**Examining the Political Spectrum**

A **political spectrum** is a way of modeling different [political](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics) positions by placing them upon one or [more](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_spectrum) [geometric](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geometry) [axes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coordinate_axis) symbolizing independent political dimensions.

Most long-standing spectra include a [right wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_wing) and [left wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_wing), which originally referred to seating arrangements in the 18th century French parliament. According to the simplest [left-right](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left-right_politics) axis, [communism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communism) and [socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism) are usually regarded internationally as being on the left, opposite [fascism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascism) and [conservatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism) on the right.

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**Left Wing Centre Right Wing**

The purpose of the political spectrum is to show the differences in beliefs and ideologies (communism, racism, feminism, capitalism, liberalism, sexism etc.). The main issues that position a person's attitudes on the spectrum include:

* + Speed of change in a society
	+ Freedom of individual versus security of group
	+ Sharing of wealth through social benefits

**Political Spectrum Chart**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Left Wing** | **Centre** | **Right Wing** |
| -more liberal |  | -more conservative  |
| -support change in order to improve welfare of all citizens | -tradition is important but change is supported if most people want it | -tradition is important and change should be treated with caution  |
| -government should play a larger role in people's lives (social services, benefits) | -government should play a role only in that it improves the lives of citizens | -government should play a small role -private [business](http://www.markville.ss.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/history/civics/specact..html) should ensure needs of citizens are met  |
| -law and order are important to protect right of all citizens fairly and equally  | -law and order are important to encourage and protect right of individuals | -emphasis of law and order to protect society and its traditions |
| -more freedom to individuals and less power to police  |  | -less freedom to individuals and more power to police |