



# Left vs. Right: the Classic Political Divide in the Modern World

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# Structure

**“Can the traditional left-right dimension still serve to organize citizens’ political choice in the contemporary world?”**

- 1. Overview of the left–right political spectrum
- 2. History of the left–right political spectrum
- 3. Left–right political spectrum In the modern world

# Left–Right Political Spectrum: Overview [1/4]

- **Ideologies** - systems of ideas that may include assumptions, beliefs, and values about human nature and society.
- In **political science**, ideologies have been viewed as configurations of beliefs and values about the government of societies that are related to each other and bound together by some forms of constraint, coherence, and functional interdependence.
- Political ideologies are **not static** knowledge systems.

# Left–Right Political Spectrum: Overview [2/4]

- In democratic systems political offers have often been distinguished by using as a criterion of their position with regard to **a hypothetical right-left ideological continuum** in correspondence with the seats held by political parties and their representatives in parliamentary assemblies.
- At the beginning, right and left have reflected the positions held by those **defending stability versus those pursuing change**, namely the interest of those who benefited from their wealth and status versus the interests of common people who instead desired to affirm their rights against the undeserved privileges of the former and to free themselves from need and serfdom.

# Left–Right Political Spectrum: Overview [3/4]

	LEFT	RIGHT
THEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hierarchical community values</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Egalitarian and progressive ideals</li></ul>
NOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limit individuals' economic freedom</li><li>• Maximum freedom in the sphere of individual and civil rights</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximum freedom in the domain of business and the economy</li><li>• Limit individual and civil rights to protect traditional values</li></ul>

# Left–Right Political Spectrum: Overview [4/4]

- **Left and right ideologies** should be viewed as dynamic phenomena that allow individuals to anchor, simplify, and orient their political judgement in accordance with the common divisions of the political world in terms of government and opposition, partisans and opponents, us and them. As such they contribute to grant stability and coherence to individuals' political choices and identities despite the continuous changes that occur in their political environment.