

1.2. International and intercontinental variations

The political left-right dimension has originated in France at the time before the revolution, some weeks after the convention of the Estates General in June 1789 (Laponce 1981:47). During the 19th century, the LR pattern spread to the rest of continental Europe, especially driven by socialist parties who loaded the terms with ideological content (Laponce 1981: 54). Outside Europe, however, the left-right dimension is less established even in democratic countries. In the United States and Japan for instance, the reigning polarity is still "liberal vs. conservative"; but it has been increasingly overlaid and reshaped by left-right considerations (Laponce 1981: 56). As Nie & Anderson have demonstrated in a longitudinal study, the general American public became "ideologized" in the years between 1964 and 1972: since the rise of the "New Left Movements" and especially since the 1972 elections, where Nixon and McGovern represented for the first time quite neatly the two ideological poles (Nie & Anderson 1972; LeBlanc & Merrin 1977; Inglehart 1989: 367).

Many studies have shown that the salience of LR-thinking extends widely beyond the sphere of Western democracies, but that it is of significantly lower importance in less developed and less democratic nations.
In *Latin America*, data from Latinobarometer annual surveys from 1995 to 2002 show that highest percentages of self raters were found in Uruguay (92%) and Brazil (85%), while lowest proportions were observed in Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Bolivia and Argentina (between 71 and 76 percent) (Colomer & Escatel 2003: 4). However, such individual views are rather loosely coupled to political parties. On the one hand, there are many self-placers who are very alienated from the existing party system; on the other hand, we find highly politicized people who don't identify with the LR-dimension, because they maintain an opportunistic ("clientelistic") relationship to political parties (Colomer & Escatel 2003: 6). Contrasting with post-materialist trends in developed Western countries, Zechmeister has found that in Mexico, the meaning of "left" was increasingly shifting toward economic issues between 2001 and 2004 (Zechmeister 2005: 18).

Even less consistent are the conditions are found in the post- communist countries of *Eastern Europe and the former USSR*. *First of all,* they have just recently been exposed to Western influences and may still be in the process of adopting basic democratic values and ideological orientations. Thus, Badescu & Sum (2005) have shown that in postsocialist countries, only 55% percent of respondents (in comparison to 73% in Western democracies) were ready to place themselves on the LR scale. Unsurprisingly, Badescu and Sum have found much higher self placement percentages in the more Western oriented countries like Czechia, Hungary and Poland then in Russia and Belarus (with less then 30%) (Badescu & Sum 2005). And *secondly,* the particular history of these countries has resulted in paradox semantic reversals of the two ideological poles. In a way, the most leftist (ex communist) parties are "conservative" or even "reactionary" insofar as they still cling to values or institutions stemming from the earlier societal system; and the liberals and conservatives are most "revolutionary" insofar as they aim at a radical transformation according to western standards (Evans & Whitefield 1998; Norris 2004). By comparing data from 1996-01 and 2001-2005, Badescu and Sum conclude that in post-communist countries the percentage of respondents ready to locate parties on the LR scale has even decreased (Badescu & Sum 2005).

As a general rule, the meaning of left-right polarities seems to be profoundly determined by the social and cultural cleavages predominant within a specific national society. In several East Asian countries, for instance, the weakness of class divisions implies that ideological conflicts focus mainly on questions of international relations and the domestic political order (Weisberg 2001, 90; Deegan-Krause 2006).
In a recent study of the author covering all continents, it has been found that in all regions except the Middle East, at least 75 percent of the total population (and over eighty percent of politically interested respondents) are ready to place themselves on a respective LR-scale (Geser 2008). This conforms with the notion that on a global scale, Islamism represents the only salient alternative to Western political culture.. Most remarkably, East Asian countries have internalized left-right thinking to a higher degree than post-socialist European countries - despite their larger geographical and cultural distance from the Western world. Opinions on "materialist as well as "postmaterialist" issues are likewise associated with LR self placements in most countries. However, there are many discrepancies that reflect the varying political cultures and political problem agendas of different regions. As expected, items related to environmental protection and "job protectionism" are more salient in higher developed countries (Geser 2008). Other studies have supported the hypothesis that postmaterialist values are not related to leftism in underdeveloped countries. The results of Riviero African study, for instance, show that neither abortion nor environmental issues are of any significance in countries like Uganda, Zimbabwe and Algeria – not even on the elite levels. (Riviero 2004). Only in the case of South Africa (the wealthiest of the compared nations) a modest impact of environmental values on left-right self placement could be found.

1.3 Inhomogeneities within national populations

Many theoretical arguments and at least some empirical findings suggest that even within developed countries where the left-right dimension is fully institutionalized, politically sophisticated individuals are better able to make use of political labels like “left” and “right” because they are better informed about their meaning (Sniderman et.al. 1991; Kitschelt& Hellemans 1990; Klingemann 1979 etc.).
In the early 1960ies already, Converse has observed that highly educated and politically interested individuals were more inclined to think in abstract ideological terms (Converse 1964), and various studies have shown that issue positions and left-right self placements are more tightly correlated when the level of political cognition is high (e. g. Inglehart/Klingemann 1976).

Nie and Andersen have found consistency among elites' responses on a wide range of issues concerning the scope of government activity enabling them to identify clear "liberals" and "conservatives." On the level of uneducated strata, however,

> *"there is little or no interdependence … in mass attitudes, because mass publics have neither the educational background, the contextual knowledge nor the capacity to deal with abstract concepts that sustain an organized set of beliefs over a wide range of political issues" (Nie & Anderson 1974).*

Eurobarometer studies have shown that within a sample of political candidates, the statistical variance of LR self-placements explained by issue positions was four times as high as within a sample of ordinary voters (Inglehart 1989: 368). Similarly, Lambert et. al. have found in a large Canadian sample that respondents with low education were least able to connect left-right self placements with specific political attitudes and issue positions (Lambert et. al. 1986).

In countries which have only recently been affected by left-right ideologies or in which the diffusion process is still going on, we may expect that the elites act as forerunning opinion leaders: so that larger elite-nonelite differentials in the usage of left-right patterns should be found than in countries where the LR dimension is established since very long. This hypothesis is supported by Rivero's study on four African countries where it was found that the predictive power of political and economic attitudes on LR self-placement was much higher among elites than among the general population (Rivero 2004).

In a recent comparative study covering 62 countries (Geser 2008), the author has found that in all regions, left-right self identifications are particularly widespread among the more educated and the more politically active strata: indicating that they are highly central, institutionalied features of the respective political systems. Even Muslim populations follow neatly this trend: illustrating the degree to which alternative Islamist notions are more salient among lower endogenenous strata than among the elites. A second finding was that irrespective of region, LR self placements are moderately more prevalent among male and urban respondents and among populations of richer countries, while age and income levels are less consequential.
In a second study including 2500 Swiss local parties, the author has found that groupings operating in urban context and endowed with a highly educated membership were more prone to organize their political issue positions tightly around a dominating left-right axis (Geser 2009).
This conforms well to Inglehart's findings that higher educated social strata and political elites are more prone to organize their political attitudes in a coherent fashion: by cultivating an overarching left-right dimension that encompasses classical socialist as well as new postmaterialist positions (Inglehart 1984: 33).

1.4 Research Questions

Based on all these considerations, our investigation focuses on the question how ecologism is "vertically" related to general left-right ideology on the one hand "horizontally" interrelated to other issue dimensions of leftism, and how such relationships differ between various nations and geographic regions as well as between various segments of intranational populations. In particular, comparisons between income and educational groups should reveal to what degree such relationships have currently diffused to various social strata, and divergences between age cohorts may indicate how relationships between leftism and ecologism have recently evolved.

2. Data and Methodology

2.1 Selection of countries

The following empirical findings are based on the fifth wave of the World Values Survey that has taken place between 2005 and 2007. In the file released in 2009, we find surveys on 57 countries encompassing respondents between 16 and 103(!) years. Out of these, 27 nations have been selected because for them, full data on all the independent and dependent variables taken into consideration are available, namely: *Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Finland, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, Ukraine, United States, Uruguay, Vietnam.*

2.2 Selection of politically interested respondents

Given the basic undisputed argument that respondents with low political interest use to be insufficiently informed about political ideology and political issues, they have been eliminated from the sample. In more concrete terms, the sample has been restricted to those about 46% (=16'269) of respondents who indicated that they were "very interested" or at least "somewhat interested" in political matters (e023; Table 1)

Table 1: Frequency distribution: according to the dregree of general interest in political matters.

	Interest in Politics			
	Very interested	**Somewhat interested**	**Not very interested**	**Not at all interested**
N =	*4017*	*12252*	*11032*	*7834*
%	11.4	34.9	31.4	22.3

2.3 The left-Right scale

The ideological *Left-Right orientation* was assessed by the self-placement on a sacle ranging from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right).
"In political matters, people talk of "the left" and "the right." How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?" (e033).

Table 2: Values on the left-right scale: Frequency distribution of the total sample of 27 nations. (only politically interested respondents).

	Value on the Left-Right-Scale									
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
N	*869*	*570*	*1376*	*1339*	*3420*	*1734*	*1553*	*1537*	*724*	*1576*
%	5.9	3.9	9.4	9.1	23.3	11.8	10.6	10.5	4.9	10.7

Among the politically interested respondents, 78% (17657 out of 22640) were ready to place themselves on the scale (in contrast to 64% of the disinterested who have been excluded). Interestingly, the frequency distribution on the total sample deviates considerably from an ideal normal distribution (Table 2). Given that a 1-10 scale lacks a natural middle position, it is remarkable that the number of respondents chosing five is almost two times higher than those locating themselves on six. In addition,

much more respondents select one of the most extreme values (1 or 10) than the more moderate neighboring positions (2 or 9).[1]

2.4 Ecologism

The *ecological orientation* was measured by a summative index (raing from -4 to +4) including the following four variables:

1) General care for the environment
"Now I will briefly describe some people. Using this card, would you please indicate for each description whether that person is very much like you, like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you?
'Looking after the environment is important to this person; to care for nature.'" (a197).

2) Priority of environmental protection (relative to economic growth)
"Here are two statements people sometimes make when discussing the environment and economic growth. Which of them comes closer to your own point of view?
'1 'Protecting environment' 2 'Economy growth and creating jobs?'" (b008).

3) Readyness to sacrifice money for ecological purposes
"I am going to read out some statements about the environment. For each one, can you tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree? (Read out and code one answer for each):
'I would give part of my income if I were certain that the money would be used to prevent environmental pollution.'" (b001).

4) Acceptance of higher taxtes for promoting environmental protection
"I am going to read out some statements about the environment. For each one, can you tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree? (Read out and code one answer for each):
'I would agree to an increase in taxes if the extra money were used to prevent environmental pollution.'" (b002).

As seen in Table 3, the frequency distribution of the summative index is heavily biased toward the positive side, as the modal values are +2.0 and +2.5 and more than 20% of respondents are in the region +3 or more, while only 2.6% rank lowest (on values -3 or less).

Table 3: Values of the summative Index of "ecological orientation". Frequency distribution in the total sample. (only politically interested respondents).

	-4.0	**-3.5**	**-3.0**	**-2.5**	**-2.0**	**-1.5**	**-1.0**	**-0.5**	**0**	**+0.5**	**+1.0**	**+1.5**	**+2.0**	**+2.5**	**+3.0**	**+3.5**	**+4.0**
N	*0*	*48*	*286*	*359*	*681*	*421*	*660*	*673*	*1242*	*1166*	*1151*	*858*	*1550*	*1769*	*1299*	*756*	*687*
%	0	.4	2.2	2.7	5.0	3.1	4.9	4.9	9.1	8.6	8.4	6.3	11.4	13.0	9.5	5.6	5.0

In addition, a series of other political attitudes have been assessed that have been found to be central dimensions of leftist thinking (see for instance (Laver & Budge 1993)

[1] It is important to note that 670 of the 1543 extreme rightist values originate from Vietnam where almost eighty percent of the respondents chose values of 8 ore more.

2.5 Classical socialist issues

1.1 More (vs. less) governmental responsibility for the well-being of society and the individual (+)
"Now I'd like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between. (Scale 1-10).
'The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for vs. People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves.'" (e037).

1.2 More (vs. less) government ownership of business (+)
"Now I'd like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale?
1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in bet-ween. (Scale 1-10
'"Private ownership of business and industry should be increased vs. Government ownership of business and industry should be increased.??'" (e036)

1.3 More (vs.less) income equality (+)
"Now I'd like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between. (Scale 1-10).
'Incomes should be made more equal vs. We need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort.'" (e035)

2.6 Social liberalism issues

2.1 Justifiability of homosexuality (+)
"Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between, using this card." (Scale 1-10).
'Homosexuality.'" (f118)

2.1 Justifiability of abortion (+)
"Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between, using this card. (Scale 1-10).
'Abortion.'" (f120).

2.7 Issues related to international solidarity

3.1 Liberal (vs. Restrictive) immigrant policy (+)
"How about people from other countries coming here to work. Which one of the following do you think the government should do?
'1 Let anyone come 2 As long as jobs available 3 Strict limits 4 Prohibit people coming. '" (e143).

3.2 Foreign Aid of own country too low (+)
"In 2003, this country's government allocated [a tenth of one percent] of the national income to foreign aid—that is, [$US 38.05]** per person. Do you think this amount is too low, too high, or about right?" (e129a)*
(This is the sole variable that is not available for the whole sample, as the question has only been asked in OECD countries).

3.3 Proudness of own nationality (-)
"How proud are you to be [e. g. German, French etc.]?
'1 Very proud 2 Quite proud 3 Not very proud 4 Not at all proud.'" (g006)

3. Empirical Results

3.1 The level of leftism and ecologism in different countries

Table 4 informs about the mean values of all used indicators in the different countries. While there are high divergences between countries within each region, there are nevertheless some interregional differences that need to be commented.

First of all, the *Western European countries* stand out as the most leftist group (mean scale value 5.16). This leftism seems to be based mainly on liberal attitudes toward abortion and homosexuality, a support for diminishing social inequality and a low level of nationalistic proudness.

Table 4: Average values of all political attitudes in 27 countries (arithmetic means; only respondents with interest in politics).

	High governmental respons. (1-10)	Govern. business ownership (1-10	More income equality (1-10)	Justifiability of Abortion (1-10)	Justifiability of homosexuality (1-10)	Liberal immigrant policy (1-4)	Foreign aid too low	Not proud of country (1-4)	L-R self placement (1-10)	Ecological orientation (-3 - +3)	*N =*
Finland	4.9	4.7	5.9	5.7	6.3	2.6	2.4	1.5	5.6	1.3	*368*
Germany	6.4	5.0	6.4	5.2	6.4	2.6	2.3	2.1	4.7	-0.3	*949*
Norway	5.9	5.3	6.0	6.9	8.0	2.6	2.4	1.6	5.6	1.6	*757*
Spain	6.4	5.4	5.2	5.8	6.7	2.7	2.4	1.6	4.6	0.6	*387*
Sweden	4.6	4.8	4.9	7.9	8.6	2.9	2.5	1.5	5.6	1.2	*590*
Switzerland	4.7	4.7	7.3	5.6	7.3	2.8	2.5	1.8	5.2	1.4	*731*
Canada	5.1	4.3	5.3	4.8	5.9	2.7	2.3	1.2	5.5	1.7	*1055*
United States	4.8	3.4	4.8	4.5	4.5	2.5	2.1	1.4	5.8	0.4	*744*
Australia	5.1	5.0	5.3	5.9	6.1	2.6	2.4	1.4	5.5	1.1	*812*
Bulgaria	6.8	5.8	5.0	5.7	4.1	2.7	--	1.7	4.7	0.6	*410*
Moldova	6.5	5.8	5.1	3.4	*2.4*	2.7	--	2.1	6.1	1.1	*387*
Poland	6.0	6.5	4.2	3.1	3.2	2.5	--	1.4	6.0	0.7	*401*
Romania	5.7	*4.4*	5.8	3.7	2.2	2.8	--	1.7	6.2	0.4	*548*
Slovenia	6.3	4.6	6.2	6.4	5.6	2.7	--	1.5	5.2	1.3	*346*
Ukraine	6.9	6.9	4.1	*3.9*	*2.7*	*2.9*	--	1.9	*5.8*	0.3	*463*
Turkey	6.2	*5.9*	6.5	2.4	1.8	2.4	--	1.2	6.0	1.5	*490*
Argentina	6.3	6.7	5.6	3.9	6.6	2.7	--	1.5	5.2	1.2	*239*
Brazil	6.6	5.4	5.3	2.7	4.4	2.5	--	1.8	5.5	1.1	*656*
Chile	5.8	6.5	6.3	2.9	5.5	2.6	--	1.5	*5.0*	1.4	*236*
Mexico	5.6	5.4	4.5	3.4	4.7	2.6	--	1.2	6.1	1.7	*513*
Uruguay	6.1	5.5	5.7	5.0	6.4	3.1	--	1.3	4.6	0.2	*358*
Taiwan	5.8	5.2	3.9	3.7	3.9	2.3	--	2.2	6.0	1.3	*354*
India	6.6	5.6	6.1	3.0	2.9	2.5	--	1.3	4.3	1.9	*719*
Indonesia	5.4	6.1	3.5	1.7	1.5	2.2	--	1.6	6.9	1.2	*695*
Japan	6.8	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.4	2.4	1.9	2.1	5.5	.9	*386*
South Korea	7.4	5.4	4.5	3.4	2.7	2.6	--	1.9	5.8	.5	*465*
Vietnam	*4.8*	*5.2*	*4.7*	*2.4*	*1.9*	*3.3*	--	*1.1*	*9.2*	2.1	*863*

On the other hand, the Western-European position toward governmental responsibility, governmental business ownership and immigration policy is comparable to the other regions, and - quite astonishingly, when the public salience of environmental issues is considered - their ecological orientation is even significantly lower (undercut only by post socialist Eastern European countries).
Unsurprisingly, *Eastern Europe* stands out by a rather affirmative attitude toward governmental responsibility and governmental business ownership - positions that seem nevertheless compatible with a moderately rightist self-placement (5.70) on the LR-scale: a rightism that may stem from more conservative attitudes toward abortion and homosexuality and rather low values on ecological orientation. In this way, they converge with the United States where rightism is associated with very low ecologism and in addition with the preference for a rather restricted governmental role.
Canada and Australia occupy a middle position between Western Europe and the United States: surpassing the latter in ecologism and social liberalism (abortion and homosexuality), and the former in a prouder identification with their own nation.
South American countries converge with *Turkey* in sanctioning abortion and preferring a rather strong governmental role. However, Turkish respondents show much more support for policies aimed at the reduction of inequality and at environmental protection. It might be speculated that their high nationalism (expressed in their proudness of being Turks) may be responsible for their rather rightist ideological position. (mean scale value: 6.03).
Finally, *East Asian countries* stand out by their most rightist ideological positions (mean scale value 6.69) that goes along with a high acceptance of inequality, but nevertheless also with reduced nationalism and a high level of ecological orientation.

As a preliminary conclusion, we may summarize that in a macroscopic international perspective, there is little evidence that ecologism and leftism are positively associated. While India and the United States conform with our major hypotheses by combining a leftist (rightist) standing with a high (low) ecological orientation, the same is certainly not true for Uruguay were leftism goes along with low ecologism, and for Turkey, Vietnam, Indonesia and Romania, where the relatively high ecologism is evidently combined with rather rightist positions. As a result, the inter-country correlation between leftism and ecologism is not statistically significant (at the 0.05 level).

3.2 "Vertical coupling" between issue positions and left-right ideology in different countries

The factual relevance of the left-right scale can be measured by the degree to which it correlates with various attitudes about specific political issues. In settings where a more traditional LR semantics has survived, we may find that such correlations are restricted to classical "socialist" issues; in more modernized environments, such covariances may also extend to "postmaterialist" dimensions like feminism, pacifism, social liberalism and ecologism.

As a major result, Table 5 shows that there is a rather significant cleavage between Western countries on the one hand and all other countries on the other. In Western Europe as well as North America and Australia, we find that more affirmative attitudes to all nine leftist issues are associated with lower (more leftist) scale self-placements in all nations. The only exception is Sweden where the correlation with "national proudness" does not reach statistical significance.

Table 5: Correlations between self-placement on the left-right scale and various leftist attitudes in 28 countries (WVS wave 2007-07; only respondents with medium or high interest in politics).

	Classical Socialism			Social Liberalism		Internationalism			Ecologism	
	High governmental responsibility	Governmental business Ownership	More income equality	Justifiability of abortion	Justifiability of homosexuality	Liberal immigrant policy	Foreign aid too low	Not proud of country	Ecological orientation	*N =*
Finland	-.17**	-.37**	-.36**	-.17**	-.29**	-.12**	-.21**	-.19**	-.25**	*378*
Germany	-.12**	-.19**	-.22**	-.15**	-.22**	-.20**	-.19**	-.21**	-.20**	*355*
Norway	-.25**	-.37**	-.32**	-.10**	-.16**	-.19**	-.28**	-.32**	-.32**	*771*
Spain	-.21**	-.24**	-.20**	-.41**	-.42**	-.25**	-.35**	-.26**	-.38**	*323*
Sweden	-.51**	-.55**	-.53**	-.10*	-.15**	-.15**	-.24**	-.05	-.33**	*556*
Switzerland	-.31**	-.21**	-.30**	-.20**	-.30**	-.26**	-.23**	-.28**	-.31**	*697*
Canada	-.26**	-.15**	-.22**	-.27**	-.28**	-.11**	-.17**	-.11**	-.25**	*818*
United States	-.47**	-.21**	-.33**	-.38**	-.42**	-.16**	-.19**	-.33**	-.34**	*719*
Australia	-.38**	-.33**	-.33**	-.24**	-.31**	-.21**	-.19**	-.26**	-.27**	*795*
Bulgaria		-.31**	-.28**				--	.11**		*353*
Moldova	-.22**		-.12**				--	.13*		*359*
Poland				-.33**	-.28**		--	*-.14***		*364*
Romania				.14**			--		*.10**	*422*
Slovenia				-.37**	-.26**	-.12*	--			*362*
Ukraine							--	*-.24***		*334*
Turkey	-.14**		-.14**	-.18**	-.15**	-.16**	--	*-.19***		*481*
Argentina	-.31**	-.26**	-.21**	-.29**	-.25**	-.22**	--			*218*
Brazil	-.08**		-.11**	-.08*		-.11**	--	*-.10***		*673*
Chile		-.15*		-.16*			--			*338*
Mexico	-.09**		-.12*	-.10*		-.15**	--			*481*
Uruguay	-.16**	-.22**	-.17**	-.15**	-.16**	-.08	--			*345*
Taiwan	-.14**		-.14**	-.18**	-.15**	-.16**	--	-.19**		*481*
India			-.20**	.09*	.14**		--		-.10*	*553*
Indonesia		.12**	-.13**				--			*556*
Japan	-.16**		-.09**		-.22**			*-.21***		*591*
South Korea	-.11*			-.17**	-.23**		--		-.12**	*463*
Vietnam				*-.09***	*-.14***	*.09***	--	*-.22***	*.09***	*1042*

By aggregating all samples from Western nations, highest correlations are found with positive attitudes toward more govermental responsibility (-.33) and toward increasing social equality (-.32), while lowest relationships exist with abortion and immigrant policies (-.18), while all the others (including ecologism with .23) are located in-between.

Several "semiwestern" countries (Turkey, Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay and Taiwan) show analogous trends: with the significant exception of ecologism which is evidently not related to the overarching ideological axis. In addition, Turkey, Brazil and Taiwan deviate in the aspect of governmental business ownership, while in Argentina, Mexico and Uruguay, national proudness shows not the expected negative correlation.

Outside the core Western hemisphere, only India and South Korea show the expected negative relationships between LR-scale values and ecological orientation, while in Romania and Vietnam, an unexpected *positive* correlation prevails.

By summarizing, it is remarkable that Eastern Europe diverges more from Western countries than Latin America or East Asia, as not a single country in this region can be included in the "semi-western" category. This is mainly due to the conspicuous absence of relationships with classical socialist issues and ecologism as well as with a positive association of leftism and nationalism (in the case of Bulgaria and Moldovia) – regularities that not hard to understand in the light of the recent communist past that still shapes the political culture within these nations.

It is characteristic for the Western pattern that associations between leftist issue attitudes and LR-selfplacements increase considerable with higher formal education. This is seen in Table 6 where subsamples of three educational levels are compared according to the total variance of LR-placement explained by eight (nine) predictors (in linear multivariate regressions).

Table 6: Total variance of LR self-placement explained by eight (nine) political attitudes in 27 countries: according to the level of formal education. (WVS wave 2007-07: only respondents with medium or high interest in politics)

	Level of formal education		
	low*	**medium****	**high*****
Finland	18.3	25.2	49.0
Germany	13.0	18.8	25.7
Norway	13.1	22.3	43.4
Spain	29.2	31.5	54.8
Sweden	21.6	37.6	57.2
Switzerland	7.6	33.7	35.9
Canada	8.7	15.6	34.4
United States	29.2	36.5	56.7
Australia	12.6	15.2	40.4
Bulgaria	2.3	18.8	8.8
Moldova	26.5	5.8	1.4
Poland	9.1	20.9	2.0.
Romania	3.5	*0.4*	4.0
Slovenia	27.6	2.3	27.5
Ukraine	1.2	1.7	1.1
Turkey	2.9	10.8	7.8
Argentina	6.3	18.9	45.1
Brazil	1.0	3.6	6.4
Chile	3.2	3.3	10.6
Mexico	0.1	1.0	11.8
Uruguay	7.8	13.2	0.2
Taiwan	4.2	2.7	1.8
India	13.5	10.4	7.3
Indonesia	17.4	10.2	7.9
Japan	21.9	32.6	14.0
South Korea	3.8	0.9	8.0
Vietnam	*11.3*	*4.4*	*0.6*

** only compulsary school ** college or basic or advanced vocational education *** academic education*

Especially in the Unted States, Spain and the three Scandinavian countries, extremely high percentages of the variance (49% or more) can be explained in the group of highly educated repondents. Outside

the Western core, only Argentina shows a comparable pattern, while in additional six countries (Bulgaria, Turkey, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and South Korea), at least moderate differences between lowest and highest educated subsamples can be observed.

In all Eastern European countries except Bulgaria and all Asian countries except South Korea, relationships with education are inexistent or even negative. Particularly in Moldavia, India, Indonesia and Japan, "Western type" left-right thinking seems to be most frequent within strata with low formal education – contradicting blatantly the hypothesis that such thinking is more prominent on elite in nonwestern countries.

As to be expected, the correlations between left-right placement and ecologism also increase with higher education in all Western countries (Table 7). Again the Unted States (as the "Nader country") - stands out as a nation where the academic elites maintain extremely tight couplings between leftism and affirmative stands toward environmental protection. In contrast to Table 6 where several other countries follow the Western pattern, only the educational elites of Mexico and Japan seem to have assimilated ecologism to their ideological leftism.

Table 7: Correlations beween ecologism and left-right self-placements in 27 countries: according to the level of formal education. (WVS wave 2007-07: only respondents with medium or high interest in politics)

	Level of formal education		
	Low[1]	**Medium[2]**	**High[3]**
Finland	-.27*	-.22**	-.39**
Germany	-.12*	-.16**	-.22**
Norway	-.21**	-.28**	-.38**
Spain	-.30**	-.,35**	-.49**
Sweden			-.45**
Switzerland		-.31**	-.31**
Canada		-.21**	-.28**
United States		-.32**	-.54**
Australia			-.34**
Bulgaria			
Moldova			
Poland			
Romania			
Slovenia			
Ukraine			
Turkey			
Argentina			
Brazil			
Chile			
Mexico			-.22**
Uruguay			
Taiwan			
India			
Indonesia	-.31*		
Japan			-.21**
South Korea			
Vietnam	*.14**		

[1] *only compulsary school* [2] *college or basic or advanced vocational education* [3] *academic education*

By comparing different age cohorts, it can be concluded that no consistent diffusion processes have taken place in the last decades. Within the Western hemisphere, only Finland, Norway and Switzerland show a rising tendency of leftist ideology in the youngest cohorts. In Eastern European as well as in Asian countries, by contrast, we see that Left-Right thinking is most pronounced among the oldest cohorts (born 1935 or earlier), while the post war generations have taken more distance from such Western influences (Table 8).

Table 8: Total variance of LR self-placement explained by nine political attitudes in 27 countries: according to years of birth. (WVS wave 2007-07; only respondents with medium or high interest in politics)

	Birth cohorts					
	-1935	**1936-45**	**1946-55**	**1956-65**	**1966-75**	**1976+**
Finland	0.1	27.1	30.3	21.8	40.3	48.2
Germany	35.6	19.6	17.7	18.7	13.8	36.4
Norway	7.2	24.5	39.8	28.1	29.5	43.0
Spain	47.5	56.6	8.1	17.5	50.3	37.4
Sweden	30.4	59.0	46.5	50.2	48.9	52.0
Switzerland	16.8	27.0	27.8	39.5	29.5	55.5
Canada	7.1	21.5	26.3	41.0	15.9	3.4
United States	33.4	23.6	40.9	45.1	47.6	38.3
Australia	27.8	40.4	25.4	35.9	17.0	26.9
Bulgaria	53.3	16.0	2.1	40.9	14.2	15.9
Moldova	--	32.4	28.2	4.9	2.7	8.3
Poland	52.7	9.2	13.6	3.1	8.9	13.1
Romania	5.7	*1.9*	10.4	2.0	0.8	27.5
Slovenia	53.2	36.8	23.9	10.2	.01	11.5
Ukraine	86.8	5.9	14.9	10.9	6.1	0.6
Turkey	--	41.0	*5.9*	14.7	12.6	0.3
Argentina	--	18.7	5.4	4.3	10.7	40.6
Brazil	19.5	12.4	2.1	6.2	14.0	10.4
Chile	--	49.5	24.8	.01	.02	10.2
Mexico	45.7	39.2	7.8	3.0	0-0	9.4
Uruguay	20.1	26.7	6.1	7.2	27.7	20.1
Taiwan	48.6	2.0	14.6	1.4	3.8	3.1
India	55.0	15.3	5.6	10.2	4.0	11.5
Indonesia	--	37.6	4.1	2.4	2.8	7.7
Japan	44.3	27.6	11.0	4.2	7.8	15.7
South Korea	--	0.1	21.8	3.6	4.8	25.4
Vietnam	*8.3*	*1.4*	*20.9*	*1.0*	*3.7*	*12.1*

On the other hand, the results corroborate the hypothesis that the left-right dimension has gained weight in Western countries as a result of the rise of postmaterialist "New Social Movements". In the United States, the explained variance rises sharply in the respondents who were youngsters when the Berkeley unrests and other protest turmoil occurred –and about "first voters" at the time when the ticket Nixon vs. McGovern was at stake (in 1972).

Focusing on ecologist attitudes, similar inhomogeneous trends are revealed. While most Western countries have in common that the oldest (pre war) generation maintains a rather low association between leftism and ecologism, two of them (Finland and Germany) show consistently rising tendencies, while in all others, curvilinear patterns prevail (Table 9). Disregarding India, there is no hint that any diffusion of "leftist ecologism" has recently taken place from Western to Non-western regions. To the contrary, a "rightist ecologism" seems to be on the rise in certain countries: especially in Romania where a statistically significant positive correlation is found among the youngest respondents (born after 1975).

Table 9: Correlations between ecologism and left-right self-placements in 27 countries: according years of birth. (WVS wave 2007-07: only respondents with medium or high interest in politics).

	Birth cohorts					
	-1935	**1936-45**	**1946-55**	**1956-65**	**1966-75**	**1976+**
Finland		-.31*	-.33**		-.35**	-.39**
Germany			-.18**	-.26**	-.32**	-.45**
Norway			-.40**	-.25**	-.34**	-.39**
Spain		-.52**	-.48**	-.43**	-.45**	
Sweden		-.43**	-.30**	-.30**	-.42**	-.37**
Switzerland	-.27**	-.28**	-.35**	-.30**	-.28**	
Canada		-.17*	-.22**	-.40**	-.35**	
United States	-.22*	-.35**	-.43**	-.37**	-.37**	
Australia	-.26**	-.33**	-.15*	-.33**		-.34**
Bulgaria						
Moldova						
Poland						
Romania						*.41***
Slovenia						
Ukraine						
Turkey						
Argentina						
Brazil						
Chile						
Mexico		-.47**				
Uruguay	-.41**					
Taiwan		-.33*				
India						-.23**
Indonesia						
Japan						
South Korea			-.46**	-.23*		
Vietnam		*.32***	*.30***			

3.3 "Horizontal couplings" between ecologism and other leftist issue positions

In a third step, we want to assess the degree to which ecologism is related to the attitudes of other specific issues that are conventionally defined in terms of left and right. Again, all Western countries stand out as a homogenous group in the sense that in most cases, significant positive correlations can be found. In all countries, ecologism shows particularly high associations with the acceptance of homosexuality, the preference for an open, liberal immigration policy and to the judgment that foreign aid to peer countries should be increased (Table 10).

Table 10: Correlations between ecological orientation and various political attitudes in 27 countries (WVS wave 2007-07; only respondent with medium or high interest in politics).

	High governmental responsibility	Governmental business Ownership	More income equality	Justifiability of abortion	Justifiability of homosexuality	Liberal immigrant policy	Foreign aid too low	Not proud of country	*N =*
Finland	.17**	.16**	.12**		.24**	.21**	.33**		*378*
Germany	*-.14***				.18**	.19**	.27**	.19**	*355*
Norway	.10**	.07*	.08*		.13**	.22**	.32**	.19**	*771*
Spain	.13**	.16**		.27**	.32**	.13*	.33**		*323*
Sweden	.24**	.23**	.29**		.16**	.15**	.30**		*556*
Switzerland		.10*	.14**		.16**	.24**	.28**	.16**	*697*
Canada	.13**	.09**	.12**	.11**	.21**	.14**	.28**		*818*
United States	.24**	.10*	.16**	.17**	.23**	.17**	.30**	.15**	*719*
Australia	.20**	.16**	.13**	.18**	.29**	.18**	.34**	.19**	*795*
Bulgaria	-.25**		-.13*				--	-.14*	*353*
Moldova						.15**	--		*359*
Poland	-.15**					.11*	--		*364*
Romania	-.30**	*-.12**	-.27**			.14**	--		*422*
Slovenia						.24**			*362*
Ukraine		-.16**		*.13**				-.13*	*334*
Turkey							--		*481*
Argentina							--		*218*
Brazil	-.11**			-.10*			--	-.08*	*673*
Chile						.18*	--		*338*
Mexico							--		*481*
Uruguay							--	-.15*	*345*
Taiwan			*-.13**		.21**			-.14**	*481*
India	.13**					.14**			*553*
Indonesia	-.17**								*556*
Japan						.15**	.12*		*591*
South Korea	.13*				.13**	.18**		-.18**	*463*
Vietnam				*-.08**				*-.14***	*1042*

Similarly strong relationships are found with affirmative views toward extended governmental responsibility and governmental business ownership, where only Switzerland and Germany deviate from the

general pattern. Weakest correlations are found with the lack of patriotism (and with the abortion issue) where significant correlations are only found in five (four) countries.
Looking at the remaining sample of Non-Western nations, only the immigration issue is rather consistently related to ecological orientation (in 8 of 18 cases), while other issues show only sporadic correlations and two of them (governmental responsibility and lack of patriotism) show even (predominantly) a negative association. In Eastern Europe as well as in Latin America and East Asia, we evidently find countries in which care for the environment is part of a positive commitment to the whole nation – not part of a global universalism (and an idealistic urge to "save the planet") as in leftist ideologies in the West.

Table 11: Explaining the ecological orientation by left-right self-placement and eight attitudes toward political issues: Multiple linear Regressions: BETA coefficents. (WVS wave 2007-07; only respondent with medium or high interest in politics).

	High governmental respons.	Governmental business ownership	More income equality	Justifiability of abortion	Justifiability of homosexuality	Liberal immigrant policy	Foreign aid too low	Not proud of country	L-R self placement	% Total Variance explained
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.25**	5.9
Finland	.12*				.14*	.11*	.22**		--	15.0
(N =336)	.12*				.11*	.11*	.22**		-.14*	16.8
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.20**	3.9
Germany	*-.15***					.12**	.21**	.08*	--	10.9
(N =710)	*-.17****	--	--	--	--	.11***	.20***		-.13**	12.7
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.32**	10.4
Norway			.09*	*-.10**		.11**	.26**		--	14.8
(N = 700)				*-.10**		.09**	.21**		-.26**	19.7
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.38**	14.4
Spain		.15**		.10**	.20**		.20**		--	16.2
(N = 251)					.14**		.17**		-.24**	19.6
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.33**	10.6
Sweden			.17**				.19**		--	14.8
(N = 477)							.18**		-.18**	16.4
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.31**	9.6
Switzerland			.11**			.17**	.19**		--	12.5
(N = 544)			.12**			.13**	.16**		-.25**	16.8
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.25**	5.9
Canada		.09**	*.10***		.16**		.22**		--	11.0
(N =670)			*.08**		.15**		.21**		-.17**	14.0
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.34**	11.4
United States	.13**			.10*			.23**		--	14.1
(N = 676)							.23**		-.23**	17.2
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.27**	7.2
Australia	.10*				.14**		.24**	*.07**	--	17.8
(N= 711)	.08*				.13**		.24**		-.10*	18.6
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.23**	5.4
Total		.05**	.06**		.12**	.10**	.25**	*-.04***		13.7
(N = 5083)	-.04**				.10**	.09**	.24**	*-.06***	-.16**	16.0

Of course, the correlations reported in Table 10 are not indicating genuine causal relationships, because they result from the intercorrelations of the different issues as well as from their common association with the overarching left-right scale.

In order to disaggregate these specific causalities, three linear regressions have been performed for each Western country. The *first* expresses the causal relevance of the left-right scale (without any controls); the *second* informs about the specific contributions of each issue attitude without controlling LR-values; and the *third* articulates the explanation power of issue attitudes and LR-values when all of these variables are included in the equation.

In the case of Finland, for example, we can see that

- the specific issues explain a much larger share of total variance than the LR self placement,
- these shares are not much lowered when the LR-variable is controlled;
- the LR-dimension nevertheless retains a modest independent explaining power when issue variables are included in the equation (Table 11).

A very similar pattern appears in Australia where explanatory power rises only by 0.8% when the LR dimension is added to the list of predictors: in contrast to Norway and Switzerland where the gain surpasses 4%. In all countries, the LR dimension retains part of its independent causal impact when issue predictors are controlled, while on the other hand, most issues also remain causally relevant independent of the ideological LR-scale. Among all issue dimensions, the attitude toward foreign aid stands out as the most powerful independent predictor in all Western countries, while all others don't reach statistical significance in the majority of cases.

Given the rather high convergence of all Western nations, it seems viable to aggregate them to a single sample in order to carry out more detailed multivariate analyses concerning divergences between different segments of the national populations.

In a first step, we want to verify whether the positive relationship between educational level and tightness of intercorrelations observed in the case of L-R self placements (see Table 6) also extends to ecological orientation. In fact, Table 12 shows that ecologism is most consistently and strongly associated with all issue indicators among respondents with tertiary education. In the subsample with low education, correlations remain limited to immigration policy and foreign aid, while classical socialist issues are unrelated or even negatively correlated (in the case of governmental responsibility).

Table 12: Correlations between ecological orientation and various leftist attitudes, according to level of education (WVS wave 2007-07; Total Sample of Western countries; only respondent with medium or high interest in politics).

Level of education	Gender	High governmental respons.	Governmental business Ownership	More income equality	Justifiability of abortion	Justifiability of homosexuality	Liberal immigrant policy	Foreign aid too low	Not proud of country	L-R Self-Placement	*N =*
low	**male**	*-.18***					.16**	.17**	*-.09***	-.15**	*582*
	female	*-.15***			.13**	.13**	.16**	.16**		-.09*	*498*
medium	**male**	.07*		.09**		.14**	.17**	.27**		-.17**	*1295*
	female	.07*	.08**	.09**	*.12***	.19**	.13**	.29**		-.22**	*1261*
high	**male**	.19**	.21**	.21**	*.08***	.21**	.14**	.36**	.11**	-.36**	*1173*
	female	.16**	.13**	.16**	*.08***	.20**	.23**	.32**		-.25**	*1030*

As a second remarkable (and unexpected) result, Table 12 suggests that with increasing education, there is a widening gap between genders: in the sense that males maintain higher interrelationships

between ecologism and most other aspects of leftism (except immigrant policy and the two "moral" issues: homosexuality and abortion).
By inspecting Table 13, it can be concluded that this gender divergence within highly educated strata is mainly caused by younger age cohorts (born after 1965) where the variance of ecologism explained by the issue predictors assumes highest values among males, while it drops to lowest levels among female respondents.

Table 13: Percentage of total variance of ecological orientation explained by eight political attitudes in Western countries: according to level of education, gender and years of birth. (WVS wave 2007-07; total sample of Western countries; only respondents with medium or high interest in politics).

		Birth cohorts					
Level of education	**Gender**	**-1935**	**1936-45**	**1946-55**	**1956-65**	**1966-75**	**1976-**
Low	**Males**	5.0	8.9	22.1	0.1	9.4	(.26.1)*
	Females	*2.9*	13.4	7.7	24.9	0.2	*(1.2)**
Medium	**Males**	9.2	6.4	2.6	12.4	16.5	14.9
	Females	7.2	17.6	17.0	14.5	17.9	8.8
high	**Males**	15.7	14.1	15.0	23.7	26.3	37.9
	Females	7.1	22.7	23.9	23.2	5.1	.5

** very low number of cases (19/9).*

Table 14 provides more specific information about the changes across generations. It is evident that the two moral issues (abortion and homosexuality) as well as attitudes toward foreign aid have maintained a constant covariance over all age cohorts, while correlations with classical socialist dimensions of left-ism (related to governmental responsibility, public business ownership and the diminishment of ine-quality) are completely irrelevant in older age group and gain considerable strength in the younger generation (born after 1965). The relationships with immigration policy attitudes also gain strength among younger respondents. As a consequence, the correlation between ecologism and left-right self placement has also risen, as well as the total percentage of explained variance that is minimal on the cohort born before 1936 and highest in the cohort of 1956-65.

Table 14: Correlations between ecological orientation and eight political attitudes in different age cohorts. (WVS wave 2007-07; total Sample of Western countries; only politically interested respondents).

Year of birth	**High govern-mental respons.**	**Govern-mental business ownership**	**More income equality**	**Justifia-bility of abortion**	**Justifia-bility of homo-sexuality**	**Liberal immi-grant policy**	**Foreign aid too low**	**Not proud of country**	**L-R self-place-ment**	**% Total variance explained by all pre-dictors**	***N =***
-1935				**.17****	.16**	.14*	.26**			8.4	*784*
1936-45				.15**	.23**	.17**	.32**		-.17**	14.9	*1046*
1946-55	.06*	.15**	.08**	.15**	**.26****	.18**	.31**		-.24**	16.8	*1214*
1956-65		.10**	.13**	.10**	**.25****	.22**	.34**		-.27**	20.2	*1216*
1966-75	**.16****	**.18****	.11**	.11**	.21**	**.24****	**.35****		**-.30****	19.5	*963*
1976+	**.16****	**.16****	**.20****	.14**	.20**	.23**	.31**		**-.28****	17.7	*695*

4. Conclusions

Unquestionably, environmental protection has become a major dimension of current political ideology and political action. As various brands of "Green Parties" in many countries demonstrate, such ecological values are often articulated by "leftist" groupings that combine them with classical socialist stances on he one hand and other "postmaterialist" issues (like feminism, social liberalism, pacifism, internationalism) originating in the "New Social Movements" since the late 1960ies. Nevertheless, the association between leftism and ecologism has remained an open issue: given the diachronic change of leftist ideologies, the manifold of cultural contexts in which they are embedded, and the divergences between different population segments within the respective countries. Based on data stemming from the fifth wave of World Values Survey (conducted 2005-2007), such relationships are analyzed comparatively in a sample of 27 countries.

As a *first* major result, it is found that the Western countries (encompassing Western European, USA, Canada and Aiustralia) stand out as a distinct group with a highly homogeneous political culture: homogeneous in the sense that in all of them, ecologism shows a tight "vertical coupling" to the general ideological left-right scale on the one hand and considerable "horizontal couplings" to other leftist issue dimensions on the other. In particular, ecologism seems to be part of a wider perspective of transnational or (or even global) solidarity that also includes foreign aid and a liberal acceptance of refugees from other countries. (In fact, ecologism may add to this broad geographical openness a wider outlook in temporal terms: e. g. by favoring "sustainable" policy measures in consideration of future human generations). India and South Korea are the only nonwestern countries where a similar (however very moderate) corrleation between leftism and ecologism can be found: in contrast to socialism, social liberalism and internationalism which are vital parts of leftist ideology in several "semi-western" countries (like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Turkey and Japan). It is remarkable that no Eastern European country belongs to this semi-western category: an indicator that a deeper ideological gap separates Western Europe from its Eastern neighbors than from any many far more distant countries.

As a s*econd* empirical regularity, it is confirmed that at least within Western countries, leftist ideologies are most pronounced within highly educated strata of the population. Very few other countries (Slovenia, India and Mexico) show a similar pattern: illustrating that there is no world-wide homogeneity on the level of academic elites. On the other hand, Western nations differ sharply in the degree to which the coupling between leftism and ecologism pervades the less educated strata of population. While this penetration is considerable in Spain and the three Scandinavian countries, it is completely absent in Australia, Canada and the United States.

Thirdly, a comparative analysis of age cohorts provides very little evidence for major intergenerational change: except in the sense that the oldest cohort (born before 1935) seems to be least affected by leftist ecologism. In particular, there is no evidence that any interregional or even global diffusion of political ideology (e.g. on the basis of modern communication media) has taken (or is currently taking) place that would cause more transnational homogeneity (and solidarity) among younger populations.

Fourth, finally, a closer look at the Western subsample reveals group-specific differences in the way ecologism is embedded in the total web of leftist attitudes. Thus, tighter correlations with classical socialist stances and with immigration policy appear in highly educated strata, while the covariances with social liberalism and attitudes toward foreign aid are not significantly affected. Similarly, the ecologism

of females seems less related to classical socialist attitudes – as well as to the overall left-right self placement - than in the cases of males.
A comparison of age cohorts indicates that within the Western hemisphere, the coupling between ecologism and classical socialist stances is on the rise (because highest correlation coefficients are found in the respondents born after 1965), while no consistent trends are found with social liberalist or attitudes toward foreign aid.

To summarize, we may conclude that "leftist ecologism" is a specific feature of Western countries that unites Western Europe with North America and Oceania, but divides them from South America and Asia as well as from their neighboring countries to the East: the post-Sowjet nations as well as the middle European Warsaw Pact countries shaped by Stalinist socialism after World War II.
This divisive state seems to be highly consolidated and stable, as there are no hints that in Nonwestern countries, younger age cohorts or higher educated strata would be more open to Western political ideology than the rest of the population.

References

Badescu, Gabriel & Sum, Paul E. **2005** The Importance of Left-Right orientations in the new democracies. Paper prepared for Presentation at the International Conference on "Elections and Democratic Governance", organized by the Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica (IPSAS), Taipei, April 10-11, 2005. http://www.cses.org/plancom/2005Taipei/Badescu&Sum.pdf

Clark, T., Lipset, S. M. & Rempel, M. 1993 The Declining Political Significance of Social Class. International Sociology 8/3: 293–316.

Castles, Francis G., & Mair, P. 1984 Left-Right Political Scales: Some 'Expert' Judgments. European Journal of Political Research 12: 73-88.

Colomer, Josep M. & Luis E. Escatel. 2004 The Left-Right Dimension in Latin America. Mexico City: CIDE, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas. Working Papers, SDTEP 165.

Converse, Philip E. 1964 The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics. in: Apter, David A. (ed.) Ideology of Discontent. Free Press, New York.

Deegan-Krause, K. 2006. New Dimensions of Political Cleavage. In: Dalton R & Klingemann H. D. (eds.) Oxford Handbook of Political Science. Oxford University Press: 538-556.
http://www.la.wayne.edu/polisci/kdk/papers/cleavage.pdf

Falter, Jürgen W. / Schumann Siegfried 1992 Politische Konflikte, Wählerverhalten und die Struktur des Parteienwettbewerbs (in: Gabriel, Oscar W. (Hrsg.) Die EG-Staaten im Vergleich. Westdeutscher Verlag Opladen 1992: 192-219.

Geser Hans 2008 The limits of ideological globalization. In: Sociology in Switzerland: World Society and International Relations. Online Publikationen. Zuerich, June 2008. http://socio.ch/internat/t_hgeser5.pdf

Geser Hans 2009 Rising Tides of Ideological Simplifications. A Comparative and Longitudinal Analysis of Local Parties. Swiss Political Science Review 15 (2): 241-280. http://socio.ch/par/t_hgeserszpw.pdf

Gross, D. A. & Sigelman, L. 1984 Comparing party systems: A multidimensional approach. Comparative Politics, 16, 4: 463–479.

Inglehart, R. & Klingemann, H. D. 1976 Party Identification, Ideological Preference and the Left-Right Dimension among Western Mass Publics. In Budge Ian, Robertson, David & Hearl, Derek J. (eds.): Ideology, Strategy and Party Change: Spatial Analyses of Post-War Election Programmes in 19 Democracies: 243-273. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Inglehart, R. 1984 The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society. In: Dalton, R., Flanagan, S. C. & Beck, P.E. (eds.) Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment? Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Inglehart, R. 1989 Kultureller Umbruch. Wertewandel in der westlichen Welt.Campus New York/Frankfurt.

Janda, K. 1980 Political parties: A cross-national survey. New York: Free Press.

Kessel, H. & Tischler, W. 1984 Umweltbewusstsein. Oekologische Wertvorstellungen in westlichen Industrienationen. Sigma Verlag.

Kitschelt, H. & Hellemans, S. 1990 The Left-Right Semantics and the New Politics Cleavage. Comparative Political Studies 23: 210–38.

Klingemann, Hans D. 1979. The Background of Ideological Conceptualization. In Samuel H. Barnes, S. H., Kaase,M. et al. Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies (Chapter 9). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Knutsen, O. & Scarbrough, E. 1995 Cleavage Politics. In: van Deth, J. W. & Scarbrough, E. (eds.): The Impact of Values. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kriesi, Hanspeter 1989 New Social Movements and the New Class in the Netherlands. In: American Journal of Sociology 94: 1078-1116.

Lambert, Ronald D., Curtis, J. E., Brown, St. D. & Kay, B. J. 1986 In Search of Left/Right Beliefs in the Canadian Electorate. In: Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique, 19/3: 541-563.

Laponce, I.A. 1981. Left and Right. The Topography of Political Perceptions. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Laver, M. & Budge, I., eds. 1993 Party policy and coalition government in Western Europe. London: Macmillan.

LeBlanc, Hugh L. & Merrin Mary Beth 1977 Mass Belief Systems Revisited. The Journal of Politics, 39/4: 1082-1087.

Mair, Peter. 1997 Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Nie, N. & Anderson, K. 1974 Mass Belief System Revisited: Political Change and Attitude Structure. The Journal of Politics 36: 540–72.

Poguntke, T. 1987 Grün-Alternative Parteien: Eine neue Farbe in westlichen Parteiensystemen. Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen 3: 369–82.

Potter, Corrie 2001 Left-Right Self-Placement in Western Europe: What responses and nonresponses indicate. Paper prepared for the Political Behavior Group, U. W. Madison.

Rivero, Carlos Garcia 2004 Testing the Left-Right Continuum in Africa Paper prepared for presentation to the 2004 ECPR Joint Sessions held in Uppsala, Sweden, 14-18 April.

Sani, G. & Sartori, G. 1983 Polarization, Fragmentation and Competition in Western Democracies. In: Daalder, H. & Mair. P. (eds.), Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change. Beverly Hills: Sage (Chapter 11).

Sniderman, P., Brody, R. & P. Tetlock 1991 Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Warwick, P. 1992 Ideological diversity and government survival in Western European parliamentary democracies. Comparative Political Studies 25: 332–361.

Weakliem, D. 1991 The Two Lefts' Occupation and Party Choice in France, Italy and the Netherlands. American Journal of Sociology 96: 1327–61.

Weisberg, H. & Tanaka, A. 2001 Change in the Spatial Dimensions of Party Conflict: The Case of Japan in the 1990s. Political Behavior, 23: 75-101.

Zechmeister, Elisabeth 2005 What's Left and Who's Right in Mexican Politics? A Q-Method Approach to Understanding Ideological Labels in Mexican Politics. Paper prepared for presentation at the Conference on Surveys and Methods in Mexican Politics,sponsored by the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the University of California, San Diego, June 17.