

Ideology in Political Discourse: A Critical Analysis of the Constitutional Party's Economic Narratives

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Abstract

This study addresses the ideological dimensions within Moroccan political discourse, focusing specifically on the economic rhetoric of the Constitutional Union (CU) party. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Van Dijk's (2008)^[26] mental model approach, it examines the alignment between the CU's economic discourse and its professed liberal ideology. Prompted by challenges facing Moroccan political parties in maintaining ideological consistency, the research draws on insights from scholars like Slaoui (2014), Darif (1998)^[22], and Boukhars (2011)^[2]. The study underscores the role of political rhetoric in conveying ideological beliefs, utilizing theoretical frameworks proposed by Van Dijk (2008)^[26], Fairclough (2013)^[7], and Bourdieu (1991)^[3]. Through content and cognitive analysis, linguistic indicators of economic liberalism in CU's discourse are examined, revealing deviations towards a more center-right political stance. By elucidating these dynamics, the study contributes to understanding the ideological influences on Moroccan political communication, potentially explaining linguistic deficiencies observed in parties' attempts to engage the public with persuasive rhetoric grounded in clear ideology.

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1. Introduction

Unquestionably, political discourse serves as a vital tool for political parties to articulate, promote, and propagate their fundamental views in the political and social spheres, as it is, in the meantime, the means by which political parties spread their ideologies (Halliday, 1978^[14]; De Saussure, 2005^[5]; Fairclough, 2015^[8]; Van Dijk, 1998^[22]; Wodak, 1989^[27]; Allen, 2011)^[1]. Similarly, in the dynamic Moroccan political landscape, such claim suggests that political party rhetoric serves as a crucial platform for the expression and spread of ideological perspectives. According to Van Dijk (1998)^[22], ideology is crucial to the legitimacy of discourses in politics. These discourses rely on referential ideology to assume norms and values that have already been established, either directly or indirectly, by legal systems or political institutions (p. 256). Further, as Fairclough (2015)^[8] points out, ideology serves as a hidden tool of power in political discourse. Its least obvious mechanisms, which operate inside common-sense frameworks, are what give it its efficacy, emphasizing the complex link between ideology and the maintenance of political power (Fairclough, 2015^[8], p. 108). This

demonstrates how ideologies may persuasively support political stances and affect public opinion within the sociopolitical contexts. This acknowledgement not only emphasizes the infinite presence of ideology within political discourse but also highlights the central role of discursive modes and cognitive processes to formulate discourse in the political sphere (Van Dijk, 2008)^[28].

In the context of Moroccan politics, where global literature has broadly covered the emergence and social consistency of political ideologies in Morocco (Slaoui, 2015; Darif, 1996, 1998; Alami, 1997; Boukhars, 2011^[2]; Sater, 2007)^[18], there's a significant gap in examining the distinct ideological expressions in Moroccan political rhetoric, especially those related to economic discourse established within the realms of political liberalism. Remarkably, liberalism has emerged as a new ideology in the Moroccan political spectrum, with the Constitutional Union party (hereinafter CU) officially declaring itself one of its key advocates. In this regard, the CU party official articulates its advocacy for liberal perspectives (CU Statute, 2018, Art 3, p. 3).

To address this, our empirical research approaches the CU's written and spoken discourse through cognitive perspective. By providing a context-specific analysis of whether the CU's discourse party conforms to liberalism within economic circumstances, the research seeks to close the current linguistics gap. The subsequent sections will provide the rationale for the study, the research objectives, a review of relevant literature, details on the methodology employed, an analysis of the collected data, a conclusive interpretation of the findings and, finally, a comprehensive conclusion.

2. Research Rationale

Previous studies may offer broad analyses of the overall political landscape and the evolving pathway of ideologies, in Morocco often drawing examples from various global contexts (Slaoui, 2015; Darif, 1996, 1998; Alami, 1997; Boukhars, 2011^[2]; Sater, 2007)^[18]. However, there is a scarcity of research that systematically explores the rhetoric used to disseminate economic objectives within Morocco's political spectrum. Accordingly, this study seeks to bridge this gap by offering a targeted investigation into the ideological framework of the CU discourse by specifically focusing on the party's discursive role to whether or not promote liberalism while dealing with economy matters. The aim is therefore to provide a comprehensive analysis of political discourse that goes beyond generalized thematic discussions. Aspiring to fill this void, the research stands as a linguistic analysis reference addressing economic liberalism in Morocco.

3. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to identify the linguistic indicators of economic liberalism within the CU party's discourse, analysing instances of discursive strategies and ideological connotations. Exploring the discourse employed by the party under consideration, the aim is to explore the distinct ideological manifestations in the CU's discourse vis-à-vis economic issues. The long-term objective is to determine whether the CU stands as a true liberal party with its discourse sustaining its officially claimed liberal ideology.

4. Literature Review

Ideology is important in the field of political communication because politicians use ideological frameworks to examine and explain their views on societal values, political goals, and government. The recognizable relationship between ideology and discourse has been better understood by academics in the discipline. Political discourse, according to Fairclough (2013)^[7], is not just a tool for communication but also plays a critical cognitive role in the establishment and maintenance of power relations (p. 170). Van Dijk (2008)^[26] examined the ways in which politicians assimilate and apply ideology as he focused on the cognitive elements of political discourse. He emphasizes that political discourse serves as a cognitive process that allows political actors to influence and control the views of their voters, going beyond its conventional role of spreading ideas (Van Dijk, 1998^[22], p. 197). In keeping with this viewpoint, Paul Chilton emphasizes the importance of political discourse's symbolic function in spreading political ideologies and upholding authoritative control over social issues (Chilton, 2004^[4], p. 30).

In the Moroccan political context, thirty-six political parties were founded between the post-independence era and 2014 allowing the contemporary Moroccan political landscape

stands as a dynamic framework of political ideologies. Amidst Morocco's multi-pluralistic system, Moroccan political discourse reveals vital research setting of interacted ideologies, linguistic expressions, as well the cognitive dimensions of political manipulation used by parties in contest. The communicative strategies employed by political parties become paramount in affecting public perceptions and legitimizing ideological positions. Van Dijk (1998)^[22] asserts that ideological communication is often associated with various types of manipulation, including techniques to control or manage the public's mentality (p. 274). Attempting to understand the multifaceted realm of ideological expressions in the discourse of Moroccan political parties, this empirical study draws on the ideological role of political discourse as a tool for cognitive manipulation and the construction of political identity (Van Dijk, 2008^[26]; Herman, 1988^[15]; Habermas, 1996)^[12]. Within this discourse, ideologies emerge as powerful drivers, influencing not only the content but also the form of political communication. The theoretical foundation of ideology in discourse has been established by Fairclough (2015)^[8] and Van Dijk (2008)^[26], who contend that ideologies are concrete forces that are ingrained in language expressions rather than merely abstract conceptions. The dynamic field of ideological expressions is where discourse plays a crucial role in helping politicians express and propagate their fundamental views. This is the relationship between language and politics. Driven by ideology, as stressed by Van Dijk (2008)^[26] and Fairclough (2015)^[8], there is a strong link between discourse and power, for political discourse allows parties to compete for legitimacy, disseminate their ideological viewpoints, and manipulate public opinion. This fact finds its root in the claim that politics is an operational system that symbolizes law and power and directs socio-political and economic relations through discourse (Allen, 2011^[1]; De Saussure, 2005^[5]; Fairclough, 2015^[8]; Halliday, 1978^[14]; Van Dijk, 1998^[22]; Wodak, 1989)^[27].

The exploration of Moroccan political discourse takes on added significance. Morocco's multifaceted political landscape exposes its evolving political climate to provide a unique scene for the study of ideological expressions. It is within this context that a critical linguistic question should be posed: How do the ideological connotations conveyed in the discourses of Moroccan political parties enrich our comprehension of their ideological positions? To address this question, we turn to a comprehensive examination of the main ideologies existing in the Moroccan political landscape. In this vein, understanding Morocco's political evolution is crucial for grasping the manifestation of its multi-plurality system and the emergence of its varied ideologies, (Slaoui, 2015). Shaped by historical resistance against French and Spanish colonialism, Morocco's political landscape has fostered a diverse array of intellectual, religious, and modern ideologies (Slaoui, 2015, p. 27). Despite ideological diversity, political analysts, including Slaoui (2015), Darif (1998), and Boukhars (2011)^[2], converge on three fundamental ideologies characterizing the Moroccan political spectrum. The first encompasses right-wing and conservative parties, rooted in early 1930s nationalistic alliances against imperialism, such as the PJD, the Istiqlal Party (PI) and Consultancy and Independence Party (CIP). The second features leftist parties like the SUPF, the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS), and Socialist Vanguard Party (SVP). The third consists of parties adhering to liberal or center-liberal ideology, with the Party of Hope (PE), National Rally

of Independents (NRI), and the CU serving as notable examples for this research. Scrutinizing their claimed ideologies, leftist parties are usually the advocates of a discourse that revolves on constitutional changes and political change, with the ultimate objectives of increasing democratic progress, motivating economic growth, and improving social equality. On the other hand, right-wing parties have worries about both capitalism and authoritarianism but support social democracy and fair profit sharing. As per liberal parties, what sets them distinct is the establishment of a moderate liberal rhetoric that promotes social and economic freedoms while simultaneously highlighting the constitutional monarchy and Islam's mandatory role.

In fact, Moroccan political ideologies encounter scepticism regarding their dynamic presence in social contexts, attributed to a duality in discourse and alliances forged during electoral campaigns. Slaoui (2014) asserts that political parties frequently face challenges in aligning themselves consistently with their acknowledged ideologies. He emphasizes that the political experience in Morocco, up to the present, is characterized by a notable lack of robust ideological foundations (p. 23). In the same vein, Darif (1998) argues about the significant structural shifts within contemporary left-wing parties, especially those of the 1990s, which are navigating a complex political and ideological terrain marked by diverse influences at the local, regional, and international levels (p. 160). Additionally, Boukhars (2011) [2] sheds light on the essence of liberalism in Morocco, noting the rigorous effort of liberal parties to establish a diplomatic equilibrium between religious values and liberal principles (p. 71). However, the purported strength of these ideologies faces doubt, as the discourse of liberalism contends with opposition from both conservative and left parties, which often prioritize social values and nationalism over individual and economic liberties.

Focusing on liberalism, such Western ideology that gained prominence during the enlightenment era and is predominantly endorsed by liberal parties such as the CU party, holds a significant position within Morocco's political landscape. This ideology, emphasizing individual freedom, civil rights, and democracy, emerges as a new political vision shaping contemporary political ideologies (Wolthuis, 2016) [29]. Put in its Moroccan context, liberalism appeared amidst resistance to colonial forces and shaped the country's post-independence political and economic reforms. As such, examining the CU party's ideology within the economic political discourse of Morocco is of paramount importance to this research.

Established in 1983, the CU party, officially confirmed its commitment to state democracy "within the framework of a socially committed liberal direction" (CU Statue, p.1) by recognizing the role of the country's constitutional monarchy, maintaining Morocco's territorial integrity and traditional identity, and pursuing a free-market economic strategy that would enhance Morocco's international position, with a central focus on the economy (CU statute, p.1; CU's Memorandum, pp. 2;5, CU's referendum, pp. 12;16). This changed the course of Moroccan politics and signalled the official beginning of the party's liberal philosophy. Overall, the CU party's fundamentally political vision revolves around the preservation of the country's tradition while emphasizing economic freedom and a fair approach to international affairs. Accordingly, this paper closely examines the ways in which the economic rhetoric of the CU party is consistent with or distant from its declared liberal goals. The basis of the

research is then an analysis of the economic discourse of the CU, which is a crucial way to comprehend the truthfulness of liberalism in the modern Moroccan political environment.

5. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Exploring the CU's liberal ideology, this research scrutinizes the ideologically based discursive strategies within the party's publicly communicative practices. To reach the objective, the two following questions are posed for investigations:

- What are the key ideological expressions and discursive techniques evident in the written and spoken discourse of CU party?
- To what extent does the CU party's economic discourse echo party's referential ideology?

Addressing ideological implications within the discourse of CU party, the study postulates that there will be a degree of conformity between the referential ideology described in the party's official documents and distinct ideological expressions approaching economic issues. Such a claim has been recognized since ideology is a mandatory, powerful instrument in political discourse as it forces the pursuit toward political power and social legitimacy (Fairclough, 2015 [8]; Van Dijk, 2008) [26].

Furthermore, we know that political manipulation is a discursive-semiotic phenomenon that operates across textual, verbal, and visual mediums, as Van Dijk (2008) [26] emphasizes (p. 213). Ideological expressions, therefore, contribute to cognitive manipulation, supporting the research claim that the CU party employs such manipulation to promote liberalism in discourse. Overall, the examination of connotations in the concerned discourse shall offer a thorough lens through which the study is aspired to discern the relationship between the CU party's economic discourse and cognitive manipulation in advocating political ideology.

6. Methodology: A Multimodal Approach Integrating Content and Cognitive Analysis

The research's methodology is grounded in applied linguistics, specifically within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study adopts a multimodal approach. First, it combines a content analysis method (Fairclough 2003) [6] serving as a fundamental analytical tool aimed at deconstructing liberal connotations apparent in the dialectical choices employed by the CU party across diverse economic contexts. Approaching the relevant data through content analysis aligns with the increasing incorporation of this methodology in research designs addressing ideology in discourse, as noted by scholars such as Fairclough (2003 [6], p. 212). Fairclough accentuates the macro-level relevance of critical analysis by emphasizing its examination of social relationships, implemented texts, and ideologies (Fairclough, 2003 [6], p. 203). Additionally, Van Dijk highlights the value of a critical-based content analysis in revealing how discourse shapes meanings, especially in the context of power dynamics (Van Dijk, 2008 [26], p. 86).

In the second aspect of the study, Van Dijk's (2008) [26] mental model method is employed as a valuable framework for analysing discursive strategies that shape ideological implications in political discourse. This choice is rooted in the recognition that a comprehensive understanding of political discourse, particularly within the context of the CU party's economic discourse, necessitates the development of a theory of political cognition (Van Dijk, 1998 [22], 2008 [26]; Fairclough, 2015 [8]; Chilton, 2004) [4]. Simultaneously, this

approach asserts that mental representations, influenced by ideologies and values, are strategically employed within discourse. This strategic usage aims to not only reflect the speaker's ideology but also to maintain communicative power and exert cognitive control over the targeted recipients (Fairclough, 2015^[8], p. 15).

The research employs a purposive sampling strategy. Recognizing that there are thirty-six political parties in Morocco's multi-plurality system, the research suggests that Morocco's current political landscape is defined by three major ideological poles that stand for the coexistence of liberal, left, and conservative ideologies (Slaoui, 2015; Darif, 1998; Alami, 1997; Boukhars, 2011)^[2]. Particularly, in addition to being in line with its ideological pole, the liberal discourse of the CU is chosen as the primary focus of the research because of its notable social presence and historical background.

The collected data utilized for this research spans from October 1st, 2018, to October 1st, 2022, deliberately condensed to encompass a significant and concise dataset. The economic sector serves as the central axis for analysing eight figures in this data, each representing a written or spoken discourse. The selected timeframe and figures are deemed adequate for a critical examination of this study to ascertain the extent to which the party's discourse in the economic sector aligns with liberal ideology.

The analysis will commence with Figure 1 (Table 1) to elucidate the CU party's primary official ideology as outlined in its official Statute 2018. Figure 1 plainly reveals the party's adherence to liberal ideology within its official discourse. As the study progresses, reference to the insights derived from Figure 1 will be made to assess the coherence and persistence of the CU party's economic perspective.

The remaining collected data consists of two types of selections. Firstly, it encompasses three spoken discourses delivered by significant representatives holding key positions within the CU party (Table 2). These excerpts are sourced

from various platforms, including the party's Facebook page, interviews, and the CU's official website. Specifically, they include a speech by the CU party's former Secretary General (SG) Mohamed Sajid on the party's Facebook page (Figure 2), a speech by the CU's Political Bureau member Hassan Aabaiba on the official website (Figure 3), and a speech by the CU's Political Bureau member Ismail Hajji on MEDI 1 national TV Channel (Figure 4). Secondly, the dataset encompasses four written discourses (Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8) extracted from the CU party's Development Model Memorandum of 2018 (Table 3).

Methodically, the consolidated data is categorized into two types, subjecting it to content analysis that specifically explores the linguistic choices within the CU's economic discourse. This examination includes a scrutiny of rhetorical connotations in relation to the CU party's officially recognized liberal ideology. The comprehensive interpretation that follows the data analysis becomes crucial in guiding the research towards significant conclusions about how effectively the party's economic discourse reflects its officially recognized ideology. Concurrently, the study adheres to Van Dijk's (2008)^[26] cognitive approach, aspiring to provide an argumentative assessment that clarifies the extent to which the CU's ideological rhetoric promotes liberalism through economic discourse.

7. Data Analysis

7.1 CU's Official Ideology

Figure 1 (Table 1) serves as the primary reference point for the study's analyses, providing the foundational guiding principles that delineate the party's official stance on economic issues, including fair competition, private initiatives, and individual liberties. Crucial to note that recurrent reference to Figure 1 in certain data analyses is essential to verify whether the CU's acknowledged liberalism authentically represents its core ideology.

Table 1: CU's official discourse portraying liberal ideology.

Figure	Citation	Original Version (Arabic)	English Translation
Figure 1	CU Statute 2018, Article 3, p. 3	نشر وإشاعة الفكر الليبرالي الاجتماعي المرتكز على الحرية والمبادرة الخاصة والمنافسة الشريفة كأساس للابداع، وخلق الأنشطة السياسية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية والاعلامية،	Dissemination and promotion of social liberal thought based on freedom, private initiative, and fair competition as the foundation for creativity in all political, economic, social, cultural, and media activities.

Putting the study in a scholarly context, we explore the liberal political philosophy that the CU party claims to uphold. This is a major claim made in the official discourse and is shown in Figure 1 (CU Statute, 2018, Article 3, p. 3). Crucial to note that Figure 1 is the main source for the study's analyses as it outlines the basic guiding principles that specify the party's official position on economic matters such as fair competition, private initiatives, and individual liberties. The aim is then to examine the connotative meanings of the implemented expressions of this excerpt (Figure 1). For this reason, the study suggests that Figure 1 serves as both the foundational text and the central reference point, delineating fundamental ideological principles that guide the narrative of the CU party. Further, reference to Figure 1 throughout some data analyses is crucial to ascertain whether the party's official claim of liberalism genuinely constitutes its primary ideology.

In Figure 1, the utilization of the phrase "Dissemination and promotion of social liberal thought" literally features the CU

party's dedication to a political philosophy that upholds individual liberties and progressive ideals. The intentional inclusion of the terms "freedom" and "private initiative" within the discourse further reinforces this commitment, indicating the party's devotion to creating an environment where citizens can exercise their rights in social and political spheres without undue restrictions (CU Statute, 2018, Article 3, p. 3). Notably, this advocacy for social and economic liberties sums up the core tenets of liberal ideology. Simultaneously, it may imply that the CU party supports limited government intervention and acknowledges the pivotal role of private enterprise in driving the Moroccan economy.

7.2 CU's Spoken Discourse

Table 2 incorporate the research's spoken discourses, as follow: Figure 2, extracted from the speech of CU's former SG Mohamed Sajid, scrutinizes the party's pragmatic approach to urban challenges. Figure 3, a speech by Hassan

Aabaiba on the official website, contrasts the CU's economic stance with religious discourses, especially targeting the PJD. In Figure 4, Ismail Hajji's speech on MEDI 1 national TV

Channel emphasizes the international role of regions, reinforced by historical references.

Table 2: Analyzing Verbal Expressions: Insights from CU Party Representatives

Figure	Citation	Original Version (Arabic)	English Translation
Figure 2	CU's Former SG, Mr. Mohamed Sajid. (2020, Jan 7)	تناولنا النموذج التنموي الجديد بالنسبة للتحديات التي تواجه الناس الذين يقطنون بالحضر، تناولنا تحديات السكن، تحديات التمدرس والتقطيب، هذه كلها مشاكل تناولناها بطريقة براجماتية بالنسبة لنا كفاعلين سياسيين مارسوا على مستويات مختلفة.. وضرورة بلورة ستراتيجيات قطاعية أكثر براجماتية تأخذ بالاعتبار مؤهلات بلادنا الكبرى ثقافيا وتراثيا وحضاريا	We dealt with the new development model in relation to the challenges facing people who live in urban areas. We dealt with housing challenges, transportation challenges, education and medical challenges. These are all problems that we dealt with in a pragmatic way for us as political actors who practiced on different levels.. and the need to formulate more pragmatic sectorial strategies that take into account the great qualifications of our country in terms of culture, heritage and civilization.
Figure 3	Hassan Aabaiba's Speech (2018, Oct 1)	الاقتصاد لا يعالج بالشعبوية، ولا بالخطابات العاطفية، ولا الشعارات، ولا الأشخاص ولا اللجوء إلى العالم الأفلاطي المبني على أشياء لا أصل لها، خطاب العواطف الاجتماعية والدينية يجب أصواتا ولا يجب تنمية	Economy is not treated with populism, emotional discourses, slogans, people, or resorting to a virtual world based on things that have no basis. The discourse of social and religious emotions brings voices and does not bring development.
Figure 4	Ismail Hajji's Speech (2015, Sep 3). MEDI 1 TV.	الجهات سوف يكون لها دور دولي، لأنه يجب أن تجعل من الجهات منصات اقتصادية	The regions will have an international role because we must transform these regions into economic platforms

Tackling Figure 2, the CU's former SG emphasizes the party's active engagement with challenges, utilizing a pragmatic approach. The repeated use of terms like "new development model" and "challenges" highlights the party's focus. The discourse foregrounds the party's ideological framework, particularly its commitment to pragmatism (CU Development Model Memo, 2018, p. 16). Yet, and notably, the deliberate use of terms such as culture, heritage, and civilization indicate an effort to connect the party's discourse with a sense of national identity and heritage, referring to the party's Official Statute (pp. 2-4, 6). In fact, the former SG of the CU emphasizes the party's active engagement with challenges, employing a pragmatic approach that is prominently featured in the discourse. Linguistically, the repeated use of terms like "challenges" and "pragmatic" is significant, positioning the CU as a liberal party that approaches problem-solving in a practical, results-oriented manner. The emphasis on the pragmatic essence serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it distinguishes the party from potential competitors relying on religious or emotional discourses. Secondly, it reinforces the party's liberal commitment to "pragmatic" solutions (CU Development Model Memo, 2018, p. 14). The discourse, on the other side, deliberately includes cultural elements, such as "culture", "heritage", and "civilization". This inclusion entails that the party deliberately integrates nationalism and cultural meanings into its discourse as a cognitive strategy to attain public support, which goes hand in hand with Van Dijk's (2008) [26] mental perspective suggesting the use of stored representations in enforcing discourse dissemination (p. 47).

In other words, despite the call for pragmatism (Figure 2), the deliberate inclusion of cultural and heritage references creates a narrative that aims to foster a sense of belonging and attachment to the country's cultural heritage. This could be a strategic move to broaden the party's appeal and resonate with a diverse audience. However, such move suggests an ideological deviation in the CU party's discourse. There is an evident effort in such linguistic choice to assimilate a sense of national identity and heritage, a feature that aligns more closely with conservative ideologies.

In Figure 3, Hassan Aabaiba, a CU Political Bureau member, articulates a clear stance on economic discourse. He contrasts

the CU's approach, devoid of "populism" and "emotional discourses", with a discourse of "social and religious emotions. Recognizing the ruling party as the PJD, Aabaiba alleges that it prioritizes securing public support (voices) at the expense of genuine economic development. The metaphorical comparison of religious and emotional discourses suggests their similarity in the speaker's view. This discourse places the CU in opposition to the ruling party's ideological discourse, particularly in the realm of the economy. It becomes evident that the speaker's communication strategy involves a rhetorical politicization, a common practice where politicians engage in the exchange of accusations. Indeed, this narrative is constructed as a deliberate departure from what Aabaiba portrays as the PJD's more passive approach (Van Dijk, 2008 [26], p. 107). Therefore, beyond the ideological discourse, the speaker's strategic use of accusations and framing tactics features the speaker's linguistic effort to differentiate the CU's pragmatic ideology from that of the PJD.

Yet, within the core of this accusation, it may be suggested that The CU's representative advocates for a liberal perspective, emphasizing a departure from what Aabaiba called a discourse of "populism" and "emotional appeals" (Figure 3) in favor of a more development-oriented strategy. Clearly, the speech strategically uses the discursive strategy of "contrast" (Van Dijk, 1998 [22], p. 270) and "accusation" (Van Dijk, 2008 [26], p. 162) to reinforce the CU's "pragmatic" position as an alternative to the ruling party's approach.

In Figure 4, Ismail Hajji's discourse strategically employs linguistic choices and discursive properties to convey the CU party's ideology regarding the international role and economic significance of regions. The deliberate repetition of the term "regions" serves to feature and secure the discourse in the geographical entities discussed, emphasizing their importance. Key terms such as "international role" and "economic platforms" are purposefully highlighted, reflecting the party's vision of positioning regions as active players in the economic development. Furthermore, the deliberate use of the expression "international role" within the discourse serves as a strategic form of foregrounding, designed to draw attention to the CU party's ideological strategy for the global

economy. The discursive technique of foregrounding is evident as the discourse intentionally emphasizes the political emancipation of regions, aligning with the party's primary economic plan (official Development Model Memorandum, 2018, pp. 5, 11, 14, 19). Simultaneously, it signals the party's commitment to global, liberal economic engagement, and investments.

7.3 CU's Written Discourse

Table 3 presents four written excerpts sourced from the

party's official Memorandum (2018), showcasing the research's textual analysis. Notably, Figure 6 illustrates the party's ideological perspective upon social economy and national production. Figure 7 demonstrates the party's vision about the king's green economy perspective, and Figure 7 outlines the party's disapproval of illegal richness and rentier economy. Together, these figures provide a multifaceted groundwork for the exploration of the CU's connotated ideology within political economy discourse.

Table 3: CU Party's Economic Ideology in Written Discourse.

Figure	Citation	Original Version (Arabic)	English Translation
Figure 5	CU Memorandum on New Development Model, 2018, p. 11	إن من أنجح آليات دعم الاقتصاد الاجتماعي بصفة خاصة والانتاج الوطني بصفة عامة: نشر الوعي الاستهلاكي لدى الأسر والمواطنين، بياقبال المعبا والمكتف على استهلاك المنتج المحلي والجهوي والوطني	One of the most effective mechanisms to support social economy in particular and national production in general is through spreading wise consumerism among families and citizens by mobilizing intensive demand for consuming local, regional and national products.
Figure 6	CU Memorandum on New Development Model, 2018, p. 12	إن الاقتصاد الأخضر من المفاهيم الحديثة كرد فعل عن التوظيف غير السليم للأموال، والسعى لمرأمة الرأسمال المادي والمالي والبشرى على حساب استنزاف وإتلاف الرأسمال الطبيعي والتوازن البيئي والثروة النباتية والحيوانية وأنظمتها وتنوعها	The green economy is one of the modern concepts resulting from a reaction to the improper employment of funds, and the endeavor to accumulate physical, financial and human capital at the expense of depleting and destroying natural capital, environmental balance, plant and animal wealth, and their systems and diversity.
Figure 7	CU Memorandum on New Development Model, 2018, p. 12	الخلاصة أن الاستثمار والتنمية وفق مفهوم الاقتصاد الأخضر يوفر مجموعة من الفوائد والمنافع الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والصحية والترشيدية، في استدامة الثروات الوطنية، والتوازن البيئي، والنمو المستدام المدر للدخل ومناصب الشغل في مختلف القطاعات والأنشطة الاقتصادية	In conclusion, investment and development according to the concept of a green economy provides a range of economic, social, health and rationalization opportunities and benefits, in the sustainability of national wealth, environmental balance, sustainable growth that generates income and jobs in various sectors and economic activities.
Figure 8	CU Memorandum on New Development Model, p. 22	الحد من اقتصاد الريع والامتيازات والتحايل على المنافسة الشرفية، وتفعيل قواعد المحاسبة والمساءلة على الإثراء غير المشروع والثروة غير المبررة	Reducing the rentier economy and privileges as well as circumvention upon honest competition, and on the other hand, activating accounting rules and accountability for illicit enrichment and unjustified wealth.

Figure 5 depicts how the CU's discourse strategically employs discursive features and linguistic repetition to convey the party's economic philosophy. The terms "Social economy" and "National production", both carrying leftist connotations, are deliberately reiterated to underscore the party's commitment to these principles. Notably, this language choice deviates from the officially declared liberal ideology of the CU party. The discourse also places particular emphasis on advocating for 'Wise consumerism' as a means to promote the social economy and domestic production. Contrary to what might be expected from a party with a liberal stance, the discourse promotes a strong preference for "Local product" and "National" consumption, aligning more with socialist ideals. It can be suggested that the discourse in Figure 5 reinforces the party's economic policies as it strategically highlights the importance of local, regional, and national consumption as integral components for fostering both social and economic growth. The deliberate implementation socialist terms as national, social, families and citizens to stress the role "national economy" brings about a discrepancy between the highlighted terms and the party's officially declared liberal ideology, which suggests an alignment more towards socialist principles in the CU party's economic discourse.

The discourse presented by the CU in Figures 6 and 7 presumably aligns with neoliberal principles, as articulated in its 2018 Official Statute (pp. 1, 3). This alignment becomes apparent through its endorsement of the recurrent use of the term "green economy" (Figures 6 and 7) and "rationalization" (Figure 7) as contemporary concept. However, a notable inconsistency arises within the examined narratives when the former addresses the accumulation of financial resources and

contradicts capitalist ideals while the latter stresses the implementation of a more socialist economy. In light of this, it is significant to acknowledge that the examined narratives in Figures 6 and 6 exhibit a clear reference to the royal orientation of October 12, 2018, exemplified by the 'Green Generation 2020-2030' plan presented to His Majesty King Mohammed VI in February 2020 (official website of the Ministry of Agriculture, n.d.). This strategic alignment with His Majesty King Mohammed VI's 2018 directives, particularly in adopting the 'green economy' not only reflects a cognitive emphasis, as suggested by Van Dijk's (2008)^[26] mental model approach, but also brings legitimacy to the CU party by linking it to the royal perspective on Morocco's green economy.

In Figure 7, the CU's discourse, presented in the Memorandum on New Development Model (p. 12), continues to emphasize the party's commitment to a green economy, echoing the themes previously discussed in Figure 6. In the meantime, the use of terms like "green economy", "sustainability", "national wealth" and the mention of "social benefits" accentuate the CU's deliberate focus on environmentally conscious and economically viable development. As noticed, the implementation of terms with social or leftist connotations such as these signals a departure from a clear liberal perspective. In fact, despite the inclusion of terms like "sustainability" and "rationalization", typically associated with neoliberal commitments, the discourse does not advocate for a clear liberal viewpoint. The call for the "adequate use of national wealth" and emphasis on "social benefits" align more with a center-right perspective, as suggested by the party's official statute (p. 3).

In Figure 8, the discourse centers on the party's economic ideology, with a specific focus on reducing the "rentier economy", "privileges", and addressing issues of "illicit enrichment" and "unjustified wealth". In fact, regarding the CU party's claimed liberal ideology, the implementation of these terms signifies the party's multi-faceted perspective on economic reforms. The discourse strategically contrasts the existing rentier economy and privileges, subtly showing the party's duality of discourse. On one hand, it embraces a socialist discourse by condemning the accumulation of wealth through "illicit enrichment" and challenging prevailing "privileges", thus advocating for economic justice. On the other hand, the discourse articulates a conservative perspective by emphasizing the activation of 'accounting rules and accountability mechanisms' to counter illegal or unjustified wealth. This reflects the party's belief in the role of the state in regulating the economy, aligning with conservative principles. Noticeably enough, the linguistic analysis of Figure 8 reveals the CU party's deliberate use of discursive strategies to present a complex ideological perspective, incorporating both socialist and conservative elements. The explicit use of terms with provocative connotations such as "privileges", "accountability", "illicit" and "unjustified" is strategically integrated to demonstrate the party's ideological principles advocating for social justice through socialist means while embracing a conservative approach in calling for state intervention and economic regulation.

8. Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the research aligns with the theoretical paradigm proposed by various analysts, including Van Dijk (2008) [26] and Fairclough (2013) [7], who contend that discourse serves as the medium through which political ideology is transmitted. Fairclough (2013) [7] supports the cognitive nature of political discourse, emphasizing that a concise analysis of political rhetoric should incorporate the discourse's cognitive framework in which interpretation occurs. This involves highlighting the ideological variability of schemata, scripts, and frames (Fairclough, 2013 [7], p. 170). Recognizing the significance of cognitive perception in discourse analysis, particularly when discussing the concept of symbolic ideology, is crucial for this type of study, as emphasized by Bourdieu (1991 [3], pp. 23, 127). This underscores the intricate relationship between ideological discourse and political activity, as outlined by Van Dijk (2008 [26], p. 155).

Within this analytical framework, Dijk's (2008) [26] concept of political cognition asserting that political discourse adheres to mental structures and undergoes cognitive processes, resonates with the CU party's examined discursive processes. The party officially declares its liberal perspective, advocating for "social liberal thought" (CU Statute, 2018, Article 3, p. 3), and reinforces its commitment by contrasting it with the ruling government's (PJD) populist ideas in its "pragmatic" alternative perspective (CU Development Model Memo, 2018, p. 14). Furthermore, the CU party strategically emphasizes mental concepts to garner public support, as seen in Figure 2 with notions of sense of belonging, attachment to the country's "civilization", cultural "heritage" and national identity and in Figure 5 with emphasis on "social economy" and "national production". The alignment with royal directives, particularly the country's "green economic project" in Figures 6 and 7 is another cognitive strategy employed within the CU's discourse to enhance the party's

economic perspective with increased legitimacy and acceptance in the minds of the audience. This suggests that the CU party's written and spoken discourses purposefully employ cognitive processes to disseminate the party's ideological beliefs in the economic sphere. However, as asserted by Van Dijk, ideology is typically legitimized and propagated through the circulated language (Van Dijk, 2008 [26], p. 159). The focal point for the current study is the degree to which the CU party's discourse reflects its liberal perspectives in the economic sector. Therefore, the essential question becomes: To what extent does the CU party's economic discourse advocate for the party's claimed liberalism?

In examining the CU party's discourse, the study initially posited a degree of conformity between the referential ideology in official documents and distinct expressions on economic issues. However, the research findings suggest that this hypothesis may not be fully justified, highlighting the complexities in the relationship between the party's official stance and expressions on economic matters. In Figure 1, the party officially articulates its commitment to liberal philosophy, as outlined in its official statute (CU Statute, 2018, Article 3, p. 3), as explicitly highlight using terms like "dissemination and promotion of social liberal thought" along with the emphasis on individual liberties and progressive ideals. This commitment is further reinforced through the deliberate inclusion of terms such as "freedom" and "private initiative", suggesting an advocacy for social and economic liberties synonymous with core tenets of liberal ideology. The implication is a potential endorsement of limited government intervention and recognition of private enterprise's pivotal role in the Moroccan economy.

However, a shift in discourse is observed in Figure 2, where despite a call for pragmatism, the deliberate inclusion of cultural and heritage references introduces a narrative aimed at fostering a sense of national belonging. This strategic move suggests a deviation in the CU party's discourse, aligning more closely with conservative ideologies. The linguistic choices, emphasizing cultural heritage, seem geared towards broadening the party's appeal and resonating with a diverse audience, but it signifies an ideological departure.

The examination of Figure 3 suggests that the CU representative deliberately juxtaposes the PJD's speech with its own, suggesting a break from the categories of "populism" and "emotional appeals". By purposefully using the discursive techniques of "contrast" and "accusation", this decision strengthens the CU's pragmatic stance as a development-focused alternative to the ruling party's strategy. This implies that the political attitude of the CU party supports liberal ideals, especially pragmatism.

Figure 4, on the other hand, highlights a discourse aligning with the party's objectives and echoing its pragmatic perspective. Despite the apparent accusation of a conservative deviation, the representative advocates for a liberal perspective, departing from what Aabaiba terms as a discourse of "populism" and "emotional appeals" (Figure 3). The strategic use of discursive techniques like "contrast" and "accusation" reinforces the CU's pragmatic position as an alternative to the ruling party's approach, emphasizing a more development-oriented strategy.

Moreover, the discursive technique of foregrounding is evident in Figure 4, emphasizing the political emancipation of regions in alignment with the party's primary economic plan (official Development Model Memorandum, 2018, pp. 5, 11, 14, 19). Simultaneously, it signals the party's commitment to

global, liberal economic engagement, and investments, showcasing a multifaceted approach that combines regional focus with a dedication to liberal economic principles.

The analysis of Figures 5-8 reveals a complex economic discourse within the CU party that diverges from its officially declared liberal ideology (CU Statute, 2018, Article 3, p. 3). In Figure 5, the party strategically emphasizes terms such as “Social economy”, “National production”, and “Wise consumerism”, which deviate from liberal ideals, aligning more with socialist principles. This deliberate choice of language challenges the expected liberal stance, suggesting a socialist inclination in the party’s economic discourse.

Figures 6 and 7 initially suggest alignment with neoliberal principles through the endorsement of the “green economy”. However, inconsistencies arise as the discourse addresses the accumulation of financial resources in a manner contradicting capitalist ideals. The strategic alignment with royal directives further complicates the party’s economic stance, introducing elements that don’t conform strictly to a liberal perspective. The discourse, emphasizing ‘sustainability’ and “social benefits”, aligns more with a center-right viewpoint.

Figure 8 deepens the complexity by introducing a dual discourse that incorporates both socialist and conservative elements. Terms like “rentier economy” and “privileges” as well as the call for “accountability” and addressing “illicit enrichment” reveal a party discourse that contradicts the party’s aspired liberal perspective. Indeed, the deliberate use of terms with socialist connotations reflects a commitment to social justice, while the emphasis on “accountability” aligns with conservative principles, advocating for state intervention and economic regulation.

Overall, the linguistic analysis of the CU’s cognitive insights within spoken and written narratives addressing economic discourse has revealed complexity in adherence to the party’s political orientation, as showcased in Figures 2-4. While Figure 1 echoes the CU party’s officially declared liberal ideology, and Figure 4’s discourse aligns more closely with the party’s pragmatic objectives, Figures 2-4 introduce an ideological complexity departure. Cultural and heritage references are strategically included, suggesting a shift toward a more conservative perspective. These variations in discourse challenge conventional expectations and highlight the party’s discursive adaptability to diverse audiences. The subsequent examination of Figures 5-8 provides further insights, revealing a departure from the officially declared liberal ideology. The strategic integration of socialist and conservative elements, seen in the use of terms such as “illicit enrichment,” “rentier economy,” and the emphasis on state intervention, contradicts the liberal tenets outlined in the party’s Article 3 of its 2018 Official Statute (p. 3).

Conclusion

In line with Van Dijk’s mental model approach (2008) [26], which posits that a party’s ideology should resonate within its discourse through manipulative cognitive processes embedded in discursive techniques, this study has uncovered significant insights. The research findings suggest a noteworthy misalignment between the CU party’s expressed discourse and its officially declared liberal ideology. The party’s articulated discourse leans toward a more center-right political ideology, incorporating elements of social economy and wise consumerism alongside calls for state intervention. This dynamic ideological synthesis showcases the CU party’s strategic navigation of diverse political landscapes through economic discourse, revealing a narrative that transcends the

boundaries of a rigidly defined liberal ideology. In the meantime, while this study sheds light on how political parties strategically tailor their economic discourse to align with or diverge from evolving ideological landscapes, it establishes a starting point for further linguistic investigations into the ways political parties may deviate from their declared ideologies.

Limitations

The current research suggests that the CU party employs political discourse to support its underlying economic goals cognitively. However, skepticism persists regarding the dynamic presence of its liberal perspective in the economy. This uncertainty arises from the party’s dual discourse and its noticeable misalignment with the party’s foundational ideology (CU Statute, 2018, Article 3, p. 3), as indicated through recurrent linguistic shifts to conservative and socialist perspectives. Nonetheless, while providing valuable insights into the CU party’s political ideology within economic discourse, it is crucial to acknowledge several limitations. The data is primarily focused and limited in its attempt to discern the CU party’s political ideology exclusively within the economic domain. This analysis contrasts the party’s officially declared liberal ideology in the CU Statute (2018) with its oral and written narratives, particularly in the CU Developmental Model Memo (2018). Recognizing the variability of political ideologies across different domains is essential, and the focus on economic discourse does not necessarily capture the entirety of the party’s political philosophy in social and political spheres. Therefore, drawing broad conclusions suggesting the CU party’s complete departure from liberalism in all sectors might be inaccurate.

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