

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY SPECTRUM

When there is an issue, people will usually tend to fall into sectors that can be classified based on the political spectrum. An **ideology** is a set of ideas in a certain topic that are shared amongst a group.

While sometimes issues can be rather nuanced (a **wedge issue**), sometimes there are issues which everyone feels about the same on but parties still feel the need to debate. These issues are unknown specifically as **valence issues**. The importance of a certain issue to a person or society itself is known as **saliency**. The more wedging an issue, the more salient it tends to be.

Now, the spectrum:

- on the left are liberals, usually taken to mean in favor of pushing limitations in order to solve problems
- on the right are conservatives, who believe the inverse: government should stay within its confinement, respect tradition, etc.
- in the middle are moderates: most people do not fully identify with one side of the spectrum, and although parties can tend to lean a certain way labeling them entirely as liberals or conservatives is not entirely correct.
- there are also a number of subdivisions: a person can be fiscally conservative yet socially liberal

Furthermore, a number of other political philosophies exist (which may or may not consist of other parts of the aforementioned identities):

- Libertarian (who generally oppose most types of government intervention). Both a party name and a part of the spectrum. This tends to mean fiscally conservative (less business regulation) but also more socially liberal (less censorship and restriction on LGBTQ rights, for instance).
- Populists follow a strict moral code and the benefitting of society; traditional Christian values: they would support safety regulations and subsidies because those are necessary to benefit society, but also crack down on “dissenting” speech and go harder on criminals.
- Progressives believe in reform in favor of the people and tend to lean left as a result. Having arisen from a time period home to various countercultural movements, the concentration of power into small number of hands, inequality, etc, Progressives tend to work in favor of the people (i.e. supporting unions, high taxes for the rich, etc.)

PLATFORMS

A party's platform details their political alignment on various issues, for instance, LGBTQ rights or healthcare. Platforms are created during nominating conventions by members of a certain party.

A party platform will include issues the party finds important and their stance on it - ie. "HEALTHCARE - we believe in m4a", as well as founding principals, important events, and trashing on other parties.

Through those pieces of information we can also determine overall political alignment, target audience (lower middle class, for instance), likely demographics of the party, etc.