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Left and right: provisions regarding the issue of changing the established order

The political spectrum, from one extreme to the other, is made up as follows:

- Far-right: the reactionaries, think that “it was better before”, nostalgic for the past economic, social and moral order.
The reactionaries believe that the existing order is illegitimate and that we must return to the status quo ante.
- Right: Conservatives believe that things are arranged correctly as they are, and that any change risks damaging society rather than improving it.
- Left: Progressives believe that the state of society can be improved by reform, and that change is better than simply accepting the current state of society.
- Far Left: Revolutionaries believe that the current system is bad, based on bad principles, that the previous order was just as bad or worse, and that a whole new, ideal model needs to be established.

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The left-right divide is defined in relation to the established socio-political order: social position and political weight are logically the main factors in the distribution of the population

- On the right, the satisfied: a population that is generally older and more economically established, has an interest in preserving the system and views any possible change with concern; tendency to pessimism; camp that carries the Declinist discourse. Values: order, authority, tradition, respect for institutions.
- On the left, the dissatisfied: a population that is generally younger and less economically settled, thinks it can benefit from reforms, takes a critical look at what is traditionally done; optimistic tendency; idealist, anti-establishment discourse is defined in opposition to the established order.
- At the extremes, the downgraded and the excluded: people who would have a lot to gain from a brutal paradigm shift. Distribution according to the origin of their situation excluded from the system: those who once belonged to a privileged population and were downgraded will be far-rightists; those who belong to an excluded population of new origin will be far-leftists.

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Satisfied and dissatisfied form the category of conformists, who consider the established order legitimate.

Excluded and downgraded form the category of nonconformists, who challenge the legitimacy of the established order.

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The variation of meaning: the slippage of ideas in the spectrum of political sensitivities over time.

The body politic is split from an established order, and political practice changes the established order, which changes the split within the body politic.

The reactionary-conservative-progressive-revolutionary specter allows in the long run only evolution in one direction, that is to say in the direction of change.

The ideas, that is to say the doctrines and especially the practical measures which they propose as a solution to the problems encountered by the political community under consideration, move on the spectrum of sensitivities.

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Unanimist phase, elitism and populism

The movement of ideas from left to right is not exactly continuous but rather works in long successive sequences, each marked by a main problematic, which results from the emergence of the class of excluded from the new established order.

When the political and social integration of the new excluded class is complete, a phase begins during which there is relative unanimity in the conformist part of the social body.

This phase can be analyzed by his contemporaries, wrongly, as the end of the left-right divide, when it is only a prelude to an ideological shift involving a rebalancing of the divide.

During this “unanimist” phase, the left-right divide seems to be erased. Not a general unanimity, but between the moderates of the two camps, that is to say conservatives and progressives. Conversely, reactionaries and revolutionaries tend to converge in their hostility to the existing system, which has the effect, temporarily, of producing an alternative, temporary and unstable divide, between conformists and anti-conformists.

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Elitism and consequences

Elitism is radicalism in moderation, the rejection of political extremism and the desire for consensus to an unhealthy point for respecting the contradictory in political debate.

It manifests itself in the pronounced taste for expertise, technical certainties, a tendency to be cautious bordering on pusillanimity, a rejection of ideas that are too strong because they "divide", the aversion in principle to any controversy. Its consequence is the gradual rejection of the discourse of extremes, the radical nature of which normally feeds the two camps of the cleavage, in preference to the search for unanimity between moderates.

In the normal divide, those excluded from each camp can count on the elites of their camp, even if they are generally more moderate than them, to listen to them and relay their discourse in the public debate.

When the divide disappears within the elites and the more moderate part of the people, the nonconformists become strangers to the elites of their own camp, and lose their voice in public debate.

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Changing the tone of ideas according to their place in the political spectrum

Ideas change color and tone depending on their placement on the political spectrum: on the left, they will tend to seek change, expansion; on the right, preservation, cautious withdrawal, resistance.

Examples: left-wing nationalism, carries a missionary dimension, the desire to export a model, to bring the light of civilization abroad; on the right, it is marked by the desire to withdraw into oneself, to preserve heritage and identity.

Left-wing secularism intends to deliver individuals from traditional beliefs supposedly hindering their development, right-wing secularism seeks to protect individuals from the hegemonic claims of new beliefs.

Left-wing liberalism seeks the liberation of individuals, the abolition of traditional social determinisms; on the right, it is concerned with preserving acquired freedoms, and defends customs and traditions precisely as freedoms.

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The three right and the three left

	Anarchist	Authoritarian	Reformist
Right	"Political authority is an obstacle to conservation"	"Political authority must ensure the conservation and restrain the progress"	"Acceptance of some progress is necessary for the preservation of traditions"
Left	"Political authority is an obstacle to progress"	"Authority must destroy traditional easements and force progress"	"A certain conservation of traditions is necessary for the conduct of progress"