



RIGHTIST VIS-À-VIS LEFTIST EVOLUTION, HISTORY, TRAJECTORY AND GEOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS

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A series of events in 2020 contributed to the growth of rightism and leftism, which were catapulted into the limelight of the political arena in Europe and North America. Again, with COVID-19 pandemic alongside the associated strict health laws equally contributed to increasing conspiracy theorists in societies marked with a close history of rightism and fundamentalist violence, including Qanon and Proud Boys as well as the opposition groups against the strict health measures imposed by their respective home countries to combat COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, global protests were staged against racial injustice under the banner of the BLACK LIVES MATTER movement that erupted in the USA, following the killing of the African-American George Floyd in public by policemen. Agitated as such, protesters took to the streets, and protested heated went viral globally. In response to such protests, the activity and violence of rightism and leftism increased online and offline across the USA and beyond into the entire globe.

Evolution and History

Poles apart, the rightist and leftist dichotomy as two basic terms came in circulation in France in the eighteenth century, when the whole world, especially Europe, was watching the French Revolution closely, with a pair of scrutinizing eyes tracking the development trajectory. With the tone set, terms such as rightist and leftist rose to prominence as political concepts, ballooning into the entire world.

The rightist and leftist dichotomy remains a heritage passed down and bequeathed to the French Revolution, or from the legacy of the French Constitutional Council, during the vote on the powers of the King on August 29 of 1789. The Constitutional Council had to discuss the veto right granted to the King. Upon voting, supporters of the royal veto (conservatives) were requested to stand to the right side of the hall, and opponents (modernists) were requested to stand to the left side of the hall. With the stage set as such, it became a new political divide. Following the adoption of the two said terms in

French politics, rightists and leftists gained prominence throughout Europe, as two key references to political identity and descriptions of the political orientation of individuals and groups. Since then, the polemic (rightist and leftist) has become a challenge to political theorists.

However, the transformation of these two terms into basic, methodological, and official premises of political identity took more than a century. Of good note, the rightist and leftist dichotomy became institutionalized only in the first decade of the twentieth century, when they gained and formed clear-cut meanings. For instance, the opponents who broke away from the Communist Party were described as far-left or far-right deviants, especially opponents of Stalinism, when favouring far-left meant adopting a fundamentalist global workers' revolution, while favouring to far-right indicates the adoption of a manifestation of fundamentalist nationalist sentiment.

Such definitions were flexible and often changed to dance to the tune of the political situation and the ruling party. As such, we can distinguish between those who seek a literal framing of the meaning of -far-right and far-left, and those who are concerned with a historically essential interpretation of the basic meanings of the terms that have remained stagnant for centuries, taking into consideration new political definitions, such as conservative, liberal, progressive, reactionary. With this in mind, we can suggest that the terms far-right and far-left describe the national cultural orientation more than they describe the unchanging political scene.

It is almost impossible to recall the 1920s and 1930s in Europe without making references to -far-right or far-left as political identities. In the years between WWI and WWII, when Europeans were grappling with the official policies of their respective countries, the use of the terms far-right and far-left was instrumentalized again as a tool to polarize the political spectrum and demonize political opponents. Both far-right and far-left became more fundamentalist, while the liberal center almost faded away.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the Cold War increased the persecution of all the exponents of far-left. For instance, citizens would lose their government jobs, and they might be prosecuted if they disclosed their socialist or communist tendencies or declared their affiliation or sympathy with Eastern Camp. Such practices had a significant impact on the activity of the leftism. Meanwhile, conservative thinkers began to associate the growth of the liberal state with what they called leftism and affiliated communist associations, giving liberalism a negative colour.

During the Vietnam War, the two terms came back to the fore; making references to rightism and leftism became important when people voiced their differences about national policies at home and abroad. As such, rightism and leftism facilitated their debate and mooted discussions. Today, we can argue leftism refers to progressivism and liberalism, while rightism refers to conservatism and deviant patriotism. The center is still in constant change and development.

Dialectics of Rightism and Leftism

The big question is: Why do most far-right parties reject the traditional (classical) distinction between (rightism and leftism), placing themselves off such a dichotomy? Subject-matter experts spell out that there are four key reasons why far-right parties seek to classify themselves off the scope of rightism and leftism:

1. The core ideology of each party, which believes that rightism and leftism are political opponents that should not be trusted and allied with.
2. The politics of far-right and the unilateral interpretation of the world, which believes it is illegitimate to have a dichotomy of rightism and leftism as they make up no political addition or any cogency.
3. Rejection of the negative connotation of the term far-right associated with racism and racial discrimination, encouraging them to learn about discrimination in its entirety.
4. Far-rightists define themselves as neither leftist nor rightist! This allows them to distinguish themselves from other political spectra and to claim that they do not belong to or pride themselves on the current traditional politics.

For instance, the French presidential elections in 2017 re-talked about this distinction and the dichotomy between rightism and leftism. Far-Right Leader, Marine Le Pen, claimed that these two terms are meaningless, and that the real division is between globalization and nationalists.

Globalization and Extremist Nationalism

Since the terms rightism and leftism originated in France, it is not surprising that the schism between the two groups in this country is glaringly wide. Many politicians have made efforts to smooth away the dichotomy (rightism and leftism). They introduced higher patriotic and democratic principles. For example, former French President Charles de Gaulle challenged these two terms, seeking to overcome partisan divisions

in French society and within his government, in the name of the greater good of the Republic.

Likewise, the accession of Marine Le Pen to the top hierarchy of her National Front Party in 2011 marked the return of the gradual transformation of the French far-right, albeit differently. This tendency should be understood in the context of the far-right party's aspirations to become an official government party acceptable to all French people, with all their orientations. Again, the struggle for this goal has become the party's strategic priority.

As such, Le Pen began a dual policy of demonizing her party, bringing it closer to public opinion, and recruiting outside the regular party lines, introducing a new division behind rightism and leftism, with globalization and nationalism as the defining line between them. It should be noted that far-right keeps the idea of leftism alive in politics and in the conscience of associated followers; the existence of far-right is associated with leftism, with continued threat to national and social peace.

Threats and Political Violence

Contrary to many media reports published in 2020 and 2021, far-right extremists were not alone behind the violence and vandalism sustained by several Western countries. Far-left groups have also mushroomed widely to obstruct the protests of other dissenting groups. To better understand the potential threats to activists from the far-right and far-left and to learn about the interactions between such conflicting political movements, it is critically necessary to take note of the activities of such groups, not only in the public sphere, but also online, examining their extremist activities on the known platforms on which they operate actively.

Although extremists are in continued conflict, they often find a common enemy in a given centralized state, such as law enforcement agencies, central governments, and public buildings. In short, far-right and far-left groups come together on common grounds, manifested in nihilism and anarchism. The two said sides seek to achieve the maximum possible, even if it triggers a civil war; the chaos they orchestrate to cause is for them a prerequisite for civil war to erupt. For instance, the Youth Liberation Front in Portland describes itself as a decentralized network of independent youth groups, seeking in direct action to realize the complete liberation of state institutions from the tyranny of government and capitalism.

Far-right groups saw former US President Donald Trump as an important ally in the White House, deemed capable of restoring matters back to normal and eliminating (traitors) and the far-left. In 2019, Trump forced on the federal law enforcement agencies to ignore the activities of the rightists while to clamp down only on the leftist threat, which he considered the greatest malice facing the USA. Meanwhile the rightists were allowed to grow and recruit overtly in such an ominous fashion. The scale and severity of the threat became glaringly stark in the events of January 6, when the news headlines and social media splashed images of far-right groups, followers of the Keo Anon conspiracy movement and supporters of white supremacy storming Capitol Hill.

Mutual Extremism

In global conflicts, it is critically important to best understand far-right activism, which claims to preserve identity and white culture or to counter the progressive leftists, in which activists see a destructive and rebellious force against traditional values and local culture. Despite the political differences, far-right and far-left remain similar psychological and behavioural characteristics, while far-right autocrats tend to strongly support the existing hierarchy, and far-left autocrats insist on strongly opposing the existing hierarchy. Both parties share a mental bedrock that makes them have more in common than the other way around.