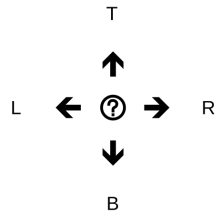


A bi-dimensional grid to characterize the
political left and right.



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1 Introduction

The left as well as the right have become incomprehensible. Indeed new orientations have appeared within these divisions displacing those which were normally understood, even relegating them to the opposite side. It is to wonder what the left and right definitions have become and even if they existed as they are blurred and wrongly understood. The fracture line is now capturing the left to the far left as well as the right to the far right and everyone cannot not recognize each other anymore and asks where it resides actually. In order to unravel this confusion we propose a two-dimensional grid capable of characterizing the many orientations of political discourse.

1.1 Orientation

Etymologically, orientation means determining where the East is in relation to yourself that is to say find the East, the direction where the sun rises. Traditionally on a geographical map the East is on the right, the West on the left, the North at the top and the South at the bottom. In the absence of the sun, the magnetic needle of the compass points to the north and allows to adequately orient a geographical map. This allows the traveler to explore his environment and find his way. Similarly in the world of ideas, whether in literature, in science, history, politics or otherwise, it is necessary to move and to be in relation to others. But there is still no compass that allows to be suitably oriented in any certainty.

1.2 Polarization

The polarization of ideas is naturally born by the classification and division between the similar and the different. It is an act of the spirit that makes possible to build knowledge and manage decisions to ensure the maintenance of identity, personality, security and finally social status. Rankings can take all kinds of shapes and are very numerous. They include divisions, subdivisions and rely on selection rules that may be more or less well defined. For example, the living species taxonomy system has five reigns divided into seven levels of subdivisions called Taxon and represents a well-defined system. On the other hand at the level of ideas they are numerous to spring constantly according to the moment, the place, the time or the social group. And particularly there are countless theories and hypotheses in social matters, which are easy to alter and modify the meaning of words or history itself

and therefore mix political divides, add to confusion and increase the background noise.

1.3 Variations

Society formats people according to history, beliefs, common values and environmental pressure. Despite this, everyone is free to think and express themselves according to his experiences of life and this one is unique and different for all. It follows that sometimes someone will be of the same opinion as others depending on the point of view and will totally differ on another. In this maelstrom from time to time new ideas and unknown concepts which are mostly non-orthodox diverging from common thought, arise and call for a paradigm change. Thus the coming of a group adhering to new principles and having the project to change the living environment for the greater good of all stands out from all and becomes destabilizing for others. Depending on the circumstances, the disagreement on these new agents crystallizes in opposition groups that camp under names, acronyms, totems or other evocative symbols.

1.4 Politics

According to David Rand [4] "The terms «left» and «right» in the political sense find their origin in the disposition of the seats at the National Constituent Assembly during the French Revolution from 1789. The deputies sitting on the left side of the House were generally sympathizers of the revolution, republicanism and secularism, while those on the right side were rather loyal to the monarchy, the clergy and the traditional institutions of the old regime."

Marcel Gauchet [2] during an interview with Maxime Le Nagard, published in number 7 of Front Populaire [3], takes over more details this subject of the historical genesis of the «right» and the «left». In summary, all begins with the monarchy-republic, individual-corporation dualities. The State finds itself in the middle so that political identities are determined by their distance to it on each side. Right and left today differentiate the plurality of political options and the consequent parliamentary representation by a simplifying binary label of a trend archipelago on one side and on the other.

In parliaments of British tradition, the elected chamber is displayed in two groups of facing aligned seats thus defining for the President of the House a group to his right and another to his left. History says that the proponents of liberalism, openness and diversity have found themselves on the left while the conservatives

holding tradition and historical values have found themselves on the right. The first, on the left, were nicknamed the Whigs and the second, on the right, the Tories. Thus the right and the left have become synonymous with cleavage between conservative ideas and liberal ideas.

1.5 Grid

In fact the political right and left as we know them today have a much richer and complex story. The intimate sense was gradually defined over the times, the left even crossing to the right and returning later to the left and vice versa. The deficiency and looseness of poorly defined notions does not permit to identify strong characteristics thus authorizing a plethora of analyzes, political parties or social groups. We must therefore elaborate a grid of criteria that will allow to clarify what characterizes these two poles.

2 Characteristics

The current convention assimilates the right to stability, authority, hierarchy, conservatism, traditions, public order, religious beliefs, family and private property; the left is then associated with dissatisfaction, demand, change, justice, freedom, giving and generosity. We begin with four pairs of polar attributes to well distinguish what identifies and characterizes the left and puts it in strong opposition with the right. Thus, we have the pairs "Revolution-Reaction", "Individuality-Community", "Fluidity-Cohesion" and "Knowledge-Belief".

2.1 Revolution-Reaction

If we look at history, we will find that it shows a rather stable western world between the IVth century and the XVIth century, a period known as the "Middle Ages". This world is dedicated to the search for perfection understood according to the Christian model. It is a hierarchical world where everyone's place is determined from birth. It is a sustainable world evolving very slowly, technically and socially. Following this rather stable period the Renaissance in the XVIth century initiates a significant change in the current thought, that being the fruit of the rediscovery of ancients, essentially a movement of artistic nature. Extending to other areas of life, its dissemination reveals the ability of man, the capacity of the individual to innovate and emancipate itself, specifically from monarchy and papal powers. Thus the French Revolt at the end of the XVIIIth century produces the "Enlightenment", a general movement of global transformation of the whole society. It leads to new moral philosophy and ethical politics, to the invention of the citizen, Republic, democracy, nation, freedom, liberalism, human rights, scientific discoveries, in fact it generates multiple revolutions. And as any small or large revolution it builds an opposite reaction. The reaction being of a conservative nature aims to protect the achievements and maintain the stability of the system in place. It appears to us clearly that the first attribute to consider in order to characterize the right and the left will be the paradigm change which is defined as a revolution on the left and a reaction on the right. This is therefore our first pair, the "Revolution-Reaction".

2.2 Individuality-Community

What is this world where revolutions and reactions occur if not an indistinct mass of individuals, people who live together linked by codes and who react in a single movement, a simple jerk, to disturbances of their environment. They derive their

strength from the common action against turmoil, against agitators, against protest. The life of the group prevails and its value lies in perfection that is to say the absence of defects. History is full of examples where the innovators never recognized for their value in their beginning saw the opposition annihilate them and crush them but their ideas have always survived, whether you think of Jesus, Siddhartha Gautama, Muhammad, Descartes, Luther, Gandhi, and others. Descartes says "I think so I am", then he claimed his individuality, his autonomy, his differentiation with respect to the group, which in union constantly recited his dogmas. The constant is the shock, the splitting fault, the dissociation between historic and circumstantial, community and individual, the freeing from the matrix that oppresses and level, the escape from a systemic anonymous cog. It is the will of an individual who asserts himself as autonomous and independent, whose thought romp with the hegemony of the group. We make up the second pair characterizing the left right dichotomy as "Individuality-Collectivity".

2.3 Fluidity-Cohesion

How can we clearly identify and characterize individuality and group? What are their main properties? It can be said on the one hand that the uniform and global thought of the group shows its members as all animated by the same movement, of the same ideology, aiming for the same objective, supporting and mutually engaged in togetherness, in union and cohesion. On the other hand we see an autonomous individual who is distant, is separated from the mass, free himself from links and ties, which displays mobility and ability to change, to evolve and to adapt quickly to all fluctuations and variations that can bother him. He distances and frees him from the group being flexible and fluid. A third polar pair characterizing the left and the right will therefore be "Fluidity-Cohesion".

2.4 Knowledge-Belief

The basis, the foundation on which any social relation is built, the cement that maintains the cohesion of a community, this is a particular vision of the world. It is the one that answers the fundamental questions of its members and ensures a sense of security, unity and grandeur. It is always anthropomorphic cosmogonies that meet the basic needs of all the members of the group. In contrast, the individualist who takes his independence and detaches from the group abandons such visions because they impose constraints and obligations to which he can not subscribe. Revolutionary and in opposition to these ideologies, he denies mysticism, mysteries

and mythologies. Based on other views, stable and different, they meet the material reality and develop new interpretations of the world he deems more adequate, falsifiable and more satisfactory. The community is founded on a world of beliefs while the individual consider a knowledge base. Therefore our last opposite pair will be "Knowledge-Belief".

3 Top-Bottom

Everyone can see the current state of confusion affecting the political discourse. The splitting of both left and right ideologies brings them into irreconcilable positions. The leftists do not recognize each other anymore and the same happens to those on the right. It seems that yesterday's revolutionaries in turn undergo an internal revolution creating a new incompatible section. Thus, the left no longer recognizes itself in the far left as well as the right in the extreme right. How can we create criteria for separating these new orientations?

The analysis of situations that intertwine and corrupt the conventional concepts allows us to identify essential properties for understanding. We are dealing with extremes that clearly distinguish each other being on the same side of the axis, left or right, but without affinities. Using the analogy with analytic geometry we create a new axis, the ordinate or Y axis, orthogonal to the abscissa, the X axis. We name this new vertical axis "Up-Down". The horizontal axis obviously represents the "Left-Right" whereas the vertical axis represents a new set of discriminating criteria. The four directions thus split the political space in four quadrants, analogously to the four directions North-South-East-West of the cartographer. We then create new pairs of polarizing opposites that will be valid whatever the side considered. This new axis will allow us to release the characteristics of the left and the right according to eight new polarizing criteria. These pairs will be "Progress-Retreat", "Realism-Utopia", "Openness-Closeness" and "Liberty-Control".

3.1 Progress-Retreat

Progress is ordinarily attributed to the left and conservatism to the right. But those two terms, progress and retreat, can be ascribed to both the right and the left. To progress or keep achievements is not the prerogative of one side or the other. Here we have to pay attention to the antonym of "progress" which is "regress" or "retreat". "Conservatism" is usually opposed to "progress" in the sense of immobility. To retreat is to return to a previous state which is considered more favorable or better than the current state. In such cases the decline is expressed by "fundamentalism" with the meaning of better integrity and therefore without an obvious negative connotation. A first pair for this axis will be "Progress-Retreat".

3.2 Realism-Utopia

How many grandiose projects haven't we seen to pitfall, abandoned because impracticable. Thus of any ideology, whether it is relevant or consists of an unprecedented project, we can say that it is either realistic or Utopian. It is therefore suitable for the present or future stability or, it is unachievable or disturbing at the point of causing regression, decline or destruction. Any evolution that offers useful and profitable guarantees is realistic, while on the contrary, if it leads to a difficult situation, worse than the present or if it has no chance to come true, it is Utopian like a dream, an ideal, imaginary project that can not come true as desired. As a second polar pair, we pose "Realism-Utopia".

3.3 Openness-Closeness

Attitude in the face of any project or any innovative idea is either that of acceptability or refusal according to the disposition of the receiver. The latter can offer listening, discussion, accreditation, setting up, testing, sharing or supporting any empathetic attitude towards such projects or proposals. This is an opening to others. The opposite attitude is closure, refusal, denial, non-acceptability, categorical rejection, insulation against the other, misunderstanding, intolerance. Then, "Openness-Closeness" composes the third discriminating couple.

3.4 Liberty-Control

A revolutionary project express a freedom to change, allowing individuals to evolve and create new ideas, full capacity to design, say, share, receive, hear, that for everyone good as it seems to them. The absence of obstacles or unreasonable limits is freedom in its simplest form. The exercise of powers restricting freedom, which restrict or prohibit any expression represents a control, a negative action. Liberty encompass freedoms. The fourth pair is named "Liberty-Control"

4 Center

At the intersection of these two axis is the center which also has its own characteristics. Of course they are in the middle at the intersection and express a simultaneous equilibrium with those that define the extremes and which characterize the two axis. In this place, there is no more pair of opposites but a single center, a point of equilibrium. The center is an unstable, uncertain position, that of the one who does not take position or pronounce, nor for or against, a state where the desire to not displease anyone predominates, the one who tries to reconcile the opposites. The recognized characteristics are those of the negotiator, the arbitrator, unifying, the pacifist, the idealist. The four characteristics of the center are therefore "Reform", "Negotiation", "Commitment" and "Idealism".

4.1 Reform

Who proposes revolution expects reaction and between progress and decline, there is a matter of discussion, therefore a possible change. We then assist of a reform of what is actually ongoing.

4.2 Negotiation

Compared to the community, the individual if he wants to be heard must discuss and make sure to remain realistic and do not fall into utopia, so he must negotiate the conditions of change.

4.3 Commitment

In a cohesive and closed environment the novelty that emerges must show mobility, flexibility, suppleness and openness if one wants to increase its chances of acceptability and get some gains. There is commitment on both sides to untie any conflict or opposition between the poles.

4.4 Ideal

The world's vision as private and particular as it is, oscillate between knowledge and belief, a try to balance the contradictions which oppose them, the falsifiable and the absolute. It must then navigate between freedom and control, that is to say to look for an ideal balance.

5 Synthesis

The two axis of our grid being well defined, they make four quadrants showing a more refined idea from the balance and interaction of the characteristics of the extremes. It is through the assessment of the preponderance and mixing of the polar characteristics of those axis that it can be defined two dozen subareas. The annexed grid 1 shows all of the features we have presented as well as their multiple compositions. We name the four quadrants according to the object that concentrates the maximum of the extreme characteristics and thus define "Nationalism", "Individualism", "Fascism" and "Totalitarianism".

5.1 Nationalism

The cohesive, believing and responsive community that is at the same time progressive, realistic, open and free manifests itself as a nationalism. A sovereign nation, which exists and asserts itself by democracy and is regulated under a secular state.

5.2 Individualism

In contrast to the community, the revolutionary individual is found, which adapts and relies on knowledge, demonstrates realism, opening and emancipates freely. Such persons are fully autonomous, be worth meritocracy and universalism.

5.3 Fascism

The same cohesive community, believing and reactive, declining, closed, full of resentment is looking for Utopian control. It breaks through historicism, socialism and relativity of cultures towards a return to misunderstood values. Being fundamentalist, she drifts towards fascism.

5.4 Totalitarianism

The revolutionary individual, only aiming for his freedom all azimuth, isolate, closes, declines and exploits knowledge to exercise Utopian control. Libertarian and liberal, he slaughter the national and cultural boundaries to establish the totalitarianism of his business.

6 Application

Now that we have an analysis grid, let's validate it with a concrete exercise. We first introduced this document by the relevance of designing an analysis grid given the confusion between the true classic left and what is difficult to name the far left. So let's have a new light from this grid by analyzing postmodernism.

6.1 Postmodernism

Since the XXth century, the fascists sits on the right (eg the proponents of the Mussolini Duce, Caudillo Franco or Nazi Hitler) and those who oppose it on left, anti-fascists. The left which always introduces new paradigms is revolutionary. Thus at the end of the XVIIIth century with the French Revolution, a century after a similar revolution beyond the English Channel, begins a new current of thought named «Enlightenment» [6] and whose master idea looks for the progress of an autonomous man, who in the name of reason, is free from the yoke of political-religious secular conformism. It values the knowledge of the real world, ignoring agreed ideas, develops the critical spirit leading to the scientific method that makes the strength of modernity today. A few years before, the «Romanticism» [7] develops in parallel a social change but totally in opposition to that of the Enlightenment. It is defined as «a feeling against the reason, exalting the mystery and the fantastic and seeking escape and the delight in the dream, the morbid and the sublime, the exoticism and the past, the ideal or nightmare of a passionate and melancholy sensitivity», in short, feelings and sensibility, a current that is expressed in literature, painting, sculpture, music, politics and dance and continues until today. This current manifests itself in all areas of human activity, it is supported by Hugo, Proudhon, Sorel, Maïstre, Carlyle, Taine, Renan, Meinecke, Berlin all relying on and to glorify their precursors Vico, Burke and Herder. Although revolutionary at the time, romanticism keeps links with previous historical way of thinking, the Middle Ages. At the XXth century French theorists Lyotard, Deleuze, Derrida, Lacan, Foucault exploit this vein, establishing the basics of what will become Postmodernism. Christian Boyer [1] gives us a clear description: «Postmodernism reuses science as a primary source of knowledge, considers reason as suspect, rejects the existence of knowledge that can be universal and disputes the concept of objectivity». It introduces the concepts of relativism and deconstructionism whose objective is to counter the Enlightenment. Subsequently, since the 1970s and until now, these ideas have been updated in the United States universities for the cause of the excluded, namely that of African-American blacks,

and now reach us under «cultural studies». It recognizes post-colonialism, alter-sexual, systemic racism, feminism, phobia against over weight and fatty persons, gender intersection, politically correctness, woke, LGBT+ rights, gender theory, species rights, etc. Given the magnitude of these new ideas, their dissemination in academic circles, appropriation by mass media, their impregnation in digital social networks, one would believe of a revolution without borders. But this is not the case because this is only the actions of reactionaries whose incongruous ideas, contrary to the nature of the biological and material reality, living in the unreal world of reverie, of calculations, of Belief, myths, morals made for the occasion, good and evil. Their affirmations are by nature indisputable and proceed from the «believe or die», typical of religions and as an extra conveniently meet with radical Islam in Islamophobia. These reactionaries direct descendants of the Anti-Enlightenment movement, as shown by Zeev Sternhell [5], continue their actions and belong obviously like them to the Right. It is erroneous to believe they constitute a Far-Left shading the Left, in fact they constitute a pure Right, Utopian, closed and controlling wing. They pretend to be a Left «anti-fascist» but it is actually an «anti-anti-fascist» Right. These people of the Right are reactionaries, which by their action make a decline relative to Western modernity, they are fundamentalists who want to impose by force their destructive reasoning. Being on the Right, nor do they constitute a far Right but rather a regressive Right, Utopian, closed and controlling at the extreme, that is to say a Fascist Right.

7 Conclusion

We have shown the necessity to identify and define relevant characteristics necessary to the comprehension of the political axis Left-Right. We extended our analysis by introducing a new axis conducive to refine these characteristics given the confusion induced by recent poorly characterized paradigms. We reviewed the cross-interaction of the relevant characteristics of those two axis and implemented them as a multi-factorial grid. We completed this exercise by examining Postmodernism according to these new criteria and determined that it was not an extreme Left but rather a Fascist Right.

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Individualism

**Autonomism
Meritocracy
Universalism**

Nationalism

**Sovereignty
Democracy
Secularism**

**Progress
Realism
Openness
Liberty**

Extrême Gauche Progressiste 22	Progressiste de Gauche 14	Progressiste 10	Progressiste de Droite 16	Extrême Droite Progressiste 24
Gauche Progressiste 18	Centre Gauche Progressiste 6	Centre Progressiste 2	Centre Droit Progressiste 8	Droite Progressiste 20
Gauche 9	Centre Gauche 1	Reform Negociation Commitment Idealism	Centre Droit 4	Droite 12
17 Gauche Conservatrice	5 Centre Gauche Conservateur	3 Centre Conservateur	7 Centre Droit Conservateur	19 Droite Conservatrice
21 Extrême Gauche Conservatrice	13 Conservateur de Gauche	11 Conservateur	15 Conservateur de Droite	23 Extrême Droite Conservatrice

**Revolution
Individuality
Fluidity
Knowledge**

**Reaction
Community
Cohesion
Belief**

**Retreat
Utopia
Closeness
Control**

**Relativism
Liberalism
Multiculturalism**

Totalitarianism

**Historicism
Socialism
Integrism**

Fascism

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Figure 1: Multi-factorial grid