

## **Chapter 2**

# **POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES**

### **CHAPTER REVIEW**

#### **Learning Objectives**

After studying Chapter 2, you should be able to do the following:

1. Explain how and why ideology plays an important role in American political life.
2. Summarize the historical development of liberalism and conservatism in the United States and compare and contrast the main ideas behind each ideology.
3. Discuss the intellectual components of the more extreme ideologies of democratic socialism and libertarianism and comment on their role in American politics.

#### **Chapter Outline and Summary**

##### **I. Introduction:**

Political ideology is an integrated set of political ideas about what constitutes the most equitable and just political order.

##### **II. American Political Ideologies**

- A. Most Americans identify with mainstream ideologies (liberal or conservative) that do not challenge the existing political order.
- B. Radical ideologies (democratic socialism and libertarianism) challenge much of the existing social and political order.
- C. Socialism and libertarianism operate within the democratic framework.

### III. Liberalism

#### A. Introduction

1. Liberalism assumes that individuals are rational and capable of overcoming obstacles without resorting to violence.
2. John Locke's contract theory of the state declares that the state gains its legitimacy from the people and is required to protect life, liberty, and property.

#### B. Classical Liberalism: Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson

1. Nineteenth century classical liberalism believed that the government that governed least governed best.
2. Jefferson and Jackson believed that a strong central government would promote a "moneyed aristocracy dangerous to the liberties of the country."

#### C. Populism and Progressivism: The Repudiation of Classical Liberalism

1. Populism called for further democratization of government and strengthening government's role in the economy.
2. Progressivism (especially Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson) supported government programs to ease the problems of industrialization, such as worker's compensation and the regulation of corporations and banks.

#### D. Contemporary Liberalism: The Welfare State and Beyond

1. Roosevelt's New Deal changed the constituency of liberalism and believed that government should ensure the economic well being of the nation and provide basic material guarantees.
2. Liberals today believe that government must protect individuals from the inequities of modern society and that strong government enhances individual freedom.
3. Liberals see government as correcting the injustices of capitalism, not supplanting it.
4. A benevolent government offers services to both the disadvantaged (unemployment insurance) and the middle class (Social Security), as occurred during Johnson's Great Society.
5. In the 1980s, many liberals favored an industrial policy involving government, labor, and public interests.
6. Liberals extend broad tolerance to different lifestyles and favor limiting government interference in individual rights.
7. In foreign policy, liberals oppose interventionism and military solutions, supporting foreign aid, arms control, and reduced military budgets.
8. Liberals tend to be members of the Democratic party because of their support for a wide range of liberal welfare programs.

9. Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) is the most prominent liberal pressure group.

#### E. Neoliberalism: Adjusting Liberalism to the Twenty-First Century

1. In recent decades liberalism shifted its focus somewhat from economic issues to social and foreign policy issues.
2. This shift caused liberals to lose support from certain groups and has aggravated their ability to capture the presidency.
3. In response, neoliberals call for a shift in the emphasis of liberalism from the redistribution of wealth to the promotion of wealth.
4. Neoliberals direct their attention not to the expansion of government services but to their effective delivery, favoring reform in the size and cost of bureaucracy, entitlement programs, and military spending.
5. Traditional liberals criticize neoliberal emphasis on government efficiency and call for a return to populist ideas.

### IV. Conservatism

#### A. Introduction

1. Conservatism emphasizes the value of tradition and established practices as guides for the future.
2. Edmund Burke (1729–1797) promoted conservative principles.
  - a. The experience of past generations was the most reliable guide to good government.
  - b. A natural inequality among men meant that a ruling class of ability and property must control government.

#### B. Early American Conservatism: John Adams

1. Adams believed in the sanctity of private property but did not associate property with an aristocracy.
2. Adams favored a balanced government (as in the Constitution) to promote public virtue and curb private greed.
3. Conservatives favored limiting suffrage to men with property.

#### C. Conservatism and the Industrial Age: Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner

1. As America industrialized, conservatives no longer supported government's role in the economy but embraced laissez-faire economics.

2. Spencer and Sumner established the theory of social Darwinism, which stated that people should compete for survival so that superior individuals would win and better humanity.
3. Conservatism became the ideology of the business class with emphasis on the individual and limited government.

#### D. Contemporary Conservatism: A Response to the Welfare State

1. From 1933–1981, conservatism was measured more by what it was against than what it was for.
2. By the 1980s conservatism established its own agenda but still defended economic individualism against the growth of the welfare state.
3. Contemporary conservatives accept civil rights, but oppose quotas and affirmative action.
4. Contemporary conservatives believe the state must promote virtue and social responsibility and improve the moral climate of society.
5. Conservatism has been embraced by the more populist ideals of the working and middle classes.
6. Most conservatives belong to the Republican party.

#### E. Neoconservatism in the Twenty-First Century

1. Neoconservatives consist of disenchanted liberals who believe the welfare state has become an intrusive paternalistic state.
2. Neoconservatives oppose quotas and busing, which cause class polarization, and higher taxes on the upper middle class, which emphasize economic redistribution over growth.
3. Neoconservatives support a modest welfare state with lower taxes on large incomes and less regulation to promote growth.
5. Neoconservatives have pushed for an empowerment agenda to assist the poor that emphasizes anti-bureaucratic market-oriented programs.

#### F. Libertarianism: A Revival of Classical Liberalism

1. Libertarianism believes that the state must be kept small with the essential role of government limited to the protection of human rights.
2. Libertarians oppose the interference of government in private lives, whether to regulate moral or economic life.
3. Libertarians favor nonintervention in the affairs of other nations.
4. The Libertarian Party and its ideas has influenced both the Republican and Democratic parties.

## Key Terms, Concepts, and Personalities

After studying Chapter 2, you should be able to identify and describe the significance of the following:

political ideology  
think tank  
liberalism  
John Locke  
contract theory of the state  
classical liberalism  
populism  
progressivism  
New Deal  
Great Society  
industrial policy  
Americans for Democratic Action  
Charles Peters  
neoliberalism  
conservatism  
Edmund Burke  
John Adams  
laissez-faire economics  
Herbert Spencer  
William Graham Sumner  
social Darwinism  
Neoconservatives  
democratic socialism  
Eugene V. Debs  
Democratic Socialists of America  
Libertarian party  
libertarianism

## TESTING YOUR UNDERSTANDING

### Completion

1. Classical liberals believed that the government that governed \_\_\_\_\_ governed \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Progressives supported government programs to ease the problems of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ direct their attention not to the expansion of government services but to their effective delivery.
4. As America industrialized, conservatives embraced \_\_\_\_\_ economics, an economic system free of government control.
5. Contemporary conservatism remains at its core a defense of economic individualism against the growth of the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ argue that a properly constructed welfare state strengthens citizens' loyalty to the capitalist system.
7. Democratic socialists believe that a genuinely democratic society must produce equality of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Libertarianism holds that the essential role of government should be only the protection of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Compare and Contrast

1. Liberalism and the contract theory of the state
2. John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson
3. Populism and progressivism
4. The New Deal and Great Society
5. Neoliberalism and neoconservatism

6. Edmund Burke and John Adams
7. Laissez-faire economics and social Darwinism
8. Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner
9. Neoconservatives and paleoconservatives
10. Libertarianism and classical liberalism

### **True/False**

1. Both liberals and conservatives accept most of the economic reforms of the New Deal. T F
2. Populists and progressives advocated economic reforms that would strengthen the government's role. T F
3. Contemporary liberals believe that a strong central government is necessary to reduce economic inequalities and enhance personal morality. T F
4. Neoliberals have repudiated the New Deal and Great Society legacies while emphasizing the promotion of wealth. T F
5. Edmund Burke believed that inequality among men meant that a ruling class of ability and property must control government. T F
6. Early American conservatives believed that only men who owned property should be allowed to vote. T F
7. Contemporary conservatism remains essentially an ideology of the wealthy upper class. T F
8. Democratic socialism essentially supports the democratic process and the ideals of capitalism. T F
9. Libertarians would support the repeal of laws forbidding prostitution, pornography, and gambling. T F

## Multiple-Choice

1. With what is political ideology is concerned?
  - a. proper functions of government
  - b. issues of liberty and equality
  - c. distribution of goods and services
  - d. all of the above
  
2. Radical ideologies such as democratic socialism and libertarianism \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. accept the basic principles of capitalism as a successful economic system
  - b. challenge much of the existing social and political order
  - c. function outside of the democratic process
  - d. have become a major challenge to liberalism and conservatism in America
  
3. According to John Locke's contract theory of the state, which of the following is true?
  - a. All men and women are allowed a voice in government.
  - b. The state gains its legitimacy from the consent of the governed.
  - c. A ruling class of ability and property must control government.
  - d. The experience of past generations is the most reliable guide to good government.
  
4. Classical liberals such as Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson believed \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. in a strong central government
  - b. that unregulated capitalism resulted in rule by a moneyed aristocracy
  - c. that liberty was the absence of government interference with the rights of citizens
  - d. that government expenditures should be limited to infrastructure projects such as roads and canals
  
5. Which of the following classical liberal beliefs did populism and progressivism oppose?
  - a. A ruling class of ability and property should run government.
  - b. The railroads, telegraph, and basic industries should be nationalized.
  - c. The role of government should be limited.
  - d. Government should be further democratized by extending the franchise.
  
6. New Deal contemporary liberalism \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. changed the constituency of liberalism to include the entrepreneurial class
  - b. is based on the belief that government should provide basic material guarantees for every individual
  - c. favored a decreased role of government in the economy
  - d. repudiated the ideals of capitalism



7. In the areas of national security and personal morality, liberals \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. seek to increase the role of government
  - b. show little tolerance to different lifestyles
  - c. support expanding the role of the CIA in foreign affairs
  - d. are likely to oppose military intervention as the main approach to foreign policy
  
8. Neoliberals \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. favor policies that call for greater government and business cooperation
  - b. support expanding the size and role of government unions
  - c. prefer reducing defense spending to military reforms
  - d. favor tying civil service and military benefits to the cost of living
  
9. What did Edmund Burke believe?
  - a. Each generation should remake society to fit the changing environment.
  - b. Society grew slowly and with purpose.
  - c. There was a natural equality among men.
  - d. Government should listen to the public's appreciation of tradition and custom.
  
10. Which of the following is true of John Adams?
  - a. He agreed with Burke's association of property rights with a landed aristocracy.
  - b. He supported Jefferson's notion of the natural goodness of humankind.
  - c. He believed that laws and government are needed to promote public virtue and curb private greed.
  - d. He called for universal manhood suffrage.
  
11. According to William Graham Sumner, with what two chief things does government have to deal?
  - a. the property of men and the honor of women
  - b. military defense and civil liberties
  - c. social welfare and economic growth
  - d. crime and poverty
  
12. Which of the following statements about contemporary conservatives is false?
  - a. They defend economic individualism against the growth of the welfare state.
  - b. They believe that the state must promote virtue and social responsibility.
  - c. They challenge the idea of quotas and other affirmative action policies.
  - d. They oppose the use of the popular referendum and other means of direct democracy.

13. Neoconservatives \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. support racial and sexual quotas
  - b. stress policies that lower taxes on large incomes
  - c. call for more regulation of business to promote economic growth
  - d. support the idea of the welfare state in principle, but not in practice
  
15. Democratic socialists believe in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. a limit on individual wealth and property
  - b. equality of results
  - c. extensive governmental regulation of the economy
  - d. all of the above
  
16. Which of the following do contemporary American socialists favor?
  - a. increasing the work week to 45 hours so as to encourage economic growth
  - b. a massive public works program for rebuilding America's infrastructure
  - c. dismantling the New Deal welfare state
  - d. public ownership characterized by government owned and controlled businesses and factories
  
17. To what can the intellectual roots of libertarianism be traced?
  - a. populism and progressivism
  - b. the philosophy of Edmund Burke
  - c. classical liberalism
  - d. the New Deal

## Essay

1. Explain what is meant by the term "political ideology." Which of the specific ideologies covered in this chapter is most appealing to you and why?
2. Compare and contrast classical liberalism to populism and progressivism. What historical events led to this change in the liberal philosophy?
3. How does contemporary liberalism differ from neoliberalism? Give examples of how the two differ in terms of general political philosophy and specific public policy alternatives.
4. How has American political conservatism changed throughout the years and how has it remained the same? Give examples of public policy choices to illustrate your answer.
5. Explain the basic ideas and policy choices of democratic socialism. Why has democratic socialism not taken hold in the United States like it has in parts of Europe?

## Research Topics and Practical Applications

1. Write an essay describing your own personal political ideology. You may wish to start by jotting down your views and opinions on the major issues of the day such as abortion, military spending, busing, foreign aid, women's rights, affirmative action, social welfare, economic policy, etc. What patterns or common themes are apparent in your opinions of these issues? Where might your political ideology fit within the different ideologies covered in the chapter?
2. Several ideologies other than liberalism and conservatism exist on the fringe of American politics. The chapter examines democratic socialism and libertarianism. Others might include fascism, Marxism or communism, racism, environmentalism, etc. Write a fact sheet about some of these alternative ideologies. Include the following:
  - a. a basic definition of the ideology
  - b. a brief statement on the ideology's philosophy on the role of government in foreign and defense policy, economics, social welfare, and personal morality
  - c. a brief statement on the ideology's stand on some of the major political issues of the day
  - d. a list of the political parties, organizations, journals, and leaders that represent the ideology
  - e. a statement describing the tactics used by advocates of the political ideology to gain influence
  - f. a statement commenting on the extent of the ideology's popularity and influence in the United States