

C A L I F O R N I A I N S T I T U T E O F T E C H N O L O G Y

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A SPATIAL MODEL OF LEFTIST
IDEOLOGICAL SHIFTS IN ARAB POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we use a Downsian spatial model to explain the political motivation behind the choice of Marxist/Leninist ideology by a number of non-communist leftist parties in the Arab nationalist movement. We assume that the attempts of these parties to distinguish their position from the strict M/L position generates perceptual ambiguities in the minds of the people. Given our assumptions about citizen utility functions, we derive the result that leftist parties gains supporters as they move towards the M/L position.

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Introduction

In this paper, a formal model of the political motivation behind the choice of Marxism/Leninism ideology by a number of non-communist leftist parties in the Arab world is presented. This conversion to Marxism has occurred in many political parties throughout the Arab world, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (P.F.L.P.) and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (D.F.L.P.) in the Palestinian Arab movement, the National Front for the Liberation of South Yemen (N.F.L.Y.), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (P.F.L.O.) [16], the Popular Front for the Liberation of Western Sahara, formerly Spanish Sahara (POLISARIO), as well as scores of lesser political parties and movements in Lebanon and the Arab east. All these parties, together with the Arab Baath Socialist Party, the Union of Popular Forces in Morocco, the original Arab Socialist Union of Egypt (which has significantly changed since Nasser's death) may be identified as leftist according to the criteria presented in the next section.

Consider the P.F.L.P. as an example of the group that shifted to Marxism-Leninism. The P.F.L.P. grew out of the Arab Nationalist movement, whose transformation to Marxism-Leninism (M-L) is striking [9, 14, 15]. The initial structure and ideas of this movement were not

left of the center by any local or external standards.¹ Most of the cadre and leadership were people with property who did not reject their background [14]. The movement's goals (unity, liberation and retribution) were broad enough to make everybody from the extreme right to the extreme left eligible for membership [9, 14, 15]. Yet, despite the party's early nationalist heritage and its initial hostility towards the Communists and Baathists -- indeed, toward all socialist ideas [15] -- it took less than six years [9] for the party's leadership and cadre to transform to the Marxist-Leninist ideology.

To distinguish their position from the traditional Arab Communists, they point out the Communists do not comprehend that "the analysis which Marxism gave to a particular situation at certain times cannot be the same for the new situation which has been developed from the previous one." [9] Thus, the P.F.L.P. political strategy stress their convictions that:

1. The Modern Capitalism is different from what it was during Marx's days.
2. The class structure in underdeveloped societies are different from that in an Industrial society which Marx tackled.
3. Nationalism, which was used by the European Bourgeoisie during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries for conquest and exploitations, has acquired a revolutionary, progressive content in the third world. It became the framework of their struggle against Imperialism, which is the highest stage of Capitalism."

These are the basic arguments with which the P.F.L.P. hopes to distinguish their position from the Arab Communists. They summarize the distinction as follows [9]:

¹On this the P.F.L.P. strategy [9] states that "the political organization of the P.F.L.P. is a continuation of the Arab nationalist movement which has a petit-bourgeois structure and content."

"The Arab Communist parties were only committed to Marxism-Leninism superficially, hence were incapable of leading the revolution in our country. They either understood the theory in a static, lifeless manner, or implemented it mechanically without due analysis to its local contact."²

In order to relate their views to traditional Marxism, the P.F.L.P. points out that "what is essential and immortal in Marxism is the dialectical way in which all problems are analyzed -- the dialectics of continuous change and movement...." Hence, the P.F.L.P. agrees with the Marxist method of analysis, but tries to escape some of the historic predictions and specifics of the theory.

The adoption by the P.F.L.P. of Marxism-Leninism as the core of their ideology was not an isolated event. In June 1968, the N.F.L.Y., the movement which shared in the struggle against the British in Aden, shook off the historical leadership of Al-Shaabi to adopt Marxism-Leninism [16].

A series of questions arise. Did these parties shift positions because Marxist-Leninist ideology captured the imagination of the Arab masses? How could the strong leadership of N.F.L.Y. lose their ideological grip on the rank and file of their party so swiftly, and after that leadership had achieved a resounding victory over the British?

One fact is certain: the standard bearers of Marxism-Leninism in the Arab world, the Communist parties, did not make any significant in-road in contemporary Arab politics [7, 9, 13], nor did they at any time have a chance of building a stable presence inside any Arab

²The researchers failed to find any adequate exposition of the P.F.L.P.'s new theoretical contributions beyond what is already mentioned. For example, the role of nationalism and the "organic" relationship between class and national struggle has been developed by the Baathists a quarter of a century before the 1967 P.F.L.P.'s Congress.

government even though they were the oldest organized party of the left.³ An explanation of the shift towards Marxism-Leninism by the P.F.L.P. and others must be sought outside the example set by the Arab Communists.

On Ideology in Arab Context

In this section, the importance of ideology and what it means in contemporary Arab politics will be pointed out.

In his book on revolutionary Arab ideology [1], Dr. Elias Farah⁴ gave the following interpretation to the concept of ideology:

"The ideology is a system of ideas with a concrete purpose; it is a collection of ideas about the world, life, and society which together form the basis of collective action.... Thus, we can distinguish between religious, nationalistic, democratic, bourgeoisie, socialist and communist ideologies.... The ideology is a social condition for any renaissance, that is because it helps to describe the total picture of society and in particular specify the relationship between what is special and temporary in the society and what is general for all humanity."

More critically, he observes that:

- a) Modern societies are ideological.
- b) Ideology is a "must" to guide change.
- c) No revolutionary party is without an ideological commitment.

³The P.F.L.P. states that "the traditional Communist parties in the Arab world failed because of their structure and mistaken strategies...." P. 130-140 [9].

⁴Dr. E. Farah is a member of the National Command of Arab Baath Socialist Party. The extract is from the Arabic text. (5th ed., 1975, pages 10, 11.)

It is on these sets of ideas that "almost" all the Arab parties on the left agree, and it is on these observations a serious study of ideological choice in Arab context should be based. On the same theme, the P.F.L.P. political and organizational strategy [9] states:

"The foundation of a revolutionary party is a revolutionary ideology; without it, the party cannot be but a group moving instinctively or under the influence of events. The revolutionary ideology is that which deals with all aspects of man and society in the relevant time."

These convictions are shared by a large number of Arab intellectuals outside the organized parties.⁵ Indeed, the consensus that no serious party could be without an elaborate and complete ideological structure is shared even by many parties on the right such as the Moslem Brotherhood and El-Tahrir. In their writings, the leaders of these parties go to great lengths to show that their ideology, Islam, answers unambiguously all the questions that modern ideologies try to answer [22, 23]. In fact, the conviction that a well developed ideology is an absolute necessity for any meaningful social, economic and cultural development can be traced to the heritage of Islam. Islam is more than a complete set of religious and ethical doctrines; it is an ideology, because it concretely outlines the shape and content of the Islamic state [21-27].⁶

⁵See Kloffis Makhsood, The Crises of Arab Left, Arabic text, First edition [17], Self Criticism After Defeat, S.J. Al-A'Adhin, Criticism of Religious Ideology [34]. Arabic Texts, First editions, and N. Alwash in [36].

⁶See, for example, M. Aflag, On Memory of the Arab Prophet, and The Baath and Heritage [5].

Some revolutionary Arabs credit the early successes of Islam to the comprehensiveness and completeness of its ideological structure. [33, 34]. Because of the completeness of his traditional ideology, Islam, the active Arab individual demands a similar level of completeness before considering any new, competing alternative.

The Left in Arab Context

A particular party will be identified as leftists if the following subjective and objective factors are present:⁷

- 1) Subjectively, if the relevant party identifies itself publicly as being leftist.
- 2) Objectively, if:
 - a) other Arab parties recognize it as leftist,
 - b) there is an international recognition of this claim,
 - c) the party manifesto limits, to various degrees, private ownership and the role of the market.

The most important objective criteria for identification is (c). This factor actually is a composite one, for it involves a measure of attitude toward religion and the organization of the state.

Islam, the dominant religion of the Arab world, is not only a set of rules to regulate a relationship with God, but also a system of government. It describes the role of an Islamic government, the basic tax system, economic classes, and the relationship between

⁷See, for example, On Revolutionary Arab Politics Before and After Defeat. [3]

individuals and government.⁸ Hence, a party position for public ownership which deviates from the widest interpretations of the teaching of Islam reflects a rejection of the role of religion in guiding the state.

Thus, it seems that (c) encompasses the two most important objectives of the Arab left: limited private ownership, and restriction of the role of religion in state affairs.

Conventional Explanations for Ideological Choices

It is difficult to disentangle, in the plethora of articles and papers dealing with Arab politics, those elements which deal primarily with ideological choice. Some terms have been so much abused as to cause much confusion. Such terms as "radicals" have been associated exclusively with the "leftists." Radicalism in the Arab world is associated with issues, not ideologies. It is possible for an individual to be radical on a political issue without being in the slightest way socialistic, and vice versa. Arab Communists have been the least radical on the Arab-Israel issue, and Fatah, the largest Palestinian Arab movement, has no particular allegiance to socialist ideals. Such confusion about terms leads to serious errors in analysis of Arab politics.

⁸See, for example, Our Philosophy, M. El-Sader, first edition, Arabic text [21]; Mr. Yousif, The Contrived Gap Between Science and Religion [24], p. 1-10; Said Kotib, Islam and the Problems of Civilization [22], p. 164-168; Mr. Khallaf-Allah, "The Koran and Socialism," in Il-Katib, July 1966; D. Saab H., Islam Facing the Challenges of Modern Life, [23], p. 20-25; Y. Al-Milaiji, Consultation in Islam Versus Its Role in the Western Democracies and Marxism [26]; and A. Al-Khatib, The Financial Policies in Islam [25].

Therefore, rather than documenting the traditional scholarly literature dealing with Arab ideological choices, two conventional explanations will be outlined and an informational version of our theory will be presented.

Leadership Transformation Theory

This is the oldest and most traditional explanation of ideological shifts by third world parties. Leaders are sovereign. They perceive the "common good" of society in a particular way at certain stages of their lives and experiences and adopt a certain ideology. Their ideological position changes to the left or the right through further personal experiences.⁹ According to this theory, George Hahbash and the group leadership in the P.F.L.P. would have had to undergo an ideological transformation from the right to the left, then have influenced the cadre and supporters to follow suit.

The support for this theory, however, is not limited to the traditionalists. The revolutionary faction¹⁰ of the P.F.L.P. asserts that [14] "the basic lesson from the Cuban experience is that when the elements in control of the leadership of a particular petit-bourgeois

⁹Almost all articles dealing with "Nasser" ideology fall in this category.

¹⁰This faction had seceded from the P.F.L.P. in March, 1972.

movement have the ability of transformation to Marxism-Leninism, then the possibility of transformation of the whole movement is there."¹¹ They go on to assert that "the existence of Marxist-Leninist elements in a petit-bourgeois organization is not the important factor in transforming the whole organization, but it's the position and effectivity of those elements in the leadership that are vital."

The reasons that are usually given for an ideological shift by a leader, such as personal experience, leadership ego, or other psychological factors, are unconvincing. The theory leaves unanswered the question of why the followers went along with the leader.

Outside Pressures

This theory states that the parties have no independent ideological choice. Parties adopt various positions on political issues (e.g., the Palestinians, oil, West-East orientation, etc.) as a result of forces largely outside the control of the political party. Thus, the more external force applied on the parties to be "radical" on these issues, the greater will be the shift to the left. For example, a conflict between a less desirable Western policy and a more desirable Soviet policy in the Arab world would make Hahbash a staunch Marxist-Leninist, and thus transform the whole P.F.L.P. Another example is the

¹¹See [4], p. 29. In fact, this faction even denies the sincerity of the P.F.L.P. adoption of Marxism/Leninism. They state in [14], p. 34, that "the official adoption of Marxism/Leninism does not mean that the P.F.L.P. possesses the necessary conditions for the transformation. For history taught us -- as Lenin mentioned -- that when the enemies of Marxism fail to fight it on an open ground, they are apt to fight it from inside by adopting it superficially. All those who lived inside the P.F.L.P. and are acquainted with its leadership cannot but doubt the earnestness of the transformation."

account of Nasser's policies related by M. Haiykel in his book, Abdul Nasser and the World. He portrays Nasser's drift to the left as a reaction to the West's unwillingness to finance the high dam. This theory asserts that the ideological shift is a choice, but it is a forced one.

A variant of this theory is what can be termed "the conspiracy theory." Here, international forces conspire to form and aid various factions in the party and force a change in leadership by either deposing them physically or usurping their real power over the faction loyal to their ideology.¹² It cannot be denied that super-power policies have appreciable effect on creating issues and affecting the position which various Arab parties assume,¹³ but the political and ideological conflicts in the Arab world are driven mainly by Arab aspirations. The final results of outside efforts can be very different from what was originally intended.¹⁴

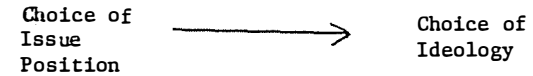
The 1967 document, in which the P.F.L.P. declares the adoption of Marxism-Leninism, criticizes the general Soviet policy in the Middle East, particularly in the case of Palestine. Later, the Movement

¹²Laqueur, N., "Russia Enters the Middle East." Foreign Affairs, January 1969: [31].

¹³Foreign Affairs, July 1957, "Strategy of the Middle East," [32], p. 661.

¹⁴The Soviet policy is seen by the rejection front (the Baath and the P.F.L.P.) as being too moderate towards Israel. Essentially, Soviet policy has no squabble with the legitimacy of its existence, only with its "imperialist connection" and its ultra-religious/nationalist character. In fact, the Soviets offered their own guarantee to the security of 1967 borders of Israel.

criticizes Chinese policy in the Arabian Gulf.¹⁵ These observations discredit the one-directional coupling theory:



The conspiracy version can only explain short-term phenomena, such as temporary shifts of position on certain issues, but not a radical, long-term ideological shift. The P.F.L.P. leadership has not been changed by outside power, but has itself undergone an ideological shift.

A Theory of the Leftward Shift

The ritual of applying lessons from European class conflicts to the economic, social, national, and religious conflicts in the Arab world has a rational basis. Those who are successful in projecting the appropriate images can hope to obtain useful international socialist or communist support in the conflicts with their opponents, or at least to diffuse leftist support of their opponents. On the far left, the Marxist-Leninist ideology, which has been developed and refined over decades of conflicts with democrats, socialists, anarchists, and capitalists, offers a politicized individual an apparently coherent and modern world view as a substitute for an old religious theology which no longer is satisfying. In developing Arab countries, many people raised in a traditional society become frustrated and anxious in the process of adapting to modern urban society. Similar psychological

¹⁵The Chinese, in an effort to outbid the Soviet policy in the Middle East, recognized what they called the "legitimate" interest of the Shah in the Arabian Gulf, according to the official version of the talks between the Chinese prime minister the Shah in Tehran, 1974.

pressures are faced by Europeans who change from a static, traditional social structure to a more dynamic, technological, and urban society. It is here argued that many politically active Arabs prefer a political party that seems to clearly define its economic and social consequences to a party that might offer them greater benefits, but with risks stemming from non-clarity. In other words, risk-averse individuals participating in a risky political struggle prefer a less desirable but certain outcome to a more desirable uncertain outcome. If, in addition, the Marxist-Leninist positions appear to be more certain than other leftist party positions in Arab politics, then it will be demonstrated that the risk aversion assumption causes the leftward shift already discussed.

In particular, it can be theorized that a rational actor (party) would maximize political support, measured by enrollment in the party. However, it can be argued that maximizing membership is only a derivative objective and that the real objective is assuming power. For example, infiltrating the Army and police, assassination, and factional elitist politics have been a central part of the struggle for power on many occasions.

While this argument cannot be disregarded, it is true that all these methods of assuming power are the final act of a long process of popular education and psychological preparation of the masses against the incumbent regime by the organized revolutionary parties. The highest form of this preparation is enrollment in the revolutionary party itself. All Arab leftist parties argue that no stable revolutionary change of government can be affected without wide and

solid support.¹⁶ The P.F.L.P. political and organizational strategy states: "Working with the masses, caring about its problems and helping solve these problems, organizing and leading the masses is our first and paramount task. The masses are the reason behind our existence. It is the only way to mobilize the revolutionary potential to achieve our goals."¹⁷ It goes on to say that "any gap between us and the masses is a dangerous signal to our own existence."

On the same theme, M. Aflag writes, "The masses are the greatest force and the only insurance of achieving the goals of Arab revolution."¹⁸ He also asserts that, "The masses are the final reference, the masses are now, more than any time before, the fermentor of revolution and history peacemaker."

These convictions are not merely ideological, they are pragmatic. The continuous failure of military regimes in the Arab world, starting with El-Zaim and Shishakely in Syria, and continuing with Kassim in Iraq, Nasser in Egypt and Jadid in Syria, are obvious examples for changes which fail to have the prerequisite of a revolutionary, solid grass roots support among the Arab masses. Thus, the choice

¹⁶See, for example, analysis for the collapse of the Baathist's 8th of February revolution in Iraq 1963, in M. Aflag, The Point of Commencement [6].

¹⁷See [9], page 101.

¹⁸See [6], page 183.

of party enrollment as an objective for a rational leftist party is reasonable in terms of the nature of Arab society.

It is also postulated that individuals have specific preferences for ideological positions. These preferences reflect class and family background, formal and informal education, and social association. The individual will enroll or support the party that:

- 1) offers an ideological structure nearest to personal position,
- 2) offers the most complete ideological structure.

Parties are hampered from ascertaining the distribution of the preferences among the population by sampling or polling due to obvious political and institutional constraint, even when they assume power. Also, for a long time after a revolutionary change, the psychological drag of the previous regimes will distort individual preferences.

Yet, in spite of their incomplete knowledge of the distribution of preferences in the population, leftist parties have to take positions on a variety of ideological and political issues as they face the challenges of day-to-day political events. In a way, this exercise can be viewed as a trial-and-error procedure that increases their knowledge about the underlying distribution of preferences. The results will be evaluated through their effects on enrollment.

Thus, in this theory, it is essential for any viable party to have as complete an ideological structure as possible, in order for such an ideology to be able to answer not only questions pertinent to the organization of society, but philosophical and ethical questions of the type which Islam, the traditional ideology, sought to answer.¹⁹ These are precisely the questions to which Marxism-Leninism give central importance. Therefore, the rational party in this model seeks to maximize its enrollment while facing the following decisional cost structure.

- 1) A penalty cost of incompleteness of its ideological structure.
- 2) Information and organizational cost of developing, articulating and communicating its ideology.

The choice is conducted within the following informational environment:

- 1) The true preference distribution of the population is uncertain.
- 2) Marxism-Leninism is an apparently tried and well-articulated ideology that is followed by millions of people, so that acquisition of this ideology by a particular party entails negligible informational and organizational cost.
- 3) In the Arab world, the position of Marxism-Leninism (x*) is to the left of the preferred positions of most people on the

¹⁹Such questions as why and how society changes, thought and matter dialectics.

ideological axis.²⁰ See Figure 1.

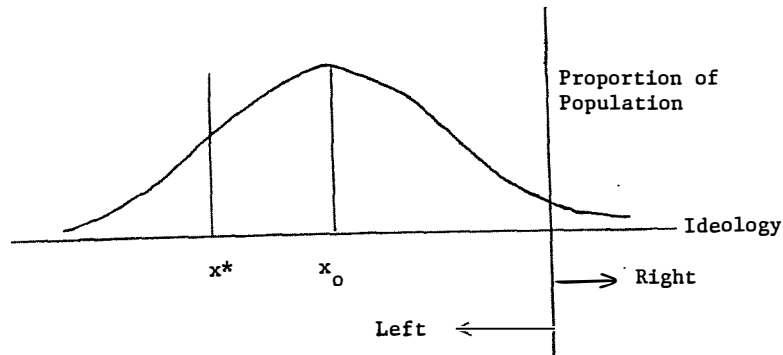


Figure 1

The model which is developed in the next section shows how a rational party will move toward Marxism-Leninism in its own ideology.²¹

The document published by the National Leadership of the Baath Party [7] seems to support this theory. It states:

"The Baath always believed that scientific social discoveries come only through effort to analyze the situation and discover facts.... This attitude has always exposed those who adopted other revolutionary ideologies, particularly the Marxist-Leninist, as ready-made framework because of laziness and incapability."²²

²⁰On this, the P.F.L.P. strategy [9] states that "The present popular ideology among the masses are to the right of our position." p. 19.

²¹Another explanation that can be loosely termed rational choice of the main phenomenon addressed by this paper, is that advanced by R. Wesson in, Why Marxism? The Continuing Success of a Failed Theory. N.Y. 1976. The gist of his argument is that Marxism is adopted because it can be made to serve the needs of diverse protest groups and radical movements. However, his analysis is mainly concerned with Western groups and movements.

²²There is an interesting footnote on the same page. It states: "The behavior of those who adopted Marxism-Leninism without due analysis to the local conditions and the socio-historical context of the current stage can be termed scientific surrender.... This means that such

The Model

The spatial model about to be introduced is an extension of the unidimensional spatial model of party competition exposted by Downs.²³ Suppose that all Arab political elites conceptualize the spectrum of left parties as points on a single ideological dimension. Let θ_{ij} denote the position of party j as perceived by individual i ($i = 1, \dots, N$ and $j = 1, \dots, p$), where N denotes the number of elites and p denotes the number of parties on the left.²⁴ In order to develop specific results which illuminate the phenomenon under discussion, it

adoption is a result of cultural and ideological bankruptcy." On the same theme in [2], p. 7, Dr. Farah wrote, "There is an essential difference between adopting an ideology as a result of deep belief and conviction and adopting it because of competition for followers and supporters.... It is said that a great deal of socialist ideals are adopted because of the latter factor, not because of deep conviction or belief."

²³The unidimensional spatial model was introduced into the political science literature by Downs [39]. The social choice theory for the unidimensional case was developed by Black [40]. Davis and Hinich [41] extended and developed spatial models for two party electoral competition; see Davfs, Hinich and Ordeshook [42].

²⁴Allowing each citizen to have a different perception of each party position is an extension from traditional spatial models. Shepsle [43] introduced candidate uncertainty into spatial models, but he assumed that the uncertainty term for party j in his model does not depend on the policy positions of the j th party. We differ from Shepsle by assuming a relationship between the perceptual uncertainty and the party position, and by using a different type of multiparty competition.

is necessary to use a special form for individual utility functions.

Suppose that all individuals have quadratic utility functions for party positions, i.e., let

$$u(\theta_{ij}, x_i) = c_i - a_{ik} (\theta_{ij} - x_i)^2$$

represent the utility which individual i receives if the position is adopted. The term x_i is individual i 's ideal point; c_i is a constant which will play no role in our results; and a_{ik} is a positive constant which is a function of the positions of the other parties, but is independent of θ_{ij} ; e.g., when $p = 3$, a_{i1} depends only on θ_{i2} and θ_{i3} , and a_{i3} depends only on θ_{i1} and θ_{i2} . The quadratic utility function is the simplest model that incorporates risk aversion.²⁵

In keeping with the game theoretic orientation of spatial theory, suppose that the parties are willing to alter their positions in order to increase their political power and hence their chances of implementing their program. In terms of this model, suppose that the average perceived position of the j th party $\theta_j = N^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^N \theta_{ij}$ is determined by the positions that the party advocates. The party can alter its average position in the population by changing its platform, but there will still be a diversity of individual perceptions.

As an important additional assumption, suppose that parties do not coordinate their platforms. Occasionally, several parties form a coalition against others, but the competition for supporters is fierce and very non-cooperative. This is in fact a correct observation about leftist parties all over the world.

²⁵See pp. 75-76 of Riker and Ordeshook [44], and Shepsle [43].

The parties choose their positions in our model to maximize their political support among the effective part of the population, and for this reason need to know the preferences of the cadre. The language used by Downs and in the formal theories of voting, conveys the impression that the results require the assumption that the candidates (or parties) know the distribution of ideal points; but for the median voter result for two candidates, each candidate need only know the median ideal point in order to guarantee at least a tie. For elections with more than two candidates, however, the form of the ideal point distribution determines the play of the game. This perfect information assumption for candidates has been made to facilitate the theorizing, but it is obvious that it is impossible to know the preferences of a large, heterogeneous political body, and it is difficult to even obtain a precise estimate of the median position using the type of survey data and methods that are available in the West. In order to model the uncertainty about preferences, assume that the population of N political individuals is a random sample from an infinite population whose statistical parameters are imperfectly known by the parties. This trick is commonly used by statisticians. For example, the average position of party j , $\theta_j = N^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^N \theta_{ij}$ is a random variable. By the Central Limit Theorem (assuming finite variance), the difference between θ_j for a given group and μ_j , the mean of the infinite population, is approximately $1/\sqrt{N}$ for large N . Thus, μ_j can be estimated within an accuracy of $1/\sqrt{N}$ by taking a random sample of the N individuals who themselves

are a representative sample from the unobservable infinite population.²⁶

Suppose that the amount of time, money, and energy which individual i contributes is proportional to $u(\theta_{ij}, x_i)$, and that the party's political power is the sum of the resources contributed by the cadre to that party. Then party j maximizes the expected value of its political power by choosing a position θ_j which maximizes the average utility in the population.²⁷ Let $\epsilon_{ij} = \theta_{ij} - \theta_j$ denote idiosyncratic perceptual error of the j th party's position, and let σ_j^2 denote the variance of ϵ_{ij} in the population. By straightforward algebraic manipulation, the average individual utility for party j is

$$\bar{c} - \bar{a}_{ik} (\bar{\theta}_j^2 + \sigma_j^2) + 2\bar{a}_{ik} \bar{x}_i \bar{\theta}_j - \bar{a}_{ik} \bar{x}_i^2, \quad (2)$$

where the overbars denote mean values.

As the special feature of this model, assume that σ_j^2 is a non-decreasing function of θ_j , i.e., the slope of $d\sigma_j^2/d\theta_j$ is positive, and

²⁶When N is large, the difference between θ_j and μ_j is negligible. For a formal statement of the relationship between sample statistics and population parameters, the reader should consult any standard mathematical statistics books; e.g., Sections 7.5 and 7.6 of Modd and Graybill [46].

²⁷This is due to the fact that the average of the sum of the utilities is the sum of the average utility. To be formally correct, the terms "expected" and "average" refer to mean values in the infinite population, but when N is large, there is no practical distinction between these mean values and averages over the set of N individuals. Thus, θ_j is used in this paper instead of μ_j in order to reduce the notational complexity as much as possible. We will also use x to denote the population mean ideal point. These distinctions will be confusing for readers who regularly use sample averages as if they were true population parameters, but a note is made here of the distinction as a modest concession to mathematical rigor.

thus the variance of the perceptual error decreases as θ_j moves to the left. Recall that the Marxist-Leninist position was assumed to anchor the left of the ideology dimensions; thus, the assumption on σ_j^2 implies that the M/L position has the smallest variance.

As an additional modest assumption, suppose that σ_j^2 is a strictly convex function of θ_j , i.e., its second derivative is positive. It is then clear from (2) that the average utility, and thus the expected power of party j , is a concave function of θ_j ($j = 1, \dots, p$). As long as $\theta_1, \dots, \theta_p$ are restricted to some common interval, the concavity of the party objective functions (their expected power) implies that there exists a Nash equilibrium, which we denote $\theta_1^*, \dots, \theta_p^*$.²⁸ This means that if party j chooses $\theta_j \neq \theta_j^*$, but all the other parties choose their equilibrium positions, then party j 's utility is less than if it had chosen θ_j^* , i.e., once the parties are at the equilibrium, there is no incentive for one party to make a unilateral move.²⁹

The property of an equilibrium that we wish to exploit is as follows: any equilibrium set $\theta_1^*, \dots, \theta_p^*$ of party positions must satisfy the first order conditions

$$\theta_j^* + \frac{d\sigma_j^2}{d\theta_j} = \frac{\bar{a}_{ik} \bar{x}_i}{\bar{a}_{ik}} \quad (3)$$

²⁸See Hinich, Ledyard, and Ordeshook [45]. The non-cooperative assumption is important here.

²⁹There may be many equilibria. In order to obtain a unique equilibrium, we would have to restrict the form of \bar{a}_{ik} . For example, there is a unique equilibrium if \bar{a}_{ik} is independent of the party positions.

for each $j = 1, \dots, p$. In order to simplify the exposition, restrict attention to the special case when $d\sigma_j^2/d\theta_j = \beta$, a constant, and the a_{ik} are independent of the other party positions. Then (3) becomes

$$\theta_j = \alpha_k - \beta \quad (4)$$

where

$$\alpha_k = \frac{\overline{a_{ik} x_i}}{\overline{a_{ik}}}$$

is independent of the party position. Consequently, the equilibrium defined by (4) is unique. As β , the slope of the relation between σ_j^2 and θ_j , increases the party's move to the left. If in the course of party competition the variance of the other parties increases relative to the variance of the Marxist-Leninist position, then β increases. The other parties then move to the left in order to increase their power. See Appendix for a clarifying example.

The interpretation of this result in the Arab context is this. Suppose that the variance of the party positions in the population is the same for all parties at the initial stages of political socialization of the proto-elites. As these politically active individuals become more aware of the ideological positions of the parties, suppose that the Marxist-Leninist position appears to be more certain than any other left position. Moreover, suppose that the variance of a party decreases as it adopts Marxist-Leninist policies, but the relative variance increases as individuals compare the parties. In terms of this model, this means that β increases over time. If, on the other hand, the variances of the parties decrease (or increase at the same rate) then

β remains constant. It is here argued that competition between Arab left parties results in a leftward shift toward the Marxist-Leninist position as a result of a perceived increase in the variance of the other parties relative to the Marxist-Leninist position by the elites. This increase is due in part to the increasing articulation of the Marxist-Leninist ideology made possible by a variety of relevant new Communist experiences, such as the Cuban, Vietnamese, and Western Communist parties, coupled with the increasing resources devoted by the Chinese and the Russians to clarify the ideological issues through which they project their struggle. On the other hand, only meagre resources are devoted by the third world countries to classify the ideology of their societies in the ever-increasing complexity of the modern world.

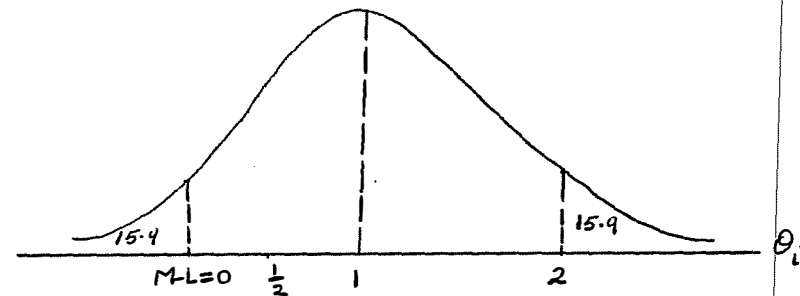
Appendix

In order to illuminate the formal reasoning behind our result, consider the following example. Suppose that all politically active individuals in a village have identical ideal positions that they are unable to articulate. Assume that this position is to the right of the M-L position, and involves compromises between M-L interpretations and traditional positions on social and economic issues. Since the origin and unit of the space are arbitrary, set the M-L position at zero and let $x = 1$ be the ideal position of the politicized villagers.

Assume that two parties are competing for support in the village. One party adopts the M-L position, while the other articulates a program that it hopes to be perceived at the village position. Due to the ambiguities and confusions inherent in a compromise between Marxism and traditional concepts of property rights and the like, each villager perceives the party to be at $\theta_i = 1 + \epsilon_i$. The term ϵ_i is an idiosyncratic distortion of the party's ideological position. Assume that the variation of the ϵ_i in the village is modeled by a normal distribution with mean zero and variance one. As can easily be seen from a table of the normal distribution 15.9 percent of the village perceive the "compromise" party to be to the left of the M-L = 0 (Figure 2). These individuals prefer the M-L party since it is closer to their ideal ($x=1$). Only 68.2 percent prefer the "compromise."

Suppose the "compromise" party moves to the left and adopts the position $\theta = 1/2$. Assume that as a result of moving towards the M-L position, the standard deviation of ϵ_i is reduced to the value $1/4$.

Then only 2.3 percent of the village perceive the party to be to the left of zero. Another 2.3 percent perceive the party to be to the right of $\theta + \frac{2}{4} = 1$, and thus they prefer the M-L party. Most (95.4 percent) prefer the party at $\theta = 1/2$ to the M-L party.



Normal Distribution of Perceived Positions
of Leftist Party.

Figure 2

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