

# Right vs. Left: Ideology and Psychological Motives in the Chinese Cultural Context

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## Abstract

This research examines the content as well as underlying psychological motives of ideology in East Asia. Adopting a mixed methods approach utilizing data from national samples in mainland China (N = 509) and Taiwan (N = 417), qualitative content analysis and correlation analysis results reveal that in both samples: (a) overall, participants had some understanding of the left-right ideological spectrum; (b) notwithstanding, most participants placed themselves at the Center; and (c) elective affinities between epistemic motives and political ideology exhibited the most consistent association. Findings shed light on the political psychology of ideology in authoritarian regimes as well as in new democracies. Findings were also discussed in the cross-cultural psychological context. Altogether, they contribute to our understanding of the nature of ideology beyond the West, which could be a first step toward reducing political polarization and avoiding conflict.

## Keywords

culture, East Asia, elective affinity, ideology, political psychology

How do we gauge people's ideological orientation? One of the most common methods in political psychology is a single self-report item asking participants to characterize their own ideology on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*extremely liberal*) to 7 (*extremely conservative*) (e.g., the American National Elections Survey, ANES). Does this measure apply across cultures? Since the terminology originated in the West, how do people conceive of Left/Right or liberalism/conservatism outside of the Western context? Does the division between Left and Right inform political discourse in East Asia? What are the psychological motives underlying ideological schema in the Chinese cultural context in particular? This research seeks to examine the nature of ideology beyond the West by exploring the general public's conceptions of Left-Right as well as their underlying psychological motives. Using national survey data collected from mainland China and Taiwan, we investigate the research question: What are the meaning and psychological correlates of Left/Right to people outside of Western cultural contexts?

## Ideology in the West

### Ideological Content

Ideology can be thought of as a set of beliefs, or organizing device (Knight, 2006, p. 622) about the role of government (Converse, 1964; Peffley & Hurwitz, 1985), the proper order of society and the means to bring about it (Erikson & Tedin,



2019; Kerlinger, 1984). Simply put, it is a set of values and beliefs about the government and society. The usage of a single left-right dimension to classify ideological opinions derives from the French Revolution in 1789, the meanings of left and right in the Western context gradually stabilized through a series of historical events over a long period of time (Jost et al., 2009; Wang, 2020). Particularly in the U.S., it is common to substitute “liberal” and “conservative” for “left” and “right,” respectively, and this equation expresses well the long-lasting ideological divide concerning preferences for change vs. stability (Jost et al., 2009).

Psychological researchers in the past have theorized political ideology as consisting of two inter-related psychological distinctions: the acceptance versus rejection of inequality, and openness versus resistance to change or preferences for status quo (Jost et al., 2003). Indeed, the two core aspects of the left-right dimension are correlated for historical reasons, since over the past several centuries, Western societies have become more egalitarian in terms of human rights and liberties, economic distribution, and the dispersion of political power. In a study conducted by Fuchs and Klingemann (1990), left-wing and right-wing respondents alike in the U.S., Germany, and the Netherlands associated the Right with such terms as “conservative,” “system maintenance,” “order,” “individualism,” “capitalism,” “nationalism,” and “fascism,” while associating the Left with “progressive,” “system change,” “equality,” “solidarity,” “protest,” “opposition,” “radical,” “socialism,” and “communism.” The meaning of these labels tends to vary, since they reflect the core divisions in each society (Benoit & Laver, 2006) and the dimensionality of the party space (Bakker et al., 2012), but in some cases the left-right dimension becomes a “super-issue” which eventually encompasses all important issues in a polity (Inglehart, 1990). Outside of developed Western countries, often ideological “bundles” combine social safety net policies with conservative social mores; suggesting that psychological needs for protection versus freedom may drive people to one or the other side of political divides in developing countries (Malka et al., 2014, 2019). In short, as Jost et al. (2009) pointed out, although people are far from perfect in their use of abstract ideological concepts, most citizens can and do use a subset of core values or principles that may be considered ideological in the sense of being broad postures that explain and justify different states of social and political affairs. However, these core values or principles are not necessarily attached to a firm understanding of ideology; in the U.S., for instance, over half a century of research has found that only one in five can accurately define liberalism and conservatism (Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017).

### Psychological Motives

What are the underlying psychological motives of ideology? Jost et al. (2003) proposed that the two core aspects of the left-right ideological dimension are rooted in a set of interrelated epistemic, existential, and relational needs – that is, psychological traits that affect one’s attitudes toward understanding the world, responses to threats affecting life’s meaning, and relations to others, respectively. Among epistemic traits, for instance, dogmatism, has been found to correlate with rightwing ideology (Jost, 2017). As another example, a wide range of measures of negativity bias have been linked to rightwing ideology, linking elective affinities to evolutionary biology (Hibbing et al., 2014).

Evidentiary support for elective affinities is considerable. Perhaps the strongest evidence comes from the fact that while decades of public opinion research in the U.S. have revealed persistent ignorance about politics and a widespread inability to define liberalism and conservatism, nonetheless people in the U.S. clearly evince a latent form of ideology linked to their psychological characteristics (Azevedo et al., 2019). Meta-analyses of hundreds of studies on the relationships between ideology and a dozen psychological variables have revealed robust relationships, even after testing for publication bias (Jost et al., 2018). However, while these studies have been carried out in over a dozen countries, these countries have all been Western.

### Ideology in the East

Since the left-right schema originated in the Western cultural context, does it inform political discourse in contexts outside of the West? Bobbio (1996) proposes that the definition of Left and Right in political discourse changes with time and varying national situations. Following Jost et al.’s (2003) proposal, which conceived of conservatism as motivated social cognition, other researchers have explored the interaction of ideology-linked psychological traits with features of various cultures (Fu et al., 2007; Ji & Janicke, 2018; Piurko, Schwartz, & Davidov, 2011; Richter & Kruglanski, 2003). For instance, in examining the associations between values and political orientation in postcommunist Eastern Europe,

Piurko et al. (2011) found that the experience of communism and the profound changes that followed its collapse has led to confusion about the meaning of the left-right dimension. More generally, their findings suggest that in postcommunist countries in Eastern Europe, the “left” and “right” political labels have little coherent meaning.

Do ordinary citizens actually use the specific ideological content associated with Left and Right to organize their political worldview in East Asia? What meaning do these labels carry in an authoritarian regime like mainland China or in a new democracy like Taiwan?

### Mainland China

It has been argued that the unique historical and cultural background of Chinese society has led to a different understanding of the concepts of Left/Right (Wang, 2020). In mainland China, the discussion about left and right dates back to the May Fourth Movement in 1919, which can be regarded as the birth of China’s left-right politics. After 1949, for a considerable period, the discussion of Left and Right became completely divorced from its original meaning because of the political movement launched by Mao Zedong. Left and Right no longer represented opposing ideologies, as the labels were often used as a weapon during power struggles. Since the 1990s, reform and opening gradually allowed Chinese society to transition from a highly centralized structure into a more diverse ideological environment. Today, in mainland China, rightists are regarded as critics of the authoritarian system while leftists are defenders of it.

As such, it should be noted that the ideological labels in mainland China are fundamentally different from the West (see also Beattie et al., 2022). China’s Left tends to espouse opinions emphasizing economic equality, traditional values and authoritarian rule, which, in Western contexts, are markers of the Right (except on economics); China’s Right embraces social change, progressivism and individual freedom of choice, as in Western capitalist countries, where such values are markers of a left inclination (but on economics, China’s Right matches the Western variant). Although scholars have recognized the long-standing dispute between leftists and rightists in modern China, empirical studies on the political tendencies and positions of ordinary Chinese people are few.

Drawing from two national face-to-face surveys in 1993 and 2002, Wu (2020) investigated the policy, partisan, and symbolic content of the left-right dimension in mainland China. Findings revealed an absence of a shared ideological understanding among the general Chinese public – while many Chinese citizens are willing to place themselves on the left-right scale, the labels do not carry a consistent meaning. Specifically, there is at best a weak association between these self-identified labels and policy issues, even for people who are well-informed about politics. Although Chinese citizens who call themselves Left or Right rarely reach a consensus on issues, they do tend to relate their own ideological placements to the perceived ideology of other political actors, such as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or Kuomintang (KMT).

In addition, Wu (2020) found that citizens who do adopt an ideological label tend to have disparate preferences on economic, political, and social issues, and as a result the relationship between the left-right dimension and issue positions is still poorly defined. In short, policy content of ideological labels in mainland China is weak and inconsistent. While some individuals are willing to identify themselves as part of the Left or the Right, their preferences on issues do not seem to follow a common pattern.

Findings based on recent data offered more insights into mainland China’s ideological spectrum. Drawing from a large-scale online survey between 2012–2014, Pan and Xu (2018) examined how preferences are configured and constrained across a wide range of issues. They found that public preferences over policy and social issues are constrained in mainland China, but less so than preferences in competitive democracies. More importantly, the configuration of preferences across different issues reflects known debates and falls along the following dimensions: (a) preference for authoritarian institutions and conservative political values vs. preference for democratic institutions and liberal political values, (b) preference for pro-market economic policies and nontraditional social values vs. preference for state intervention in the economy and traditional social values, and (c) preference for nationalism.

Furthermore, Pan and Xu (2018) found that respondents’ latent traits in the three aforementioned dimensions are strongly correlated, so that individuals who are politically “liberal” are also more likely to be pro-market/nontraditional and non-nationalist, while individuals who are politically “conservative” are more likely to be antimarket/traditional and nationalist. Importantly, one implication of Pan and Xu’s (2018) findings is that the belief system they identified does not reflect an alignment of pro-regime or anti-regime preferences. Those who prefer changes to mainland China’s

current political system may not lead to opposition if the CCP maintains the trajectory of market-based economy. Similarly, those who oppose economic reforms support the continuation of CCP rule.

Contrary to Pan and Xu's (2018) argument, Wang (2020) contended that the left–right divergence in mainland China is contingent on whether Chinese people support the current political system. Using data from online surveys in 2015, Wang (2020) argued that in contrast to the Western left–right confrontation, ideological divergence between communism or state-led capitalism and the market economy is the chief underlying factor of the left–right debate and constitutes the basis of mainland China's current political spectrum.

In short, the left–right debate in mainland China is essentially that of two different means, state-led development pursued by the Left vs. market-oriented competition pursued by the Right, over which approach could better advance the economy. On economics, China's Left and Right are close to their Western counterparts; on social issues, the positions are reversed. Due to mainland China's historical background, its experiences with capitalism and communism, and the current transition from a command economy to a market economy, it is essential to reconsider the meanings of Left/Right in mainland China's unique sociocultural environment.

## Taiwan

On the other side of the Strait, Taiwan embodies a similar cultural heritage but a drastically different political system. After the transition from an authoritarian regime to a new democracy in the late 1980s, democratization has taken root steadily in Taiwan. As Wu (2020) pointed out, the degree to which ideological labels carry a consistent meaning is shaped by factors such as the age of the regime, the level of polarization, and the effective number of political parties. In new democracies, such as the post-communist states of Eastern Europe, it often takes a few years for the general public to coalesce around a shared understanding of the policy content of the left-right dimension (e.g., Hanson, 2010). Studies of European democracies have also found that the ideological content of the left-right label is clearer in societies with many effective parties (Inglehart & Klingemann, 1976; cf. Zechmeister & Corral, 2013).

In the case of Taiwan, the labels commonly align with the Western version of left-right ideology; notwithstanding, scholars have argued that the issue of Taiwan's unification with mainland China is at the center of political debates as opposed to social or economic welfare (Hsiao & Cheng, 2014). Among Taiwanese citizens, misunderstanding or ignorance about the differences between Left and Right is prevalent, as people base their understanding of Left and Right on their preference for political parties such as the KMT or the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The correct connotation and significance behind Left and Right remains largely unfamiliar even to some highly educated people. Overall, as Hsiao and Cheng (2014) argued, measuring Taiwanese' understanding of Left-Right through the lens of Taiwan's unification issue might be the fittest way to study the ideological ecology in Taiwan.

Qiu (2017) explored Taiwanese understanding of the essence of left and right based on Taiwan's Election and Democratization Studies (TEDS) data from 2001 and 2008. Findings revealed that even if Taiwanese citizens lack a deep understanding of left and right, they do have a more reliable understanding of it when provided with a political party cue. The content of this systematic ideological understanding was, however, unexplored.

In short, past research on ideology in the context of Taiwan has uncovered two main findings: first, given its unique political circumstances, the debate over independence vs. unification trumps left-right ideology; second, most citizens associate the meaning of ideology with political parties, thus when provided with the cue of political party, we do evidence a consistent pattern of ideological understanding.

## Psychological Motives: Elective Affinities Beyond the West

Is ideology in Western contexts uniquely linked to psychological traits, such that in other contexts psychology has no measurable relationship to ideology? Research on elective affinities in countries other than Western capitalist democracies has been relatively rare, limiting the scope and further development of elective affinity theory. Conceived according to the left-right divide, "left psychology" would comprise epistemic, existential, and relational traits inclining one toward embracing social change and desiring greater equality, and "right psychology" would comprise traits inclining one toward fearing change and desiring stasis, stability, and hierarchical order (Jost et al., 2003). Uncovering

how psychological traits attach (or not) to ideology in the Chinese cultural context may reveal more about which aspects of ideology have an elective affinity with psychological traits.

Testing elective affinities between psychological traits and political ideology in mainland China, Beattie et al. (2022) found that the Left is (psychologically) Right, and the Right is (psychologically) Left. That is, traits of the psychological Left mostly correlated with “liberal right” opinions, while traits of the psychological Right mostly correlated with “conservative left” opinions. Specifically, China’s “liberal Right” roughly combines the socially liberal/leftwing and economically conservative/rightwing beliefs of Western contexts, and its “conservative Left” roughly combines the socially conservative/rightwing and economically liberal/leftwing beliefs of Western contexts. Epistemic traits most clearly evinced this Left is (psychologically) Right pattern. Existential traits mostly displayed the same pattern, but relational traits evinced mixed and unexpected results. In short, many but not all of the psychological traits with strong elective affinities in the West predicted taking issue positions consistent with the prevailing ideological cleavage in mainland China. Overall, Beattie et al.’s (2022) research adds to the understanding of elective affinity in contexts other than the West. Yet additional research is needed in examining the psychological motives underlying ideological inclinations.

## The Present Research

Our main research question was: What do people in mainland China and Taiwan think “left” and “right” mean? The aims of the present research were twofold: (a) to explore the content of ideology in the Chinese cultural context, and (b) to examine the psychological motives underlying political ideology. We adopted a mixed methods approach utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data from national samples in mainland China and Taiwan. Study 1 sought to uncover laypeople’s understanding of Left/Right and the psychological correlates of ideology in mainland China. Study 2 was exploratory in nature and attempted to investigate citizens’ understanding of Left/Right in the new democracy of Taiwan. Study 3 sought to replicate and extend Study 2 by examining the psychological motives of ideology in Taiwan.

Our review of prior literature on these labels shows that many intellectuals and political actors conceive of political divides in recognizably ideological ways in the Chinese cultural context. If cues from the CCP as well as intellectual debates in a new democracy like Taiwan have filtered down into the mass public, we might expect for the left and right labels to be associated with similar psychological traits as in the West. Hence, we focused on one trait among each of the three psychological motives in which previous research in Western contexts has found ideological asymmetries: among epistemic motives, Jost et al.’s (2018) meta-analysis found dogmatism, a relatively unshakeable but unjustified certainty in one’s beliefs, to have the strongest correlation (among several other traits) with rightwing ideology in Western countries; among existential motives, one of the oldest areas of elective affinity research focused on the relationship between rightwing ideology and authoritarianism (Jost et al., 2003), a tendency to submit willingly to strong authority; among relational motives, social dominance orientation, a generalized preference for group hierarchies and inequality, correlates with rightwing ideology in Western countries, and has been found to mediate conservatives’ relatively lower acuity in the moral senses of care and fairness (Kugler et al., 2014).

Our hypotheses were as follows:

*H1:* Dogmatism should be higher among those further to the left in mainland China (H1a) and among those further to the right in Taiwan (H1b).

*H2:* Authoritarianism should be higher among those further to the left in mainland China (H2a) and among those further to the right in Taiwan (H2b).

*H3:* SDO should be higher among those further to the left in mainland China (H3a) and among those further to the right in Taiwan (H3b).

## Study 1: Ideology in Mainland China

Our aim in Study 1 was to explore laypeople's conception of ideology in mainland China. In addition, we attempted to examine whether the same correlations between self-reported ideology and psychological traits found in Western countries would be found in mainland China.

### Method

#### Participants

Sample for Study 1 was recruited for a previous study, which included measures for twenty other variables (see Beattie et al., 2022). The previous study did not examine self-reported ideology, but used instead a scale comprising answers to questions on political issues. We employed a market research firm to give a survey to a nationally representative sample of urban residents of mainland China using an online panel ( $N = 509$ ). Participants were selected by the company to reflect national proportions of gender, age, and income levels. Participants' average age was 38.97 years ( $SD = 13.69$ , range = 18–91); men comprised a bare majority (51.5%,  $n = 262$ ) and women the minority (48.5%,  $n = 247$ ). For a snapshot of the sample characteristics, please refer to Table 1. For the purpose of this research, we report measures relevant to this study below.

#### Measures

**Conception of Ideology** – To assess understanding of ideology, participants responded to one open-ended question, “What does ‘Right’ and ‘Left’ mean to you?”

**Ideological Orientation** – Participants were asked to self-report their ideology on a 0-100 Left-Right sliding scale.

**Social Dominance Orientation** – We adopted nine items from Tan et al.'s (2016) Chinese version of the SDO scale ( $\alpha = .70$ ). A sample item is “If certain groups of people stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems,” and agreement was measured from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*).

**Dogmatism** – We selected the top half of Altemeyer's (2002) DOG dogmatism scale ( $\alpha = .64$ ) by factor loading (Crowson, 2009). A sample item is “My opinions are right and will stand the test of time,” and agreement was measured from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*).

**Authoritarianism** – We adopted Im's (2014) authoritarianism scale using items from the Asian Barometer Survey. The scale included 7 items ( $\alpha = .65$ ), for instance, “A person should not insist on his own opinion if his coworkers disagree with him.” Level of agreement was measured from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly agree*).

#### Procedure

All participants completed an online questionnaire including the measures described above. After giving their consent, participants were directed to follow the instructions on screen in answering the questions. In the end, all participants were asked to provide basic demographic data before signing off.

**Table 1***Demographic Characteristics of Chinese Participants (Study 1)*

Variable	% of Sample
<b>Age</b>	
18 ~ 29	32.8
30 ~ 39	22.6
40 ~ 49	19.4
50 ~ 59	13.0
60 and above	13.1
<b>Education</b>	
Below Primary School	3.5
Primary School	10.4
Junior School	25.3
High School	23.0
Some College	13.9
Bachelor's Degree	20.2
Master's degree	3.3
Doctoral Degree	0.2
<b>Geographical Region</b>	
South	70.7
North	29.3
<b>Occupation</b>	
Farmer	3.7
Self-employed	13.2
Private Enterprise	45.4
Joint-venture or Foreign Enterprise	10.8
Non-profit Organization	1.8
Government	2.8
State-owned Enterprise	13.0
Town/Village Enterprise	3.5
Other	2.4
Never Worked	3.5
<b>Monthly Income (RMB)</b>	
Below \$500	0.4
\$500 ~ 4,499	30.6
\$4,500 ~ 8,499	43.5
\$8,500 ~ 12,499	16.3
\$12,500 ~ 20,000	4.5
Above \$20,000	2.2
No Fixed Income	0.6
Without Income	2.0

## Results

### Qualitative Analysis

To gauge lay understanding of ideology, responses to the open-ended question “What does ‘Right’ and ‘Left’ mean to you?” were analyzed. Following a directed approach to qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), keywords were identified in answers to the open-ended question. They were then coded into five different categories by two independent coders blind to the research design: “don’t know” (e.g., the respondent simply stated “I don’t know”), “invalid” (e.g., “great” or no response), “acceptable” (e.g., “reform vs. conservatism” or “moderate vs. radical”), “good”

(e.g., “they are opposing political views, the Right means capitalism, the Left, socialism” or “Leftists are traditional and conservative, Rightists are open and liberal”), and “apolitical” (e.g., “no difference, I don’t care” or “it’s all politics, I’m not a political person”). Intercoder agreement was 90%. Table 2 lists the top three answers in the categories “acceptable,” “good,” and “apolitical,” respectively.

**Table 2**

*Top 3 Responses to the Question on Ideological Understanding (Study 1)*

Category / Keywords	% of Sample Within Category	Sample Response
<b>Good</b>		
Reform vs. tradition	57.1	“Rightists are pro-reform, leftists are more traditional and moderate, they support stability and order” (Participant #367)
Conservative vs. liberal	17.9	“Rightists attempt to protect basic human rights, leftists are usually conservative and advocate stability” (Participant #454)
Socialism vs. capitalism	14.3	“According to China’s political ecology today, leftists are those who insist on public ownership as the mainstream in a socialism-oriented society, rightists are capitalist forces that guide the country toward private ownership” (Participant #192)
<b>Acceptable</b>		
Radical vs. conservative	48.9	“To me, the Left and the Right are conservative and radical” (Participant #29)
Support vs. oppose	7.4	“Support or oppose the government” (Participant #253)
Maoism	4.0	“Advocate or against Maoism” (Participant #43)
<b>Apolitical</b>		
Extreme	25.8	“Two extremes” (Participant #24)
Different opinions	22.1	“They are different political opinions” (Participant #223)
Meaningless	21.1	“Nothing to do with me” (Participant #36)

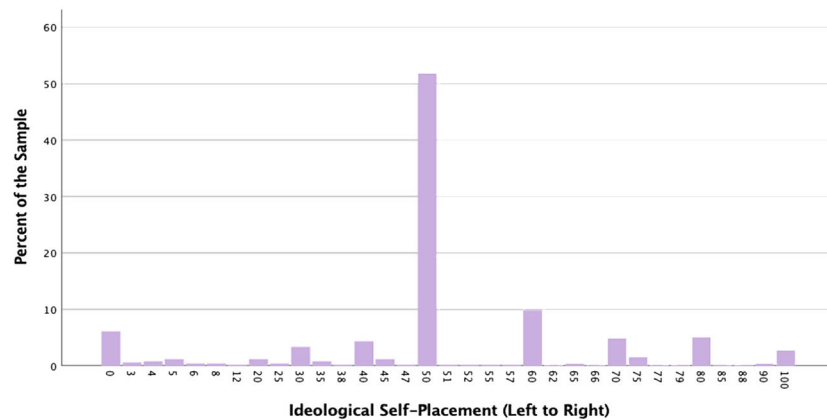
Overall, about 37.3% ( $n = 190$ ) of the respondents had a vague idea of what Left-Right means, while 5.5% ( $n = 28$ ) seemed to have a good grasp of the concepts. About one-fifth either did not know what the terms mean (7.7%,  $n = 39$ ) or did not provide a valid answer (12.8%,  $n = 65$ ), while 36.7% ( $n = 187$ ) simply stated they are not interested in politics. Most respondents equated Left with conservatism and tradition, and Right with reform and change.

Participants were also asked to self-report their ideology on a 0-100 Left-Right sliding scale. As Figure 1 shows, responses revealed an ideological tendency of Center-to-Right, with about half of the respondents self-identified as at the Center (51.9%,  $n = 264$ ;  $M = 49.43$ ,  $SD = 20.67$ ) while slightly more among the remaining respondents placed themselves on the Right. A chi-square independence test was conducted between conception of ideology (Good, Acceptable, Other) and self-reported ideology (Left, Center, Right). Results indicated that conception had a medium effect associated with self-report,  $\chi^2 = 36.60$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cramér’s  $\hat{V} = .19$ . 13.89% and 43.52% of the participants who identified as “Left,” 2.92% and 47.45% of those who identified as “Right,” 3.41% and 29.55% of those who identified as “Center” demonstrated a good and acceptable understanding of ideology, respectively. In short, most of those who considered themselves leftists and about half of those who considered themselves rightists showed at least some understanding of ideology in our sample, while a majority of those who put themselves at the center of the scale stated they did not know the meaning of Left/Right, have no interest in politics, or gave invalid answers.



Figure 1

Ideological Self-Placement (Study 1)



### Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation test was conducted to assess the associations between participants' self-reported ideology and underlying psychological traits, i.e., authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and dogmatism (descriptive statistics are reported in Table 3). As hypothesized, a significant negative correlation was found between ideology and dogmatism ( $r = -.09$ ,  $p = .044$ ), suggesting that those on the Right were less likely to hold an unshakeable certainty in their beliefs (H1a). Likewise, a significant negative correlation existed between ideology and authoritarianism ( $r = -.12$ ,  $p = .008$ ), suggesting that those on the Right were less likely to obey authority, supporting H2a. Social dominance orientation did not correlate significantly with ideology (please refer to Table 3).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations Among Key Variables (Study 1)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Self-report ideology	49.43	20.67	–	–	–	–
2. Authoritarianism	2.57	0.48	-.12**	–	–	–
3. SDO	3.37	0.54	-.02	.05	–	–
4. Dogmatism	3.66	.64	-.09*	.28***	-.15**	–

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### Discussion

The findings from Study 1 were twofold. First, they revealed that under half of the participants demonstrated a fair grasp of the concepts of Left-Right. Almost as many participants gave an acceptable answer as those who responded by saying they have no interest in politics. Among those who showed a fair understanding, however, their understanding mostly reflected the common conceptions evidenced in the West, albeit in reverse; namely, the Right was associated with change and reform, while the Left was associated with conservatism and tradition. We also see some evidence of equating the meaning of ideological labels to different economic approaches to development (viz., Wang, 2020). Moreover, compared to those at the Center, participants who self-identified on the Left and Right showed better understanding (see also Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017). Second, among the tested psychological traits, dogmatism and authoritarianism appeared to be more associated with the Left as opposed to the Right in mainland China. That is, epistemic and existential needs rather than relational needs motivate Chinese citizens' ideological self-identification.

Interestingly, results were consistent with previous research indicating that half of the respondents placed themselves in the middle of the spectrum (Wu, 2020), which is high compared to the proportion of middle placements in

established and ex-communist European democracies, though less exceptional when we consider response patterns in East Asia (Jou, 2010). Our results from this study, however, did not show a high non-response rate by comparative standards, which averaged between 12% to 20% in Europe and Latin America (as cited in Wu, 2020).

Could findings from the current study be replicated in another Chinese cultural context but with a drastically different political system? We sought to address this question in the next study.

## Study 2: Content of Ideology in Taiwan

The aim of Study 2 was to explore the content of ideology in another Chinese cultural context, Taiwan. Despite sharing common cultural heritages, given Taiwan's democratization over the past three decades and now radically different political system, how would people's conceptions of ideology differ across the Taiwan Strait? Furthermore, given prior research indicating the role of political party and stance on independence/unification in shaping Taiwan's ideological ecology, we intended to explore the relationship between ideology and stance on independence/unification as well as political party identification. All measures included in Studies 2 and 3 are reported below. Both data sets have not been published previously.

### Method

#### Participants

We employed a local polling company to administer an online survey to a sample of Taiwanese adults ( $N = 106$ ). Participants were recruited online by the polling company and each participant was compensated for approximately USD\$2 for their participation. Given the qualitative nature of the study, we aimed to target 100 participants. Participants' average age fell in the 30-39 age group (47.2%,  $n = 50$ ); men comprised a bare majority (58.5%,  $n = 62$ ) and women the minority (41.5%,  $n = 44$ ). For a snapshot of the sample characteristics, please refer to Table 4.

#### Measures

**Conception of Ideology** – Participants were asked to answer an open-ended question, “What does ‘Left’ and ‘Right’ mean to you?”

**Ideological Orientation** – Participants were also asked to self-report their ideology on a 1-5 Left-Right scale, with higher scores indicating a conservative orientation.

**Party Affiliation** – Participants were asked to indicate their political party affiliation from 1 (*deep blue*) to 10 (*deep green*), with higher scores indicating a more pro-DPP orientation.

**Stance on Independence/Unification** – Participants were also asked to indicate their stance on unification/independence from 1 (*total unification*) to 10 (*total independence*), with higher scores indicating stronger support for Taiwan independence.

#### Procedure

The procedure was the same as for Study 1.

Table 4

*Demographic Characteristics of Taiwanese Participants (Studies 2 and 3)*

Variable	Study 2 % of Sample	Study 3 % of Sample
<b>Age</b>		
18 ~ 29	15.1	20.9
30 ~ 39	47.2	24.1
40 ~ 49	19.8	21.5
50 ~ 59	16.0	19.9
60 and above	1.9	13.5
<b>Education</b>		
High school	16.0	20.9
College	65.1	62.4
Master's Degree	11.3	11.6
Doctoral Degree	4.7	1.3
Other	2.8	3.9
<b>Residence</b>		
North	50.0	54.7
Middle	23.6	22.5
South	22.6	20.6
Eastern	2.8	2.3
Other	0.9	0.0
<b>Occupation</b>		
Education	8.5	4.8
Technology	8.5	7.4
Government	8.5	5.1
Business	28.3	22.5
Engineering	18.9	16.1
Medicine	2.8	4.8
Law	1.9	0.0
Student	3.8	4.8
Farmer	0.0	1.3
Other	18.9	33.1
<b>Monthly Income (NTD)</b>		
Below \$30,000	32.1	35.7
\$30,001 ~ 50,000	34.0	30.5
\$50,001 ~ 70,000	18.9	11.9
\$70,001 ~ 90,000	7.5	7.7
Above \$90,000	4.7	6.8
Other	2.8	7.4

## Results

### Qualitative Analysis

To gauge lay understanding of ideology, responses to the open-ended question “What does ‘Right’ and ‘Left’ mean to you?” were analyzed following the steps outlined in Study 1. All responses were coded into five different categories by two independent coders blind to the research design: “don’t know” (e.g., the respondent simply stated “I don’t know”), “invalid” (e.g., “thank you” or the respondent just copied the question), “acceptable” (e.g., “liberal vs. conservative” or “KMT vs. DPP”), “good” (e.g., “Left means reform and big government, Right means conservatism and small

government” or “they are opposing political views, the Left advocates change while the Right supports tradition”), and “apolitical” (e.g., “meaningless to me” or the respondents simply stated they are not interested in politics). Intercoder agreement was 92%. Table 5 lists the top three answers in the categories “good,” “acceptable,” and “apolitical,” respectively.

**Table 5**

*Top 3 Responses to the Question on Ideological Understanding (Study 2)*

Category / Keywords	% of Sample Within Category	Sample Response
<b>Good</b>		
Reform vs. tradition	50.0	“Left emphasizes active reform, Right emphasizes maintaining tradition. The two of them seems to be contrary but are inseparable in fact” (Participant #23)
<b>Acceptable</b>		
Liberal vs. conservative	37.3	“Left means liberal, Right means conservative” (Participant #52)
KMT vs. DPP	10.2	“KMT and DPP” (Participant #78)
Radical vs. traditional	6.8	“Leftists are radical, while Rightists are traditional” (Participant #35)
<b>Apolitical</b>		
Meaningless	44.4	“Meaningless” (Participant #100)
Extreme	22.2	“Both are irrational extreme thoughts” (Participant #53)
Opposing views	14.8	“Opposite opinions” (Participant #41)

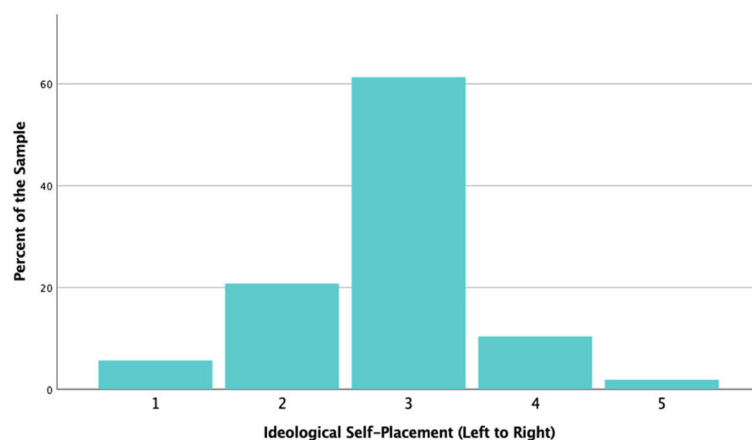
Overall, over half of the participants (55.7%,  $n = 59$ ) had a vague idea of what Left-Right means, while 3.8% ( $n = 4$ ) seemed to have a good grasp of the concepts. About 15% either did not know what the terms mean (3.8%,  $n = 4$ ) or did not provide a valid answer (11.3%,  $n = 12$ ), while 25.5% ( $n = 27$ ) showed no interest in politics. Most respondents equated Left with liberty and reform, and Right with conservatism and tradition.

### Correlation Analysis

Pertaining to self-reported ideology, as Figure 2 shows, the preliminary data in Study 2 revealed an ideological tendency of Center-to-Left, with more than half of the respondents self-identified as at the Center (61.3%,  $n = 65$ ;  $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = .77$ ), while slightly more among the remaining respondents placed themselves on the left of the ideological spectrum.

**Figure 2**

*Ideological Self-Placement (Study 2)*



A chi-square test was conducted between participants' understanding of ideology (Good, Acceptable, and Other) and their ideological self-report (Left, Center, and Right). Results indicated that understanding had a medium effect associated with self-report,  $\chi^2 = 18.29$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = .001$ , Cramér's  $\hat{V} = .29$ . 14.29% and 57.14% of the participants who identified as "Left" demonstrated a good and acceptable understanding of ideology, respectively; 84.62% and 49.23% of the participants who identified as "Right" and "Center" demonstrated an acceptable understanding, respectively. In short, most of both self-claimed leftists and rightists showed some understanding of ideology in our sample, while about half of those who put themselves at the center of the scale stated they did not know the meaning of Left/Right, have no interest in politics, or gave invalid answers.

A Pearson correlation test was conducted to assess the association between participants' self-reported ideology and their stance on independence/unification ( $M = 6.55$ ,  $SD = 2.48$ ) as well as their party affiliation ( $M = 5.54$ ,  $SD = 1.75$ ). There was a significant negative correlation between ideology and stance on independence/unification ( $r = -.23$ ,  $p = .018$ ), suggesting those on the Left were likely to support Taiwan independence. It should also be noted that a significant positive correlation existed between stance on independence/unification and party affiliation ( $r = .59$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting participants who identified as pan-green were indeed very likely to support Taiwan independence. Interesting, there was no significant correlation between self-reported ideology and party affiliation (please refer to Table 6, descriptive statistics are reported in Table 8).

**Table 6**

*Bivariate Correlations Among Key Variables (Studies 2 and 3)*

Study 3	Study 2					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Self-Report Ideology	1	–	–	–	-.23*	-.14
2. Authoritarianism	.07	1	–	–	–	–
3. Dogmatism	.12*	.08	1	–	–	–
4. SDO	.08	-.20**	-.01	1	–	–
5. Stance on Independence / Unification	-.18**	.02	-.07	-.17**	1	.59**
6. Party Identification	-.20**	.04	.02	-.06	.41**	1

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

## Discussion

Results from Study 2 revealed that although the language of Left and Right might not be used commonly in political discourse in Taiwan, the participants still showed a fairly good understanding of what the labels entail. We see some evidence of attaching political parties to ideological labels (see also Qiu, 2017), but their understanding mostly reflected the common conceptions evidenced in the West; namely, the Left was associated with liberty and reform, while the Right was associated with conservatism and tradition. In line with the finding of Study 1, most participants placed themselves in the middle of the left-right spectrum. Participants who self-identified on the Left and Right showed a better understanding of ideological labels compared to those at the Center. Moreover, results demonstrated that those who identified with the Left tended to support Taiwan independence, which makes sense since it would entail a change of status quo (provided the island lacks de jure independence). In short, Study 2 offered some preliminary insights into the content of ideology in Taiwan; however, the sample was rather small. Hence, we sought to replicate the results in the next study.

## Study 3: Ideology and Psychological Motives in Taiwan

The aim of Study 3 was to replicate the finding of Study 2 with a larger sample. In addition, we sought to extend Study 2 by examining the elective affinities between psychological traits and political ideology in the new democracy of Taiwan.

### Method

#### Participants

A local polling company was employed to recruit participants and to administer an online survey to a national sample of Taiwanese adults ( $N = 311$ ). This number of participants was selected after using G\*Power to determine the sample size required for  $(1 - \beta) = .95$  (Faul et al., 2009). Based on previous meta-analytic results, our sample size provided 95% power for all variables for which weighted effect sizes had been previously calculated (Jost, 2021). Each participant was awarded approximately USD\$2 for their participation. Women comprised a bare majority (58.6%,  $n = 180$ ) and men the minority (41.4%,  $n = 127$ ). Participants' age was quite evenly distributed, for a snapshot of the sample characteristics, please refer to Table 4.

#### Measures

**Ideology** – Items assessing conception of ideology and ideological orientation were identical to Study 2.

**Psychological Traits** – Items assessing dogmatism ( $\alpha = .70$ ), authoritarianism ( $\alpha = .74$ ), and SDO ( $\alpha = .78$ ) were identical to Study 1. Agreement was measured from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) for all measures.

**Party Affiliation and Stance on Independence/Unification** – Items were identical to Study 2.

#### Procedure

The procedure was the same as for Study 2.

### Results

#### Qualitative Analysis

We followed similar steps in prior studies to gauge lay understanding of ideology. Responses were coded into five different categories by two independent coders blind to the research design: “don't know,” “invalid,” “acceptable,” “good,” and “apolitical.” Intercoder agreement was 91%. Table 7 lists the top three answers in the categories “good,” “acceptable,” and “apolitical,” respectively.

Overall, over half of the respondents (52%,  $n = 162$ ) had a vague idea of what Left-Right means, while 2.3% ( $n = 7$ ) seemed to have a good grasp of the concepts. About one-fifth either did not know what the terms mean (12.2%,  $n = 38$ ) or did not provide a valid answer (7.1%,  $n = 22$ ), while 26.4% ( $n = 82$ ) showed no interest in politics. Most respondents who showed understanding equated Left with liberty and reform, Right, conservatism and tradition.

Pertaining to self-reported ideology, the Taiwanese national sample in Study 3 revealed an ideological tendency of Center-to-Left, with over half of the respondents self-identified as at the Center (63.7%,  $n = 198$ ;  $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) while slightly more of the remaining participants placed themselves on the Left (please see Figure 3). Chi-square test results indicated that conception of ideology had a medium effect associated with self-report,  $\chi^2 = 32.84$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cramér's  $\hat{V} = .23$ . 4.17% and 69.44% of the participants who identified as “Left,” 4.88% and 73.17% of those who identified as “Right,” 1.01% and 41.41% of those who identified as “Center” demonstrated a good and acceptable understanding of ideology, respectively. In short, most of both self-identified leftists and rightists showed some understanding of ideology in our sample, while over half of those who put themselves at the center of the scale stated they did not know the meaning of Left/Right, have no interest in politics, or gave invalid answers.

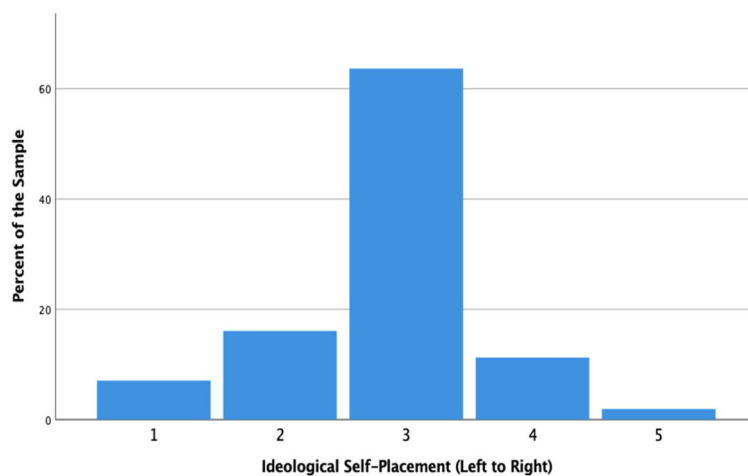
Table 7

Top 3 Responses to the Question on Ideological Understanding (Study 3)

Category / Keywords	% of Sample Within Category	Sample Response
<b>Good</b>		
Reform vs. conservatism	57.1	“Leftists usually advocate actively reforming and eliminating outdated ideologies and systems; people who’re anti-government usually consider themselves leftists. Rightists are usually more conservative and advocate stable, gradual, slow reform and the maintaining of traditions” (Participant #191)
Socialism vs. capitalism	42.9	“Left: advocating change and pro-socialism, Right: supports market economy and pro-capitalism” (Participant #164)
Liberty vs. tradition	14.3	“Left: Liberal, democratic political system, but excessive freedom causes class antagonism. Right: Conservative, traditional, but excessive conservatism prevents the country from interacting and learning from other countries and progressing” (Participant #274)
<b>Acceptable</b>		
Liberal vs. conservative	29.8	“Left means liberal and Right means conservative” (Participant #86)
Reform vs. tradition	13.7	“Left: reform, Right: tradition” (Participant #196)
Communism vs. democracy	5.6	“Right: democracy, Left: communism” (Participant #288)
<b>Apolitical</b>		
Meaningless	41.0	“They mean nothing to me” (Participant #205)
Different opinions	4.8	“Two parties with different opinions” (Participant #132)
Extreme	3.6	“Extreme standpoints” (Participant #306)

Figure 3

Ideological Self-Placement (Study 3)



## Correlation Analysis

To test H1b-3b, we conducted Pearson correlation analyses between self-reported ideology and interested psychological traits. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between ideology and dogmatism ( $r = .15$ ,  $p = .01$ ), supporting

H1b, suggesting that more dogmatic participants were more likely to report a right-leaning ideology (please refer to Table 6, descriptive statistics are reported in Table 8). No significant correlations were found between ideology and SDO and authoritarianism.

**Table 8**

*Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (Studies 2 and 3)*

Variable	Study 2				Study 3			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Self-report Ideology	2.82	0.77	1.00	5.00	2.85	0.78	1.00	5.00
Authoritarianism	–	–	–	–	3.36	0.78	1.00	6.00
Dogmatism	–	–	–	–	3.17	0.53	1.20	5.10
SDO	–	–	–	–	2.85	0.65	1.22	5.67
Stance on Independence / Unification	6.55	2.48	1.00	10.00	6.83	2.27	1.00	10.00
Party Identification	5.54	1.75	1.00	10.00	5.55	1.67	1.00	10.00

In addition, there was a significant negative correlation between self-reported ideology and stance on independence/unification ( $r = -.18$ ,  $p = .001$ ), namely, those who self-identified as conservatives tended to support unification with mainland China, while those who self-identified as liberals tended to favor Taiwan independence. Similarly, there was a significant negative correlation between ideology and political party affiliation ( $r = -.20$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that people who were pro-KMT (i.e., “blue”) tended to place themselves on the Right, while people who were pro-DPP (i.e., “green”) tended to place themselves on the Left.

## Discussion

Replicating Study 2, results of Study 3 revealed that the Taiwanese participants showed a fairly good understanding of the left-right dimension. Specifically, their understanding mostly reflected the common conceptions evidenced in the West; namely, the Left was associated with liberty and reform, while the Right was associated with conservatism and tradition. Again, over half of the participants placed themselves in the middle, while demonstrating less understanding of the labels compared to those who self-identified as Left or Right. Moreover, in line with Study 1, a significant correlation was found between political ideology and the psychological trait of dogmatism, demonstrating a consistent epistemic motive underlying people’s ideological identification in the Chinese cultural context.

## General Discussion

The central purpose of the present research was to explore the content of ideology beyond the West. In three studies, we investigated the conceptions as well as underlying psychological motives of ideology in East Asia. Study 1 examined ideological content and psychological correlates in mainland China; results revealed that under half of the participants showed a fair understanding of the left-right dimension, commonly associating the Left with conservatism and tradition, and the Right, reform and change. Moreover, both epistemic and existential motives underlay the Chinese general public’s ideological self-identification, as people higher on dogmatism and authoritarianism tended to place themselves on the Left. Study 2 explored ideological content in Taiwan and found that most participants had a fairly good understanding of Left-Right, commonly associating the Left with liberty and change, while associating the Right with conservatism and tradition. Study 3 replicated and extended Study 2 by showing that epistemic needs were the main motive underlying Taiwanese public’s ideological self-identification. Across three studies, we see that people who self-identified as either Right or Left had at least some understanding of the meaning of those labels, compared with those at the Center. We also found consistent evidence that ideological self-report is significantly associated with



conception. Taken together, the findings shed light on our understanding of the nature of ideology outside of the Western context. Overall, as the findings from Studies 1-3 indicate, the utility of the left-right labels varies by cultural context. In the Chinese cultural context, for instance, most participants tend to place themselves in the middle of the left-right scale when asked to self-report their ideology. This pattern is consistent with previous research (e.g., Wu, 2020) and across the Taiwan Strait, in both the authoritarian regime of mainland China and the new democracy of Taiwan. Moreover, there is coherence between ideological understanding and self-reporting among the citizens in Taiwan and mainland China.

Pertaining to the finding that a seemingly large number of participants placed themselves in the center of the left-right spectrum scale, we speculate that there are at least three reasons (unrelated to political orientation) that may explain why so many people were “Center.” First, research has indicated that East Asians exhibit a moderacy bias in their response style where they tend to choose the central points of scales. For instance, East Asians tend to be more moderate in their responses than European Americans are (Chen et al., 1995). And East Asians show a greater moderacy bias when they complete the materials in their native language than when they complete them in English (Kuroda et al., 1986). Similarly, given the current political climate in mainland China, we should not underestimate the possibility of social desirability bias – after all, this research intends to explore a culture (mainland China) where people have been persecuted for their political beliefs (less so for Taiwan, albeit there is still the cultural issue that makes social desirability a stronger bias than in the West). Finally, the qualitative results suggest that many participants did not understand “left vs. right.” Although we posit that people who are in the actual ideological center were less likely to understand Right/Left, we cannot rule out the possibility that people who do not know what Right/Left means tend to put themselves in the center. This is what has been found in the U.S., where the center/moderate category “seems less an ideological destination than a refuge for the innocent and confused” (Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017, p. 71).

Intriguingly, elective affinities between ideology and epistemic as well as relational needs also demonstrate similar patterns across the Strait, with dogmatism a consistent correlate of people’s ideological identification while SDO showed no evident link. Since dogmatism has been identified to have the strongest correlation with rightwing ideology in Western countries (Jost et al., 2018), we believe it is similarly plausible that the conservatives in mainland China and Taiwan show a relatively unshakeable but unjustified certainty in their beliefs. As such, this finding highlights the universality of epistemic needs across cultures. The nonsignificant results pertaining to SDO were unexpected, though social desirability may have affected results among an online population who elected to participate in a political psychological survey like ours, particularly given the low mean scores in Studies 1 and 3.

On the contrary, we see that the existential motive of authoritarianism underlay Chinese but not Taiwanese ideological identification. Given the fact that, mainland China remains an authoritarian regime while Taiwan has evolved into a young democracy, perhaps this finding is not very surprising. In a similar vein, as Taiwan has undergone the process of democratization and westernization for over three decades, it is not surprising to see a better lay understanding of Left-Right, aligning with the Western conceptions, in Taiwan than in mainland China overall.

Another notable distinction between the Chinese and Taiwanese findings is that a much higher percentage of Chinese participants gave apolitical responses (i.e., simply indicating they have no interest in politics) when asked about the meaning of Left/Right. This could be due to lower levels of interest in politics, or discomfort in answering questions about political ideology. The contributions of this research are three-fold. First, in investigating the linkage between psychological traits and ideology in mainland China, Beattie et al. (2022) found that, overall, the characterization of the psychological Left-Right divide as consisting of traits inclining people toward desiring change and equality versus tradition and hierarchy, respectively, looks relevant in mainland China – albeit largely in reverse. However, since ideological placement was determined by opinions on individual political issues, how people conceive of ideology itself, and whether they know what Left and Right mean in the contemporary Chinese cultural context, remained unanswered. The present research sheds light on this question.

Second, public opinion surveys in the U.S. have found, over several decades, a widespread ignorance of the content of liberal and conservative ideology (e.g., Converse, 2006). Yet psychological traits predicted taking issue positions consistent with the prevailing ideological cleavage (Azevedo et al., 2019). Is it the same in other cultural contexts? Our findings suggest that in Taiwan and mainland China, ideology also evinces elective affinities with psychological traits. While the correlations reported across our studies are rather small, it should be noted that in Jost et al.’s (2003)

meta-analysis, most of the average correlations were of a similar magnitude. Specifically, the average effect sizes ranged from  $r = -.16$  to  $r = .48$  for the relationship between political ideology and epistemic motivation,  $r = .07$  to  $r = .38$  for existential motivation, and  $r = .13$  to  $r = .27$  for relational motivation (Jost, 2021).

Third, our study contributes to extant political psychology literature on ideology by exploring its content beyond developed Western democracies. Previous work in this line focused on the structure of political preferences in public opinion, with more emphasis on the latent structure of citizen beliefs (e.g., Pan & Xu, 2018). As a widely recognized political spectrum, the left–right debate is an indication of a country’s understanding of its internal political differences and divergences. While scholars and officials often use Left and Right to describe and orient political discourse in the West, findings from the current research shed light on the conceptions of ideology in an authoritarian regime like mainland China as well as in a young democracy like Taiwan. Additionally, our study contributes to the cross-cultural psychological literature by illuminating the universality as well as specificity of elective affinities between ideology and psychological motives across cultures. As outlined above, we hope that this initial investigation sheds light on the role of psychological motives in ideology in East Asia. After all, there might be a measurable relationship between human psychology and ideology not unique to Western contexts. Additionally, understanding the psychological drivers behind political ideology may be a first step toward avoiding or reducing political polarization, if contrapartisans can better acknowledge the psychological needs influencing their opponents.

## Limitations and Future Directions

Like all research, the current research has several limitations, providing opportunities for future research. First, our findings are based on the Chinese cultural context, so future research should see if they could be replicated in other East Asian cultural contexts. Second, in theorizing the links between psychological traits and ideology, we only focused on one trait among each of the three psychological motives; future research should seek to examine more traits (e.g., need for cognition) for replication. Third, our research relied on self-reported ideology. As prior research indicates, a distinction should be noted between symbolic vs. operational ideology: namely, whether there is a disconnect between the symbolic content of the labels and the underlying operational ideology. For example, Ellis and Stimson (2012) show that in the U.S., many citizens identify as conservatives but believe that the government should spend more to solve social problems. Whether similar disconnects can be found in the Chinese cultural context warrants further investigation. In Beattie et al.’s (2022) study, self-reported ideology did not correlate with many psychological traits – however, reported opinions on individual political issues were related. Fourth, the behavioral implications of ideology, for instance, how might different ideological understandings predict people’s voting behavior in a new democracy like Taiwan, remain an important topic for future research.

## Conclusion

There has been a long academic debate over the psychological nature of right-left ideology. As we witness in recent world events, understanding the correlates of those distinct political orientations might be a prerequisite for managing political disputes, which could lead to intractable and deadly conflict. In this paper, we study ideology in the Chinese cultural context. In so doing, we complement existing studies of political motivation by offering a different perspective on assessing ideological content and psychological correlates in East Asia. We hope that this research offers a compelling first step in examining ideology in a non-Western context that others will take up.

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