

Journal of Ideology

A Critique of Conventional Wisdom

An electronic journal at:

www.lsus.edu/journalofideology

Ideology Games of Conservatives and Socialists: In the Pursuit of Difference

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Abstract

Why and how do the political ideologies, deemed to be stable by their very definition, change? In this paper, I contribute to answering this puzzle by proposing that political actors' desire to maintain ideological *contrast* overpowers the will to preserve status quo in their political positions. In the context of political parties, it is plausible then that in response to the shift of labor and socialist parties to the right following the rise of the New Left, conservative parties were compelled to move further to the right in order to preserve their partisan distinction. Extending this logic to the general interaction between socialist/labor and conservative political parties, in this paper I argue that a substantial shift of a party *A* into the ideological position space of another party *B* results in the further position shift of the latter party *B* away from the invader party *A*. Employing data from the Party Manifestos Project I provide an empirical evaluation of my theory based on the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in Britain in 1950-1992 and the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union in Germany in 1949-1990. I find that labor/socialist parties react to the leftward changes in conservative parties' ideologies

by shifting further left. As labor/socialist parties have largely remained committed to their original ideologies, conservative parties however have not significantly moved further right in their ideological positions.

Introduction

A key characteristic of ideologies is internal consistency and the relative *stability* of central beliefs and values, according to a recent survey of ideology studies (Knight, 2006, p. 625). However, single individuals and entire movements are observed to have modified, at times drastically, their political ideologies. “In the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats” (Huntington, 1993, p. 27), while in the West the ideological position of the New Left grew to diverge from those of the Old Left. Why and how do the political ideologies, deemed to be stable by their very definition, change? In this paper, I contribute to answering this puzzle by proposing that political actors’ desire to maintain ideological *contrast* overpowers the will to preserve status quo in their political positions. The study of ideology change is important for more than theoretical reasons. As ideologies condition political actors’ behavior, they help us understand political and social outcomes both on the domestic and international levels. In the context of Germany and Great Britain, for example, crucial policy questions, whether British troops should be kept in Iraq and Germany’s in Afghanistan, economic bailout extended to Greece, or Turkey admitted to the European Union, depend directly on the ideology of the dominant actors in power.

While the questions and the proposed theory have implications for a broad range of ideologies and political actors, to trace the process of ideological change, I will focus on the instances of political parties, which adhere to conservative and labor/socialist

ideologies. Political parties are central to all democratic systems and many authoritarian regimes. Consequently, political party ideologies are directly relevant to government policy. On average, political parties are institutionalized to a higher degree than other political and social actors; they publish official party programs. The study of party ideological positions can, therefore, yield significantly accurate test of the proposed theory.

Ideologies and Political Parties

Past decades gave an impetus to such systemic developments and changes as the decline of the welfare state, the end of the Cold War (Minkenberg, 1993), the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, globalization of capital, and the rise of postmaterial values. These changes have, arguably, accelerated one of the major developments in the realm of political parties—the ideological shift of Old Left socialist and labor parties to the right (Kelley et al., 1985), which may in turn explain their relative electoral success in major European states, including the United Kingdom, Germany, and Spain.

Labor and socialist parties are parts of countries' general party systems, where change in one element of the system is likely to produce an impact on another. More specifically, change in labor and socialist parties can affect other parties in the party system. Consequently, it is plausible that in response to recent developments within labor and socialist parties, which have shifted to the traditional realm of Conservative parties in ideological center, Conservative party leaders have felt compelled to move further to the right in order to preserve their partisan distinction. Extending this logic to the general interaction between socialist/labor and conservative political parties, in this paper I argue

that a substantial shift of a party *A* into the ideological position space of another party *B* results in the further position shift of the latter party *B* away from the invader party *A*.

The rest of the article is divided in four sections. I begin by providing a brief discussion of the major existing explanations of party change. I then elaborate on the theoretical basis of my proposition, focusing on the instances of labor and socialist parties, on the one hand, and conservative parties, on the other, and present testable hypotheses. I provide an empirical evaluation of my theory and conclude with the discussion of the results based on the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in Britain and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Germany.

Party Change: Existing Explanations

Many students of party politics regard political parties as conservative institutions reluctant to change. Duverger, for instance, points out that “in every country, over a relatively long period of time, there is a certain stability in the number of parties, their internal structures, their ideologies, even their respective sizes, alliances, and types of opposition” (1972, p. 18). However, changes in the parties and party systems, which have been especially salient since 1970s, have given an impetus to theories of party change. In particular, an important debate has developed in the party change literature on whether parties shape themselves or are shaped by their environments.

Even though the first position among the party change scholars that parties can change themselves reflects a minority view within the literature, it reacts to ‘environmental’ explanations by placing primary explanatory power on internal dynamics of party change. Albisson’s study of the Swedish Moderate Party, for example, is

primarily concerned with whether, and how, structural changes as well as the change of party name, were influenced by such “internal factors” as fluctuations in the number of members (party size), financial resources and the occurrence of party conflicts (1986, p. 186). In a similar vein, Deschouwer (1992) criticizes the environmental model as deterministic as it does not consider the possibility that organizations themselves can change their environment. Attending to the role of leaders, he is suspicious of an unconditional causal link that goes directly from the environment to the organization, without taking into consideration the role of leadership. This is inappropriate, according to him, since perception of leadership serves as filters against the impact of environmental changes on organizations.

The studies emphasizing internal factors in explaining party change are counterbalanced by a more widely held view within the party change literature that attributes primary power in shaping political parties to environmental factors. Katz and Mair (1990, pp. 18-21), for instance, attempt to explain incremental, gradual changes in political parties by relying on environmental factors, such as electoral system and law changes, changes in the availability of, and need for, various resources, including evolution of media of mass communication and provision of public subsidy. Janda’s electoral performance theory, on the other hand, provides an elegant account of parties’ response to electoral defeat proposing that “defeat is the mother of change” (1990, p. 5). Similarly, Demker’s (1997) analysis of Gaullist parties leads her to the conclusion that electoral defeat is a source of party change. Her analysis, however, suggests that defeat is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for party change.

Ideology Games of Socialists and Conservatives

Labor/Socialist Invasion and the Conservative Response

This paper contributes to the extant literature by suggesting *ideological shifts of rival political parties* as an important environmental factor that contributes to party change. The driving force of such changes, I argue, is parties' desire to be different. The desire for being different is well addressed by Janda's performance theory. That is, parties (such as party *A*) want to maximize their votes and be electorally successful. If another party *B* intrudes into their ideological space and does better electorally than the former (*A*) do, parties (*A*) have the incentive to change their issue positions in the same directions as the intruder party *B* and emphasize their issues even more radically than the invader party.

The shift of the socialist and labor parties to the right has arguably coincided with, and been facilitated by, the rise of the New Left. It is contended that the New Left as a movement developed in the 1960s (Schneider, 1999, p. 56), when issues of new politics were gaining attention among campus students (Schneider, 1999, p. 109) and some leftist political parties, such as the Labour of Ireland (Mair, 1987, p. 171). In contrast to the traditional "Old" Left, the New Left was not as much concerned with issues of income redistribution. Rather, as Minkenberg (1993) argues, the New Left embraced new values and agenda by supporting opposition to the Vietnam war, the struggle for civil rights, women and minority rights, as well as environmentalism, democratization, and promotion of the new life-styles (1993, p. 10). Although the criticism of the materialist society by the post-materialist New Left is widely known, many New Social Movements, a large part of which constitutes the New Left, do not use the violent means of guerilla

warfare utilized by some Old Left parties. Moreover, they accept and operate within the free market economy.

The ongoing societal change and its impact on the Left has been acknowledged by the leading members of the movement. As sociologist C. Wright Mills states in his *Letter to the New Left*, “[f]or socialists of almost all varieties, the historic agency has been the working class—and later the peasantry; also parties and unions variously composed of members of the working class or (to blur, for now, a great problem) of political parties acting in its name—“representing its interests”” (Wright Mills, 1960, p. 21). Yet, he “cannot avoid the view that in both cases, the historic agency (in the advanced capitalist countries) has either collapsed or become most ambiguous” (p. 21). Societal changes and the concomitant rise of the New Left movements thus alter the traditional base of the labor and socialist parties of Western Europe. This might explain the rightward shift in ideologies of the socialist and labor parties, to the extent that they not only tolerate, but also in many instances promote, the causes of the market economy.

What are the implications of the Left’s shift to the right for other political parties? Parties experiencing the most serious consequences of this drift to the right are conservative parties. By shifting their ideology positions to the right positions, labor and socialist parties intrude into the ideological realm of the conservative parties. In other words, labor and socialist parties adopt issue positions and emphases that for a long time have been the provenance of the conservative parties.

I hypothesize that under such conditions the response of conservative party leadership will be driven by the desire to be different, to protect their distinctiveness vis-à-vis other political parties. Conservative parties, therefore, will shift in their ideological

positions and emphases further to the right, as this is seemingly the most beneficial route for them to pursue given the societal trends of the time. In a postindustrial society that moves away from income distribution cleavages, shifting to the right, along with the systemic trends, is seemingly less risky than drifting to the left. Furthermore, moving to the right provides more consistency with the initial ideology of the conservatives than would be moving to left. The ideology of the party (and its behavior) should be consistent since any deviation discourages traditional voters from voting for the party. According to Downs, this condition is exacerbated by competition among political parties; and parties must have consistent ideologies (Downs, 1957). Such a dynamic in the behavior of conservative parties is consistent with both typologies of conservatism presented by Minkenberg (1993, p. 6): “one [that] resists radical change in the socio-political system, and the other [which] takes necessary and even radical steps of systematic adaptation in order to maintain the existing power structure and its principles”.

Conservative Invasion and the Labor/Socialist Response

Others, however, contend that defining a consistent conservative ideology has been difficult (Peele, 1982). As Peele (1982) argues in case of the Conservative Party in Britain, “...difficulty in defining Conservative ideology has arisen from the fact that the priority given to electoral success by the Conservative party has forced it to be flexible in its doctrines and policies” (1982, p. 22). It is possible then that conservative parties may shift their ideologies leftwards pushing the competing socialist and labor parties further left from their original positions.

The Conservatives in Great Britain have in fact found themselves in the ideological space of Labour for much for the post-World World II period. The

Conservative party has used traditionally leftist rhetoric in its electoral competition. As argued for the entire period of 1945-1970,

The introduction and expansion of the welfare state in Britain has for the most part been extremely popular as neither contemporary academic debate about its retreat nor modern political doubts about our ability to fund it should blind us to the fact that for much of the post-war period there was a consensus between the two major British parties about its continuation and usefulness. True, the Conservative party never believed, as Labour did, that welfare programmes should be employed as methods of redistributing wealth and promoting social equality. Nevertheless for a long period the Conservative party, like Labour, did not merely accept the principles of universality of benefits and progressive taxation but used the increases in public expenditure on welfare as part of their election propaganda (Peele, 1987, p. 24).

Thus, conservative parties may initiate changes and invade ideological space of labor and socialist parties. Leftist parties, in turn, are pushed to move their positions further left. The main reason for such behavior is the desire to be different.

More generally, the leadership in party *B* should discern its ideology from the invader party (party *A*)'s ideology that became very similar to party *B*'s ideology. The reason for this is to (re)gain votes. To (re)gain votes, party *B* will move further to the extreme from its present position. At that new position party *B* will place a larger emphasis and take a stronger position on issues than it previously did, since leaders of party *A* decided to emphasize the issues to the similar extent as party *B* has previously

done thus gaining more support and minimizing the difference between the two. Hence, I hypothesize that

Hypothesis 1: If a substantial shift of a party into the ideological position space of another party is accompanied with its better electoral performance, the latter party shifts away from the invading party's new issue position in the direction of the invader party's move.

Speaking specifically about conservative and labor/socialist parties, I, therefore, hypothesize that

Hypothesis 1a: If a substantial shift of a conservative party into the ideological position space of labor/socialist party is accompanied with conservative party's better electoral performance, the labor/socialist party shifts away further to the left from the conservative party's new issue position.

Hypothesis 1b: If a substantial shift of a labor/socialist party into the ideological position space of a conservative party is accompanied with labor/socialist party's better electoral performance, the conservative party shifts away further to the right from the labor/socialist party's new issue position.

With respect to the left-right dimension the literature indicates the existence of a rightward drift in the case of the British Labour (Callaghan, 1989) as well as the Conservative (Durham, 1989) parties. Similar indications have been detected in the case of Ireland (Mair, 1987) and Germany (Roberts, 1997). Therefore, the secondary literature indirectly supports these propositions.

Data and Method

Even though the extant literature attempted to test these propositions (Kelly et al.,

1985), it did not directly examine shifts in ideological positions of political parties. Instead, it heavily relied on demographic variables of the electorate to make its case. In contrast to this work, the data used in the project draws directly on the issue positions of political parties employing Harmel and Janda's Party Manifestos Project.

Comparative data on ideological positions of political parties are most extensive and complete in the European context. The data employed in this study are coded using the coding schemes for issue position variables developed by Harmel (2000). The scheme employs 11 values, ranging from -5 to +5, "as basic values, based on what the program says" (Harmel, 2000, p. viii). The data consist of the coded party characteristics on nineteen variables: *Limitation of Individual Freedom, Income/ Personal Taxes, Total Taxation, Scope of Government, Social Services: Range, Health Care: Government Role, Environmental Protection: Government Role, Agricultural Supports, Cultural Supports, Limits on Defense Spending, Foreign Aid, Rehabilitation of Law Breakers, Centralized Power, State Ownership of Means of Production, Regulation of the Private Sector, Minority Rights, Women's Rights, and Open Immigration*. Although dimensions other than income redistribution are a part of the general ideology of labor/socialist as well as the conservative parties, in this research I concentrate on the economic dimension.

Therefore, by rightward/leftward ideological movement I mean change on such programmatic positions as the liberal market, state ownership of the means of production, and social services provided by government. These are reflected by such variables as *Income/Personal Taxes, Total Taxation, Scope of Government, Social Services: Range, Agricultural Supports, Cultural Supports, State Ownership of Means of Production, and Regulation of the Private Sector*. Traditionally, income redistribution has been one of the

most important issues in party politics. The literature supports a focus on the economy by demonstrating that economic issues have acquired significance in the case of the Conservative Party of Great Britain (Janman, 1985; Thompson, 1990). For instance, the new ideology of Thatcherism in Great Britain resulted in a radical move to a more liberal economic policy, including privatization of publicly owned industries.

Among the three West European party systems available for the analysis in the Party Manifestos Project, British, German, and Danish, I have selected political parties in Great Britain and Germany. Both countries are the leading players in the European and global economy and politics. Consequently, their political ideologies have impact far beyond Great Britain and Germany. Crucial policy questions, whether British and German military should be involved in the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, economic aid extended to Greece and Ireland, or Turkey admitted to the European Union, relate in a direct way to the ideology of the British and German political parties in government. As both states have relatively stable political institutions and electoral rules we can control for many domestic-level variables. Party systems of both cases have relatively few political parties, both conservative and socialist/labor, that have high chances to win elections and form government. This makes them better suit to test the hypotheses concerning interactions between labor/socialist and conservative parties than the Danish case characterized by a larger number of parties within the party system that can effectively compete for popular vote. While the general argument advanced in this article should apply to the Danish case as well, its empirical examination is complicated by the multi-party dynamics conditioned by the country's multi-member district elections. Consequently, changes in a conservative party could be attributed to ideological shifts not

only within a competing socialist party, but also in another competing conservative party. As the primary focus of this article is the interaction between a socialist/labor party, on the one hand, and a conservative, on the other, I exclude the Danish case. Instead, I concentrate on the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in Great Britain as well as Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD) of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Ideology statements of political parties are coded in four-year intervals starting from 1949 to 1990 for German parties and from 1950 to 1992 for British. Exceptions to the four-year intervals are 1969-1972, 1980-1983, and 1987-1990 for Germany and 1950-1951, 1959-1964, 1964-1966, February 1974 – October 1974, October 1974 – 1979, and 1987-1992 for Britain.

Results

A factor analysis was performed to more systematically determine how variables relate to each other. The factor analysis was expected to yield left-right and possibly other dimensions, such as liberal-conservative and materialism-postmaterialism, using the nineteen variables developed in Harmel and Janda's project on party ideological positions. The only clearly identifiable factor was the left-right, or economic, dimension. As expected, such variables as *Income/Personal Taxes*, *Total Taxation*, *Social Services: Range*, *Cultural Supports*, *State Ownership of Means of Production*, and *Regulation of the Private Sector* were highly correlated with each other, having the coefficient above .75. *Scope of Government* is correlated with other variables in the factor at .71, while *Agricultural Supports* at .52. Even though the last two factors are correlated somewhat lower with other variables, they were included in the left-right dimension due to their

theoretical relevance. Moreover, *Government Role in Education* correlated relatively highly with other variables in the factor, at .78, was excluded since it does not fit conceptually with the economic dimension. Despite these exceptions it can be claimed with relatively high confidence that this factor represents left-right dimension.

For further analysis, I take mean values of the variables on left-right dimension for each of the four parties – the SPD and CDU of Germany and the Conservatives and Labour of Great Britain. I then correlate the issue positions of conservative and labor/socialist parties in each country. I also plot ideology positions of the parties for the scattergram analysis (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis indicates that conservative parties invade ideological space of the left as their ideology values range from -2.5 to $+2.14$. In contrast, labor/socialist parties in both Germany and Great Britain are mostly true to their ideological stands as their average scores are located in the left half of the left-right spectrum ranging from -5 to -1.5 . That socialist/labor parties are more consistent in their ideological positions is also evident from their standard deviation, .95, which is less than that of the conservative parties, 1.28.

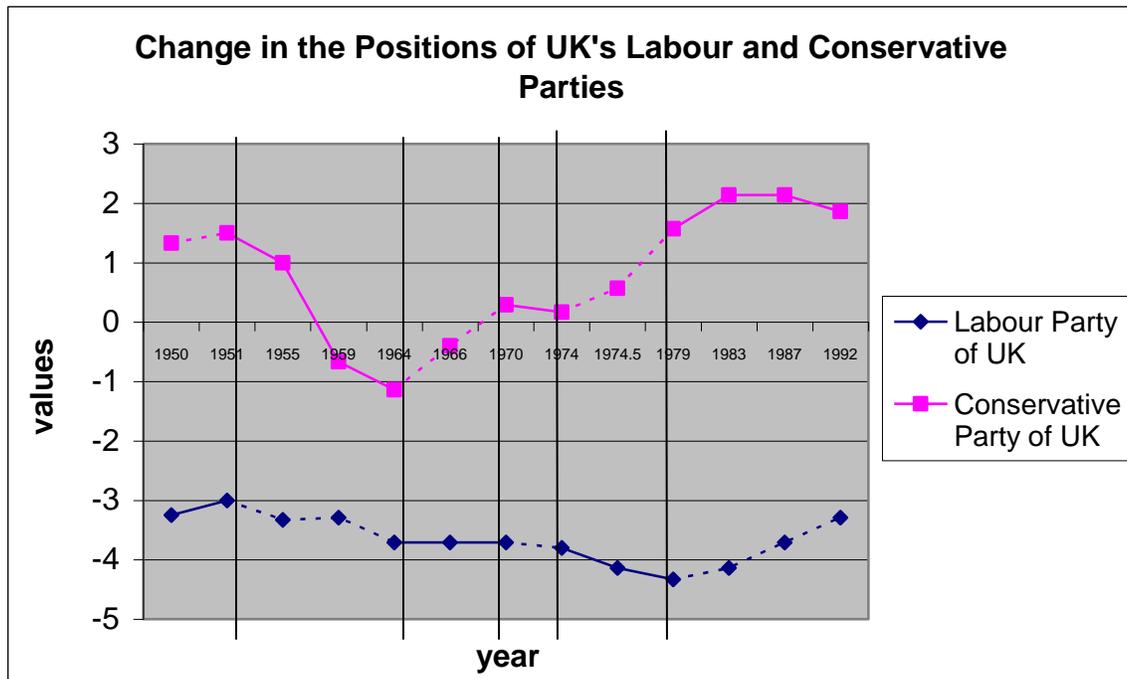
Due to limited number of data points, performing a multivariate statistical regression analysis to test the propositions developed above is not feasible. Instead, to establish the relationship between the ideological shifts of conservative and labor/socialist parties I correlate the shifts in ideology scores of opposition parties (dependent variable) with lagged changes in ideological positions of the party in government (independent variable).

The results show that labor/socialist parties react significantly to the changes in conservative parties' ideologies (correlating at .74). The British Labour has been influenced slightly less by changes in the Conservative Party (.70) than has SPD by CDU (.92). In contrast, Conservative parties react to ideological changes in labor/socialist parties at a much lower rate (correlation .04). Still, the ideological changes of the German CDU correlate with the past ideological changes of SPD at .24. Ideological changes among the British Conservatives, however, are inversely related to previous changes in the Labour Party at $-.87$. Three out of four parties under consideration provide support for the hypothesized relationships that opposition parties shift their ideological positions away from the invading party. The case of the Conservative Party seems an exception. To “unpack” statistical correlations, it would be helpful to trace the process of ideology changes of the conservative and labor/socialist parties in both countries.

The British Conservative and Labour Parties

In response to the rise of postindustrial society and diminution of class cleavages, the Conservative Party has had incentives to reach out to a broader electorate. The data show that between years 1951 and 1964 the Conservative Party has been steadily moving leftwards on its issue positions: between years 1955 and 1959 it has crossed zero point (ideological “neutrality”, or center), and between 1959 and 1964 moved further to the left crossing -1 . The absolute value of change is 2.64 points (Fig. 1).

Figure 1



———— Party in government

----- Party in opposition

As during these years the Conservative Party has consistently been in power, it depicted a threat to the Labour Party. Between 1951 and 1959 the Conservative Party has shifted 2.17 points leftwards (from +1.5 to -0.67) into the realm of Labour. Although Labour's position at that time was relatively distant from the Conservative Party's (-3.29), Labour observing such a substantial shift of the Conservative issue position from the right to the left, made a shift further to the left (to -3.71).

This is not surprising, since, as Peele (1982) points out, during 1945-1970 Conservatives used the leftist rhetoric in their electoral campaigns. The data show that it was even more so between 1951 and 1964, where we observe a substantial change in the positions of the Conservative Party and the leftward response of Labour between 1959

and 1964. This short period in Labour's history was marked by the end of ideological conflict within the party and the era of pragmatism and compromise. Taylor (1980) contends that as far as policy and ideology was concerned, the party's direction did not change much, "[t]he party that Wilson inherited in 1963 was really no more or less revisionist or fundamentalist than it had been during the 1940s and 1950s" (1980, p. 23). The conflict of the 1950s within the party made it difficult to identify the mainstream ideology. Nevertheless, the authors acknowledge, "[t]he Left [wing of the party] appeared stronger than it actually was, partly because in Bevan it had a leaders of stature, but also because the issues that were raised had more impact on the centre" (1980, p. 23). While these quotes illustrate both a short magnitude of Labour's ideological changes and its move leftward, to the explanations that the Left of the party appeared to be stronger I add another explanation: the Left might have gained importance due to the perceived ideological threat from the Conservatives.

Throughout the period between 1964 and 1970, while in government Labour essentially maintained its left-oriented position (at -3.71), while the Conservatives were undergoing changes. Since 1951 the Conservative Party has been steadily moving to the left for thirteen years, yet their defeat in the 1964 elections was a powerful catalyst for them moving back to the right. Indeed, by the 1970 elections the Conservatives found themselves at the right half of ideological spectrum ($+0.29$). From the standpoint of the Labour Party, this might still have been too close to the left half of the continuum. Moreover, while in power between 1970 and 1974, the Conservatives have slightly moved to the left (from $+0.29$ to $+0.17$). This coincided with yet another leftward shift of Labour (from -3.71 to -3.8).

Between 1974 and 1979, Labor controlled two consecutive governments of Wilson and Callaghan and maintained its leftist stances. Yet, the vote of no confidence in the midst of economic problems and the subsequent formation of a Conservative government led Labour to reverse its ideological predispositions. Labour's leader Michael Foot, a left-winger, was replaced by Neil Kinnock who started to move the party to the center. Since 1979 the party has been drifting to the right (from -4.33 in 1979 to -3.25 in 1992). These developments precipitated the rise of New Labour.

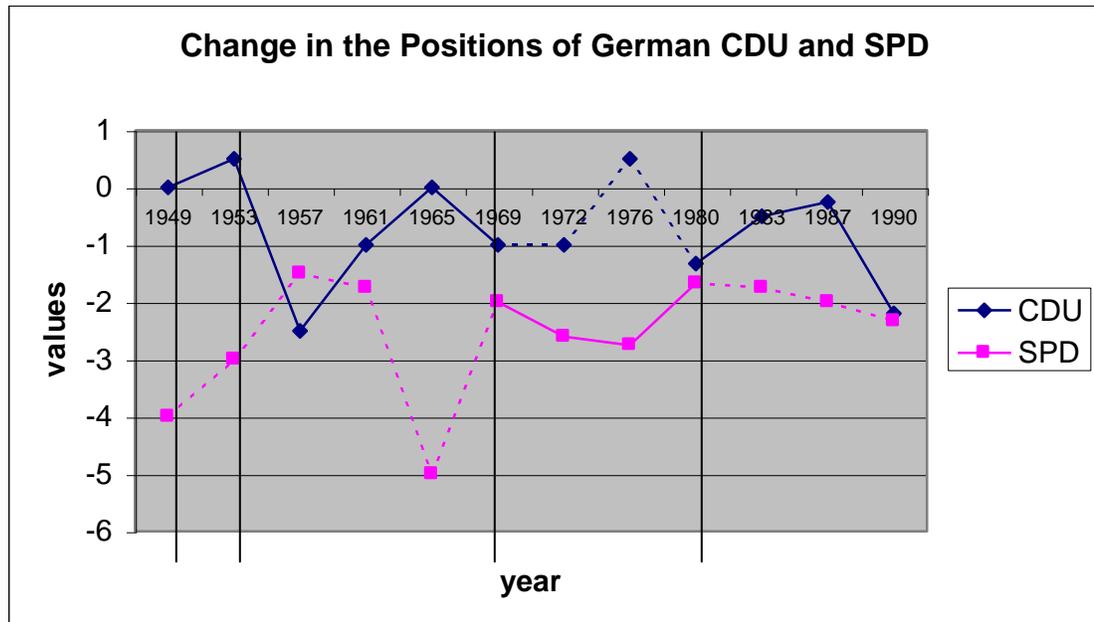
The rightward trend depicting Labour as an invader party is expected to continue in the post-1992 period. This trend has arguably culminated in 1997 with the rise of New Labour in general elections. New Labour has aggressively intruded into the position space of the Conservatives leading their leader to lament that the Blair government "stole" the Conservative's language on certain policies (White & Watt, 2004). It is then likely that the Conservatives have shifted further right and taken stronger issue positions than those of New Labour.

Social Democrats and Christian Democrats of Germany

The case of Germany presents another empirical illustration to my theory. Although the data available for this case has a number of missing points, available information nevertheless supports the theory. During the period of 1949-1969 when CDU has permanently taken place in the formation of coalition governments, the Christian Democrats appear to be the party, ideological changes of which trigger Social Democrats to shift their positions in the similar direction. Between 1949 and 1953 CDU made a slight move from the position of neutrality (0) to the right (+.5). Since some ideological

space of CDU that had successful elections has been freed, the response of SPD moved to the right between 1953-1957 from -3 to -1.5 (Fig. 2).

Figure 2



————— Party in government
 - - - - - Party in opposition

In the grand coalition of 1966-1969, SPD was a *minor* partner in the CDU/CSU and SPD government led by a *CDU* Chancellor, I have coded this period as an opposition for SPD.

However, following the ideological invasion of CDU that sharply moved to the left in 1953-1957 (from $+0.5$ to -2.5), SPD slightly shifted to the left in 1957-1961 (from -1.5 to -1.75). Such small magnitude of the shift is likely explained by the Godesberg Congress in which SPD “after a long period of internal party debate, accepted a new basic programme which abandoned the party’s links to Marxist ideology and which deliberately sought to open the party to new types of member and supporter, beyond the traditional working-class clientele” (Roberts, 1997, p. 15). Given this intervening factor,

ceteris paribus, the magnitude of the response to the significant shift of CDU to the left is not as high as one could expect. The next move of CDU's ideological position was to the right but still within the left positions in 1957-1961 (from -2.5 to -1). SPD's issue position in 1961 was -1.75 . Apparently, such ideological positioning of two parties was too close to each other, so that SPD moved again to the left, this time much further (from -1.75 in 1961 to -5 in 1965). However, neutral positioning of CDU in 1965 led to ideological moderation on the part of SPD and the party moved from its -5 position in 1965 to -2 in 1969. What also could have contributed to the rightward move of SPD is the grand coalition between SPD and CDU. Grand coalition was formed in time of economic recession, student protest movements, growing unemployment, and rising vote for a radical right-wing party (Roberts, 1997, p. 17). Bipartisan backing of the policies intended to resolve such problems, led to the ideological rapprochement between two parties. CDU moved leftwards and SPD to the right, to the extent that the difference between the two parties' ideological positions minimized to 1 point in 1969 (-1 for CDU and -2 for SPD). In the following period of liberal-socialist coalition with SPD in government and CDU in opposition, SPD did not show any major attempt to invade the ideological space of the conservatives. CDU, being a conservative party in opposition, showed the move to the right in 1976 ($+0.5$), but quickly reverted to the leftist positions by 1980 (-1.33), its most assertive shift since 1957. By doing so, CDU reduced its ideological difference with SPD by a mere .34 point and was able to form a government.

During the period of 1983-1990, CDU was in the ruling coalition. Its ideological position was to the left from the center, despite the rightward trends in periods of 1980-1983 (from -1.53 to -0.5) and 1983-1987 (from -0.5 to -0.25). The very fact that CDU

was in the left, although only slightly, led to similarly slight moves of SPD to the left in 1983-1987 (from -1.75 to -2) and in 1987-1990 (from -2 to -2.33).

By 1990, ideological positions of both parties have literally converged (-2.33 each). The left leaning CDU has maintained its continuous presence in the German governments until 1998. Yet, SPD is likely to have continued its leftward drift in response to the ideological invasion of CDU, as exemplified by SPD's choice to form two governments from 1998 to 2005 with the more leftist *die Grünen*, the Greens, rather than FDP. However, Social Democrats have possibly moved rightward since the time of the current grand coalition with CDU.

Conclusions

The data provide evidence to hypothesis 1a that when a substantial shift of a conservative party into the ideological position space of labor/socialist party is accompanied with conservative party's better electoral performance, the labor/socialist party shifts away further to the left from the conservative party's new issue position. Such instances were identified in the cases of the United Kingdom and Germany. Continuous drift to the left in the case of the Conservative Party in Britain in 1951-1959, when the party was in power, resulted in the further shift to the left on the part of the Labour Party. In a similar vein, leftward move of the ruling German Christian Democratic Party (CDU) in 1953-1957 led to a further leftward move of SPD. Generally, when CDU runs the coalition government, the party finds its ideological position on the left from the center. The reaction to this on the part of SPD is shifting more to the left on the ideological continuum. This was especially true in the periods of 1957-1965 and 1980-1990.

Hypothesis 1b posits that when a substantial shift of a labor/socialist party into the ideological position space of a conservative party is accompanied with labor/socialist party's better electoral performance, the conservative party moves away further to the right from the labor/socialist party's new issue position. While the combined correlation between the two ideological shifts is positive, the case of Germany provides stronger result with a correlation coefficient of .24. In part, lower level of support for this hypothesis is due to the fact that left parties of early 1990s were not much different from the left of late 1940s/early 1950s in their ideological appeals. The analysis of data suggests that during much of the last century both the Labour Party in the UK and the Social Democratic Party of the Federal Republic of Germany have been more consistent in their ideology and less aggressive in invading ideological issue space of their opponents than have the conservative parties. Even though the left might have lost its traditional demographic base as early as late 1950s-early 1960s, it was still committed to the very same principles on which it was established. None of the two leftist parties has crossed the center line of the ideological continuum in the entire period under examination. Collectively, the variance of ideologies of both leftist parties has been lower than that of the conservative parties. In fact, the trends toward *New Labour* in the UK have started much later than one might expect – only in early 1980s. It is true that SPD dropped its links to the Marxist ideology at Godesberg. However, one might argue that SPD became a truly New Left only after its coalition with CDU.

Future research ought to examine over time the ideological development of the labor/socialist parties investigated in this study, the British Labour and German Social Democrats (SPD), and then observe the conservative response to such developments.

Currently, both parties seem to have abandoned the realm of the Old Left. Further, some of their recent policies resemble centrist or right of center attitudes of the conservatives. These attitudes are likely to be reflected in the ideological positions of the labor/socialist parties as well. Provided that such ideological intrusion leads to electoral success of the New Left parties, the conservative response would tend, as I hypothesize, drift further to the right in order to preserve their difference and (re)gain the votes. Conservatives will be even more radicalized to attract the voters who sympathize with the intruder party's ideology.

Current global economic crisis is likely to change these dynamics and move conservative and labor/socialist parties to the left. It is, however, plausible that parties would tend to preserve their distinct identity as this research shows is the case with the Labour Party and SDP. The desire to protect a distinct character is likely to shift both Labour and SDP even further left in their ideological appeals, as the ongoing economic crisis would tempt rival conservative parties to increase their own leftist rhetoric.

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