

Political Ideology



Hasan Muhammad Baniamin

Which one are you?



1/2 FULL?



1/2 EMPTY?

Political ideology

- Political ideology is a **comprehensive set of beliefs about the political world**—about desirable political goals and the best ways to achieve those goals.
- There are **three** main concerns for a political ideology:
 - ▣ (1) individual human nature- “**nature versus nurture**”.
 - ▣ (2) the proper relationship among the individual, state, and society- **maximize individual liberty and freedom of action** vs individual **freedom** must be **constrained** by the state.
 - ▣ (3) the desirability of **establishing equality** among individuals – **legal** equality vs **material** equality.

Types of political ideology in the west

- **Conservatism**
- **Classical liberalism**
- **Socialism**

Conservatism

- **Conservatism** *attempts to prevent or slow the transition away from a society based on traditional values and the existing social hierarchy.*
- Particular importance is placed on **stability, tradition, and loyalty to God and country.**
- **The Individual-**
- Conservatism makes two key assumptions.
 - **First, individuals are not consistently rational**, in many situations, people are **emotional and are unable to reason clearly**. Thus, **tradition and religion, rather than reason**, are viewed as the most reliable sources for guiding society.
 - **Second, individuals are inherently unequal in intelligence, skills, and status**. Some **individuals and groups** are **superior** to others

Conservatism

□ Individual, State, and Society-

- **Traditional values and ethics provide the guidelines** for group cooperation as well as individual behavior.
- **Government should use its power to maintain social order;** to preserve traditional values, especially regarding family life, religion, and culture; and to protect private property rights.
- **State military and economic power** should also promote the **country's interests** abroad and defend against intervention by other states.

Conservatism

□ Equality

- Because **inequality is a natural aspect of society**, it is **foolish and even dangerous to seek egalitarianism**.
- Forced **equality is unwise because it disrupts the natural, cooperative hierarchy** among groups, causes social conflict, and endangers the fundamental goal of order and stability.

Classical liberalism

- The ideology of **classical liberalism** *places the highest value on individual freedom and posits that the role of government should be quite limited.*
- **The individual-**
 - ▣ Each person is **rational** and has the **ability to use reason to determine the sensible rules** (the “laws of nature”) that shape how she should live in pursuit of her own needs and without harming others.

Classical liberalism

- Classical liberalism contrasts with conservatism in several important ways:
 - ▣ (1) the **freedom of each individual** to pursue her natural rights is the highest value; and
 - ▣ (2) each **individual is rational and responsible** and is the best judge of what is in her self-interest.

Classical liberalism

□ Individual, State, and Society

- A **person's full capabilities** can be **realized** only if she is **not limited by a conservative social order** in which **tradition and hierarchy** are dominant.
- The state should mainly be a **night watchman, a low-profile police officer who ensures the basic safety and freedom** of every individual.

Classical liberalism

□ Equality

- **Equality before the law** (equality of opportunity) is important, but **government should not attempt to create material equality** (equality of outcomes).
- People **pursue their interests in different ways** and with **different levels of success**.

Socialism

- For **socialism**, *the most important goal is to provide high-quality, relatively equal conditions of life for everyone, with an active state assisting in the achievement of this goal.*
- Socialism evolved as a distinctive ideology among theorists concerned about the **plight of people who had relatively little economic, social, or political power.**

Socialism

□ The Individual

- ▣ In the socialist perspective, people are **social and caring by nature**.
- ▣ They are **not innately selfish and aggressive**, although **negative social conditions** can produce such behavior.
- ▣ Thus, it is crucial to **create an environment** that encourages individuals to place the highest value on **cooperation and sharing**.

Socialism

- **Individual, State, and Society**
 - ▣ Because the **good of the society as a whole is the most important goal**, some of an **individual's interests must be subordinated** to, or at least coordinated with, the overall interests and needs of everyone in the society.
 - ▣ The **state** is also much more **active in controlling powerful actors and self-interested groups** whose behavior will harm the collective good of the society

Socialism

□ Equality

- ▣ The ideology of socialism centers in a deep **commitment to use the power and policies** of the state to increase the **material, social, and political equality** of all its members.

Different 'isms'

- **Anarchism**— there is an **absence of organized government**.
- **Authoritarianism**—a system in which the political **rights and interests of individuals** are **subordinated**, usually by **coercion**, to the interests of the state.
- **Conservatism**—a belief in the virtue of preserving **traditional values and social institutions** and of **promoting loyalty to country, reliance on family, and adherence to religion**.



Different 'isms'

- **Corporatism**—a political economy in which there is extensive **economic cooperation between an activist state and a few groups** that represent major economic actors such as large industry, organized labor, and farmers.
- **Environmentalism**—**advocacy of the planned management of a natural resource** or of the total environment of a particular ecosystem to prevent exploitation, pollution, destruction, or depletion of valuable natural resources.
- **Fascism**—a system in which the **unity and harmony of government and society** are of central importance and forces that might weaken that unity are repressed; a top **leader is usually viewed as the embodiment of the natural will**, and all **individuals** are expected to **obey the leader's will**.

Different 'isms'

- **Feminism**—a diverse social movement promoting **equal rights and opportunities** for **women and men** in their personal lives, economic activities, and politics.
- **Totalitarianism**—a system in which the **state possesses total control over all aspects of people's lives**, including their economic, social, political, and personal spheres.
- **Pacifism**—a belief that the **highest political and social value is peace and the absence of violence**.
- **Marxism**—a set of ideas based on the writings of **Karl Marx**, who argued that society is composed of competing classes based on economic power, that **class struggle** and change are inevitable, and that **the desired goal is the equal distribution of welfare in the society**.

Suggested readings

- Danziger, J. N., & Smith, C. A. (2016). *Understanding the political world: A comparative introduction to political science*. Boston :Pearson, pp. 30-39.

Q?