

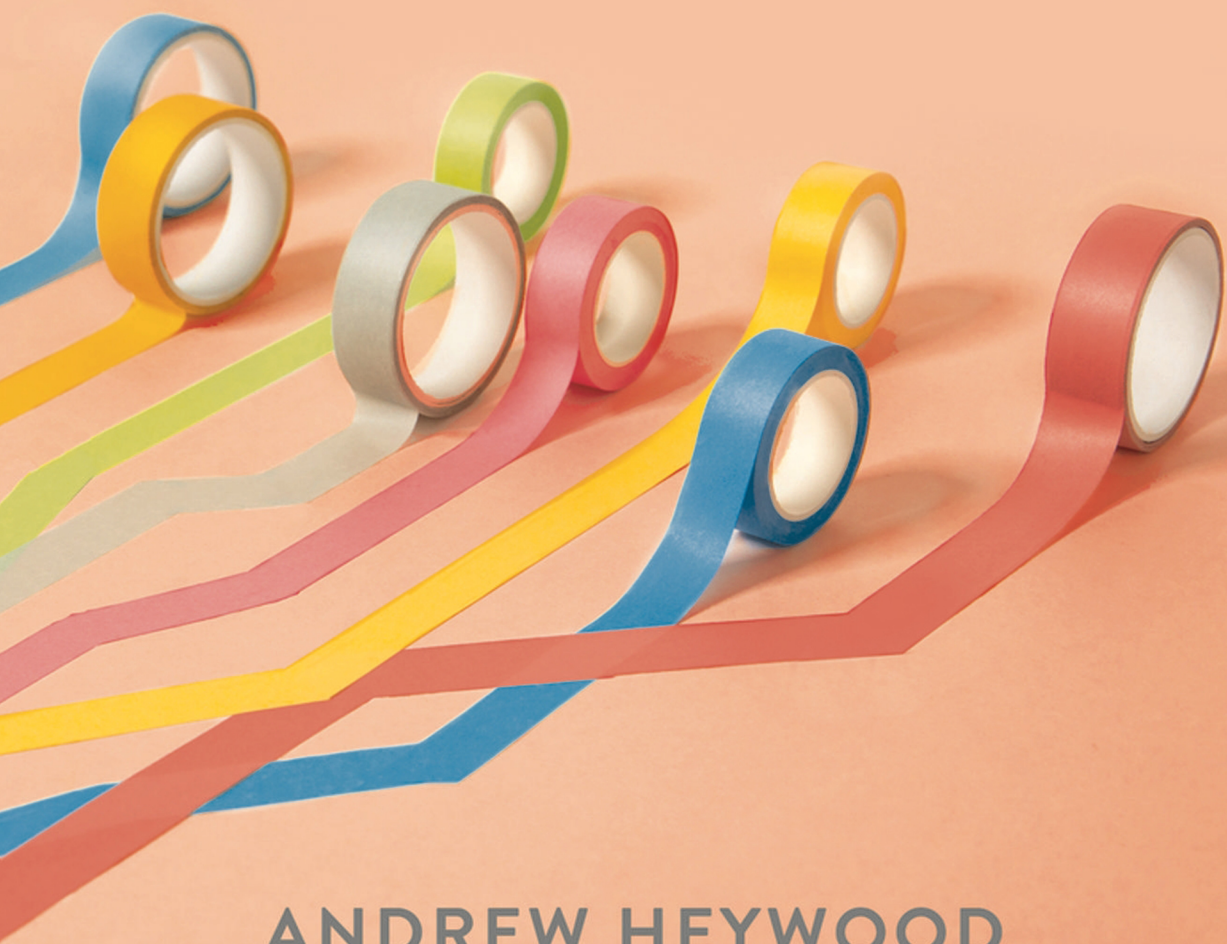


ONLINE
RESOURCES
AVAILABLE

SEVENTH EDITION

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

AN INTRODUCTION



ANDREW HEYWOOD

‘Every summer I teach a course on politics and popular culture and assign Andrew Heywood’s *Political Ideologies*. The book provides a clear introduction to the “isms” that shape how most of us think about politics, including, in the new edition, populism. The book hits the sweet spot of being accessible to newcomers and illuminating for more advanced students.’

– **Nicholas Tampio**, *Fordham University, USA*

‘This brand new edition of Andrew Heywood’s *Political Ideologies* reflects the challenges and developments of our times: it includes a chapter on populism, a feminism chapter comprising intersectionality, trans theory and queer theory, an in-depth analysis of postcolonialism, case studies on contemporary issues and a discussion about the future prospects of each ideology. An indispensable tool for learning and teaching.’

– **Andrea Schapper**, *University of Stirling, UK*

‘A rare book which helps teachers not only inform but also inspire students to discover their place among competing ideologies. Heywood’s orderly presentation provides readers with excellent access to a wide range of ideological identities.’

– **John Uhr**, *Australian National University, Australia*

‘*Political Ideologies* represents an excellent resource that continues to be of interest to both staff and students. Heywood sets out and develops a clear understanding of the ideologies that continue to shape contemporary politics and society.’

– **Michael Kyriacou**, *University of East Anglia, UK*

‘*Political Ideologies* reflects considerable scholarship but communicates this in a clear and accessible way. The format, including tables and boxes that compare ideologies, is exceptionally reader-friendly. The tracking of the evolution of ideologies is particularly good, and helps students (and others!) make sense of the bewildering forest of labels that litter the political landscape today. This is a book that students will actually read!’

– **Jennifer Leigh Bailey**, *Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway*

‘Andrew Heywood’s book remains one of the best introductions to the study of political ideologies. Its main strength lies in the author’s ability to explain complex ideas in an engaging and accessible way, while the ‘Political Ideologies in Action’ features encourage the reader to reflect on the relationship between political ideas and contemporary issues.’

– **Judi Atkins**, *Aston University, UK*

‘This book is essential reading as a core text in political ideologies. It explores in detail the origins, key concepts, variants and tensions within ideologies, and this new edition provides even more extensive consideration of the most recent developments in ideology such as populism and trans and queer theory. A key attractive feature is the way the book relates ideology to current themes such as decolonising the curriculum, nationalism and the pandemic, anarchism and cyberspace. In short, this is a well-written, comprehensive, up-to-date and above all stimulating text.’

– **Paul Flenley**, *University of Portsmouth, UK*

‘I teach an introductory course with many general education students. Consequently, I was looking for a text that was above all highly accessible and engaging without sacrificing content. *Political Ideologies* meets both goals by succinctly outlining foundational material and building meaningful points of comparison across the traditions with ample opportunity to address finer nuances and draw connections to recent events.’

– **Peter Doerschler**, *Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, USA*

SEVENTH EDITION

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

AN INTRODUCTION

ANDREW HEYWOOD

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
LONDON • NEW YORK • OXFORD • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

BLOOMSBURY, BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC and the Diana logo are trademarks of
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain 2021 by Red Globe Press
Reprinted by Bloomsbury Academic 2022

Copyright © Andrew Heywood, under exclusive licence to Macmillan Education
Limited 1992, 1998, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2021

Andrew Heywood has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act,
1988, to be identified as Author of this work.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or
by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information
storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc does not have any control over, or responsibility for, any third-party
websites referred to or in this book. All internet addresses given in this book were correct at the
time of going to press. The author and publisher regret any inconvenience caused if addresses
have changed or sites have ceased to exist, but can accept no responsibility for any such changes.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: HB: 978-1-352-01194-4
PB: 978-1-352-01183-8
ePDF: 978-1-352-01184-5
eBook: 978-1-350-92880-0

To find out more about our authors and books visit www.bloomsbury.com and sign up
for our newsletters.

Commissioning Editor: Peter Atkinson
Assistant Editor: Becky Mutton
Cover Designer: Laura De Grasse
Senior Production Editor: Amy Brownbridge
Marketing Manager: Amy Suratia

BRIEF CONTENTS

1.	UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES	1
2.	LIBERALISM	19
3.	CONSERVATISM	49
4.	SOCIALISM	75
5.	ANARCHISM	103
6.	NATIONALISM	124
7.	FASCISM	148
8.	POPULISM	169
9.	FEMINISM	186
10.	ECOLOGISM	206
11.	MULTICULTURALISM	225
12.	FUNDAMENTALISM	245
13.	WHY POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES MATTER	266
	<i>Bibliography</i>	272
	<i>Index</i>	283

CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrative material</i>	ix	<i>Tradition</i>	52
<i>Figures</i>	xi	<i>Human imperfection</i>	54
<i>Tour of the book</i>	xii	<i>Organic society</i>	55
<i>Preface to the seventh edition</i>	xiv	<i>Hierarchy and authority</i>	58
		<i>Property</i>	60
1. UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES	1	Types of conservatism	61
Preview	1	<i>Libertarian conservatism</i>	61
Views of political ideology	2	<i>Authoritarian conservatism</i>	65
<i>Marxist views</i>	3	<i>Paternalistic conservatism</i>	69
<i>Non-Marxist views</i>	5	<i>Christian democracy</i>	71
Contours of ideology	7	The future of conservatism	73
From 'classical' to 'new' ideologies?	10	Questions for discussion	74
Left, right and beyond	13	Further reading	74
The end of ideology?	16		
Questions for discussion	18		
Further reading	18		
2. LIBERALISM	19	4. SOCIALISM	75
Preview	19	Preview	75
Historical overview	20	Historical overview	76
Core themes	22	Core themes	78
<i>Individualism</i>	23	<i>Community</i>	79
<i>Freedom</i>	24	<i>Cooperation</i>	80
<i>Reason</i>	26	<i>Equality</i>	81
<i>Justice</i>	27	<i>Class politics</i>	83
<i>Toleration</i>	29	<i>Common ownership</i>	85
Types of liberalism	31	Types of socialism	87
<i>Classical liberalism</i>	31	<i>Communism</i>	87
<i>Modern liberalism</i>	36	<i>Social democracy</i>	94
<i>Liberal democracy</i>	41	The future of socialism	100
The future of liberalism	46	Questions for discussion	101
Questions for discussion	47	Further reading	102
Further reading	48		
3. CONSERVATISM	49	5. ANARCHISM	103
Preview	49	Preview	103
Historical overview	50	Historical overview	104
Core themes	52	Core themes	105
		<i>Anti-statism</i>	107
		<i>Natural order</i>	109
		<i>Anti-clericalism</i>	111
		<i>Economic freedom</i>	112
		Types of anarchism	113
		<i>Collectivist anarchism</i>	113
		<i>Individualist anarchism</i>	117

The future of anarchism	121	<i>Right populism</i>	178
Questions for discussion	122	<i>Left populism</i>	182
Further reading	123	The future of populism	184
		Questions for discussion	185
		Further reading	185
6. NATIONALISM	124	9. FEMINISM	186
Preview	124	Preview	186
Historical overview	125	Historical overview	187
Core themes	128	Core themes	188
<i>The nation</i>	129	<i>Redefining 'the political'</i>	189
<i>Organic community</i>	132	<i>Sex and gender</i>	190
<i>Self-determination</i>	133	<i>Patriarchy</i>	192
<i>Culturalism</i>	134	<i>Equality and difference</i>	193
Types of nationalism	137	Types of feminism	196
<i>Liberal nationalism</i>	137	<i>Traditional feminist theories</i>	196
<i>Conservative nationalism</i>	140	<i>Modern approaches to gender and sexuality</i>	200
<i>Expansionist nationalism</i>	141	The future of feminism	204
<i>Anti-colonial and postcolonial nationalism</i>	143	Questions for discussion	205
The future of nationalism	146	Further reading	205
Questions for discussion	147		
Further reading	147		
		10. ECOLOGISM	206
7. FASCISM	148	Preview	206
Preview	148	Historical overview	207
Historical overview	149	Core themes	208
Core themes	150	<i>Ecology</i>	209
<i>Anti-rationalism</i>	151	<i>Systems thinking</i>	211
<i>Struggle</i>	153	<i>Sustainability</i>	213
<i>Leadership and elitism</i>	154	<i>Environmental ethics</i>	215
<i>Socialism</i>	155	<i>From having to being</i>	215
<i>Ultranationalism</i>	157	Types of ecogism	217
Types of fascism	158	<i>Reformist ecology</i>	217
<i>Extreme statism</i>	158	<i>Ecosocialism</i>	219
<i>Extreme racism</i>	161	<i>Eco-anarchism</i>	219
The future of fascism	166	<i>Ecofeminism</i>	220
Questions for discussion	168	<i>Deep ecology</i>	221
Further reading	168	The future of ecogism	223
		Questions for discussion	224
		Further reading	224
8. POPULISM	169	11. MULTICULTURALISM	225
Preview	169	Preview	225
Historical overview	170	Historical overview	226
Core themes	172	Core themes	227
<i>The people</i>	172	<i>Postcolonialism</i>	227
<i>The elite</i>	174		
<i>Populist democracy</i>	175		
Types of populism	177		

<i>Politics of recognition</i>	229	<i>Other fundamentalisms</i>	261
<i>Culture and identity</i>	231	The future of fundamentalism	264
<i>Minority rights</i>	233	Questions for discussion	265
<i>Togetherness in difference</i>	236	Further reading	265
Types of multiculturalism	237		
<i>Liberal multiculturalism</i>	238		
<i>Pluralist multiculturalism</i>	239		
<i>Cosmopolitan multiculturalism</i>	241		
The future of multiculturalism	243		
Questions for discussion	244		
Further reading	244		
12. FUNDAMENTALISM	245	13. WHY POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES MATTER	266
Preview	245	Preview	266
Historical overview	246	Why we need political ideologies	267
Core themes	247	<i>Making sense of the world</i>	267
<i>Religion as politics</i>	248	<i>Investing politics with moral purpose</i>	268
<i>Essential truths</i>	251	<i>Forging the collective</i>	268
<i>Anti-modernism</i>	252	Do ideologies matter too much?	269
<i>Militancy</i>	254	<i>Imprisoning the mind</i>	269
Types of fundamentalism	255	<i>Distorting 'truth'</i>	270
<i>Islamism</i>	255	<i>Pitting 'us' against 'them'</i>	270
<i>Christian fundamentalism</i>	258	Choosing between ideologies	271
		Questions for discussion	271
		<i>Bibliography</i>	272
		<i>Index</i>	283

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

KEY FIGURES

Mikhail Bakunin	111	Vladimir Ilich Lenin	91
Daniel Bell	16	John Locke	29
Jeremy Bentham	33	James Lovelock	212
Isaiah Berlin	240	Rosa Luxemburg	92
Eduard Bernstein	96	James Madison	44
Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale	262	Herbert Marcuse	94
Murray Bookchin	220	Karl Marx	76
Edmund Burke	50	Charles Maurras	143
Judith Butler	202	Guiseppe Mazzini	137
Rachel Carson	207	Carolyn Merchant	220
Houston Stewart Chamberlain	164	John Stuart Mill	25
Hugo Chavez	183	Kate Millett	189
Simone de Beauvoir	191	Narendra Modi	262
Jerry Falwell	260	Benito Mussolini	156
Frantz Fanon	145	Arne Naess	222
Betty Friedan	28	Friedrich Nietzsche	154
Francis Fukuyama	17	Robert Nozick	65
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi	144	Michael Oakeshott	55
Marcus Garvey	136	Viktor Orban	181
Giovanni Gentile	159	Robert Owen	80
Anthony Giddens	15	Bhikhu Parekh	240
Joseph Arthur Gobineau	163	Juan Domingo Perón	171
William Godwin	117	Thomas Piketty	86
Emma Goldman	109	Pierre-Joseph Proudhon	115
Antonio Gramsci	5	Sayyid Qutb	256
Germaine Greer	199	Ayn Rand	63
Johann Gottfried Herder	135	John Rawls	39
Adolf Hitler	149	Alfred Rosenberg	160
Thomas Hobbes	54	Murray Rothbard	120
bell hooks	201	Jean-Jacques Rousseau	133
Immanuel Kant	23	Edward Said	228
Ayatollah Khomeini	248	Ernst Friedrich ('Fritz') Schumacher	214
Peter Kropotkin	113	Adam Smith	34
Will Kymlicka	234	Max Stirner	118
Marine Le Pen	182	Charles Taylor	234

Henry David Thoreau	119	Woodrow Wilson	138
James Tully	236	Mary Wollstonecraft	28
Friedrich von Hayek	64	Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung)	77
Jeremy Waldron	241		

KEY CONCEPTS

Anti-globalization	105	Libertarianism	61
Anti-politics	171	Majoritarianism	177
Anti-Semitism	164	Neoconservatism	67
Authoritarianism	66	Neoliberalism	63
Capitalism	77	New Left	94
Clash of civilizations	247	New Right	62
Collectivism	80	Paradigm	268
Colonialism	228	Paternalism	70
Communism	87	Patriotism	125
Constitutionalism	42	Plebiscitary democracy	176
Corporatism	160	Pluralism	240
Culture war	179	Postmaterialism	217
Democratization	18	Pragmatism	6
Elitism	174	Racism	162
Federalism	43	Rationalism	26
Globalization	21	Religious fundamentalism	246
Identity politics	232	Republicanism	230
Imperialism	126	Social democracy	95
Individualism	24	Sustainable development	218
Industrialism	213	Theocracy	247
Internationalism	139	Toryism	71
Intersectionality	201	Totalitarianism	159
Islamism	255	Utilitarianism	33
Keynesianism	40	Utopianism	110
Liberal democracy	44	Zionism	263

PERSPECTIVES ON ...

Authority	155	Human nature	56
Culture	232	Ideology	7
Democracy	45	Nation	131
The economy	85	Nature	210
Equality	82	The people	173
Freedom	25	Religion	250
Gender	191	Society	59
History	17	State	107

TENSIONS WITHIN ...

Classical liberalism v. Modern liberalism	40	Liberal nationalism v. Expansionist nationalism	142
Neoliberalism v. Neoconservatism	67	Fascism v. Nazism	166
Paternalistic conservatism v. Libertarian conservatism	70	Right populism v. Left populism	182
Communism v. Social democracy	97	Equality feminism v. Difference feminism	195
Social democracy v. Third way	100	Liberal feminism v. Radical feminism	200
Individualist anarchism v. Collectivist anarchism	120	'Shallow' ecology v. 'Deep' ecology	211
Civic nationalism v. Ethnocultural nationalism	136	Liberal multiculturalism v. Pluralist multiculturalism	241

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN ACTION

Decolonizing the curriculum	12	Greece's Golden Dawn	151
Free speech in a plural society	30	The refugee crisis in Europe	179
Same-sex marriage	57	The Me Too movement	194
Universal basic income	84	School climate strikes	216
Anarchism and cyberspace	106	Cultural appropriation	235
Nationalism and the pandemic	128	Donald Trump and the Christian right	249

FIGURES

1.1 Features of ideology	8	7.1 Types of fascism	158
1.2 Contrasting ideological structures	10	7.2 The nature of racism	162
1.3 'Classical' and 'new' ideologies	11	9.1 The sexual division of labour	190
1.4 Linear spectrum	13	9.2 Radical feminist view of patriarchy	193
1.5 Horseshoe spectrum	14	11.1 Contrasting approaches to social advancement	229
1.6 Two-dimensional spectrum	14	11.2 Liberalism and cultural diversity	239
1.7 The open/closed divide	15	11.3 Types of multiculturalism	242
4.1 Historical materialism	88	12.1 Relativism–fundamentalism spectrum	251
5.1 The nature of anarchism	105		
6.1 Views of the nation	132		

TOUR OF THE BOOK

This book contains a number of pedagogical features to help you understand each ideology discussed, the key thinkers and concepts associated with them, the differences between them and the tensions within them.

At the start of each chapter...

Chapter previews highlight the broad nature of the ideology and give a taste of the discussion to follow in the chapter.

CHAPTER 8
POPULISM

Preview	00
Historical overview	00
Core themes	00
Types of populism	00
The future of populism	00
Questions for discussion	00
Further reading	00

PREVIEW

Derived from the Latin *populus*, meaning people, the term 'populism' was originally used to refer to the ideas and beliefs of the US People's Party (also known as the Populist Party), which was founded in 1892. The term later acquired a range of pejorative associations, being used to imply, for example, mass manipulation or political irresponsibility. Few politicians therefore identify themselves as populists. These difficulties are compounded by a lack of scholarly agreement about both the nature of populism as a political phenomenon – is it an ideology, a movement, a political style or whatever? – and its defining features.

It is nevertheless widely accepted that, as an ideology, populism is shaped by two key stances: adulation of 'the people' and outright condemnation of the elite or establishment. The central image of populism is therefore of a society divided into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups: the 'pure' people and the 'corrupt' elite. From the populist perspective, the people – typically conceived selectively as the 'real people' or the 'true people' – constitute the only source of moral worth in politics, their wishes and instincts providing the sole legitimate guide to political action. Populists thus embrace a monist stance that is firmly opposed to pluralism, and puts it at odds with liberalism in general and liberal democracy in particular. However, in contrast to other forms of pro-people liberalism (notably fascism and communism), populism is essentially reformist rather than revolutionary.

It is nevertheless important to note that there are ideological tensions within populism, in particular between left-wing and right-wing populism. Left-wing populists typically define

Within each chapter...

Definitions of key terms, highlighted in the text, appear on the page where they are used, instead of in a separate glossary.

Environmentalism: A concern about the natural environment and particularly about reducing environmental degradation: a policy orientation rather than an ideological stance.

Humanism: A philosophy that gives moral priority to the achievement of human needs and ends.

Key figure boxes offer biographical details about the major thinkers and their influence on each ideological tradition, as well as highlighting their key writings.

KEY FIGURE



JAMES LOVELOCK (BORN 1919)

A UK atmospheric chemist, inventor and environmental thinker, Lovelock is best known as the inventor of the 'Gaia hypothesis'. This proposes that the Earth is best understood as a complex, self-regulating, living 'being', implying that the prospects for humankind are closely linked to whether the species helps to sustain, or threaten, the planetary ecosystem. Lovelock was also the first person to alert the world to the global presence of CFCs in the atmosphere, and he is, controversially, a supporter of nuclear power.

Colin McPherson/Corbis Entertainment/Getty Images

KEY CONCEPT

PRAGMATISM

Pragmatism, broadly defined, refers to behaviour that is shaped in accordance with practical circumstances and goals, rather than principles or ideological objectives. As a philosophical tradition, associated with 'classical pragmatists' such as William

disputes that seeks to clarify the means and hypotheses by identifying consequences. The benefits of pragmatism are that it allows policies and politics to be judged 'on their merits' (on the basis of what works), and that it prevents ideology from being divorced from reality and turning into dogma. Critics, however, equate pragmatism with a lack of principle.

Key concept boxes provide extended explanations of important ideas that underpin the ideologies under discussion.

Perspectives on ... features consider rival perspectives on important political themes.



PERSPECTIVES ON ... IDEOLOGY



LIBERALS, particularly during the Cold War period, have viewed ideology as an officially sanctioned belief system that claims a monopoly of truth, often through a spurious claim to be scientific. Ideology is therefore inherently repressive, even totalitarian; its prime examples are communism and fascism.

CONSERVATIVES have traditionally regarded ideology as a manifestation of the arrogance of rationalism. Ideologies are elaborate systems of thought that are dangerous or unreliable because, being abstracted from reality, they establish principles and goals that lead to repression, or are simply unachievable. In this light, socialism and liberalism are clearly ideological.

SOCIALISTS, following Marx, have seen ideology as a body of ideas that conceal the contradictions of class society, thereby promoting false consciousness and political passivity among subordinate classes. Liberalism is the classic ruling-class ideology. Later Marxists adopted

Political ideologies in action features draw on important and contemporary case studies to illustrate how each ideology plays out in the real world



POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN ACTION ...



DECOLONIZING THE CURRICULUM

EVENTS: In March 2015, the first protests took place in the student-led Rhodes Must Fall campaign. The campaign was initially directed against a statue at the University of Cape Town that commemorated Cecil Rhodes, the British mining magnate and prime minister of Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896. Although the statue was removed in April 2015, the protest movement spread to other universities, both within South Africa and elsewhere in the world. The Rhodes Must Fall in Oxford campaign called on Oriel College, Oxford University, to take down the statue of Rhodes that sits overlooking the High Street, but this demand was rejected in January 2016. The protesters objected to the statue on the grounds that they glorified a man who was an architect of apartheid and had been deeply implicated in the racist and bloody history of British colonialism.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Rhodes Must Fall protests were linked to the wider goal of 'decolonizing the



Getty Images/Getty/Getty

Those who argue that the decolonisation agenda urgently needs to be applied to political ideologies claim that, as a product of the Enlightenment, ideology is intrinsically a part of the Western intellectual tradition, so separating it from non-Western cultures (Chinese, Indian, African, Islamic and so on). Such thinking is consolidated by the tendency of liberalism to operate as an ideology of Western domination. Not only do liberals insist that their values and institutions are universally

TENSIONS WITHIN ... CONSERVATISM (I)



Neoliberalism	VS	Neoconservatism
classical liberalism	↔	traditional conservatism
atomism	↔	organicism
radicalism	↔	traditionalism
libertarianism	↔	authoritarianism
economic dynamism	↔	social order

Tensions within ... features highlight key points of tension within each ideology.

At the end of each chapter...

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How does the Marxist concept of ideology differ from the mainstream concept?
- Is ideology necessarily false? If so, why?
- Can 'socially unattached' intellectuals rise above ideology?
- Are all political ideas ideological, or only some of them?
- To what extent do ideologies differ in terms of their conceptual structure?
- What is the distinction between political ideology and political theory?
- How should the political spectrum be presented, and why?
- What is new about the 'new' ideologies?
- To what extent has ideological commitment become a lifestyle choice?
- Does the rise of 'new' ideologies mean that the old ones are now defunct?
- To what extent does the left/right divide aid our understanding of political ideologies?
- To what extent should the political spectrum be presented, and why?
- Are ideologies destined never to end?

FURTHER RESOURCES

Ball, T., Dagger, R. & O'Neill, D. *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader* (2019). A broad anthology of important writings, both classic and contemporary, covering all major ideological traditions.

Freeden, M., Sargent, L. & Stears, M. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies* (2015). Dozens of experts collaborate to bring the key developments and recent research in political ideology.

Questions for discussion encourage you to reflect on some of the key issues and debates relating to each ideology, either on your own or within a group setting.

Further resources provide a list of useful texts and online resources to extend your study of ideologies beyond the book.

At the end of the book...

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acton, Lord (1956) *Essays on Freedom and Power*. London: Meridian.
 Adams, I. (1989) *The Logic of Political Belief: A Philosophical Analysis*. London and New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
 Adib-Moghaddam, A. (ed.) (2014) *Introduction to Khomenei*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
 Adonis, A. and Hames, T. (1994) *A Conservative Revolution? The Thatcher- Reagan Decade in Perspective*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Ball, T., Dagger, R. *Ideologies and* and New York
 Ball, T., Dagger, R. *Ideologies*
 Routledge.
 Baradat, L. P. (2
 Origins and I
 River, NJ: Pre
 Barber, B. (2003) *Ji
 and Tribalism*
 London: Cor

There is a full bibliography, and in the index entries material in boxes are in bold, and the on-page definitions are in italics.

INDEX

Note: page numbers that are in **bold** type refer to figures, tables *italics* refer to on-page definitions.

A
 abortion
 legalization of 193
 Adorno, Theodore 94
 affirmative action 234, 234

religion, anarchists' perspective on **250**
 society, anarchists' perspective on **59**
 Spanish Civil War and 115

PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

The world of political ideologies never ceases to surprise. The election of Donald Trump as US president in November 2016, and the referendum vote in the UK in favour of Brexit earlier in the year, thus appeared to come out of the blue. In both cases, the forces of mainstream conservatism were supplemented by an upsurge in populist nationalism that far exceeded the predictions of most pundits. In part, this was because the rise of populism – which, albeit to different degrees, affected most developed states as well as some developing states – threatened to reverse the dominant ideological trend of the post-1945 period: the onward march of liberalism. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether resurgent populism is destined to be an ongoing trend, or merely a temporary one. This uncertainty occurs not least because other ideological developments have also recently come to the fore, such as the campaign for racial justice, associated with the Black Lives Matter movement, to say nothing about the myriad (and often contradictory) ideological ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic since 2020.

The seventh edition of *Political Ideologies* has been systematically revised and updated throughout. It differs from the previous edition in a number of significant ways. The coverage of populism has been expanded by the inclusion of a separate chapter on the subject (Chapter 8). The chapter on Islamism has been replaced by one on the broader topic of fundamentalism (Chapter 12). The focus of the concluding chapter has shifted from the end-of-ideology debate (now incorporated into Chapter 1) to the topic of why ideologies matter, and to what extent (Chapter 12). The feminism chapter has been revised to include a consideration of modern approaches to gender and sexuality, including intersectionality, trans theory and queer theory (Chapter 9). The multiculturalism chapter has been restructured to analyse postcolonialism in greater depth (Chapter 11). All the 'Political Ideologies in Action' features have been updated to focus on contemporary, rather than historical, issues. Each of the substantive chapters now includes a concluding section reflecting on the future prospects of the ideology in question.

I would like to thank all those at Red Globe Press who have contributed to the production of the book, particularly Lloyd Langman and Peter Atkinson, whose suggestions and feedback throughout the process were unfailingly encouraging, constructive and insightful. I would also like to thank Matt Laing for his contribution to the Further Reading sections, as well as the anonymous reviewers who commented on the book at various points in its development. Discussions with friends and colleagues, notably Karen and Doug Woodward, Angela and David Maddison, Barbara and Chris Clarkson, Kate and Barry Taylor, Gill and Collin Spraggs, and Gill Walton, also helped to sharpen the ideas and arguments advanced here. The book is dedicated to my wife, Jean, without whose advice, encouragement and support none of the editions of this book would have seen the light of day.

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES



Views of political ideology	2
Contours of ideology	7
From ‘classical’ to ‘new’ ideologies?	10
Left, right and beyond	13
The end of ideology?	16
Questions for discussion	18
Further reading	18

PREVIEW

All people are political thinkers. Whether they know it or not, people use political ideas and concepts whenever they express their opinion or speak their mind. Everyday language is littered with terms such as ‘freedom’, ‘fairness’, ‘equality’, ‘justice’ and ‘rights’. In the same way, words such as ‘conservative’, ‘liberal’, ‘socialist’, ‘communist’ and ‘fascist’ are regularly employed by people either to describe their own views, or those of others. However, even though such terms are familiar, even commonplace, they are seldom used with any precision or a clear grasp of their meaning. What, for instance, is ‘equality’? What does it mean to say that all people are equal? Are people born equal; should they be treated by society as if they are equal? Should people have equal rights, equal opportunities, equal political influence, equal wages? Similarly, words such as ‘socialist’ or ‘fascist’ are commonly misused. What does it mean to call someone a ‘fascist’? What values or beliefs do fascists hold, and why do they hold them? How do socialist views differ from those of, say, liberals, conservatives or anarchists? This book examines the substantive ideas and beliefs of the major political ideologies.

This introductory chapter reflects on the nature of political ideology. It does so by examining the life and (sometimes convoluted) times of the concept of ideology, the structure of ideological thought, the differences between so-called ‘classical’ ideologies and ‘new’ ideologies, the extent to which ideologies conform to a left/right divide, and the question of whether ideology has or could come to an end. (Chapter 13 discusses how and why political ideologies matter.)

VIEWS OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

This book is primarily a study of political ideologies, rather than an analysis of the nature of ideology. Much confusion stems from the fact that, though obviously related, 'ideology' and 'ideologies' are quite different things to study. To examine 'ideology' is to consider a particular *type* of political thought, distinct from, say, political science or political philosophy. The study of political ideology thus involves reflection on questions about the nature, role and significance of this category of thought, and about which sets of political ideas and arguments should be classified as ideologies. For instance, is ideology true or false, liberating or oppressive, or inevitable or merely transitory? Similarly, are green ideology and multiculturalism, by virtue of their relatively narrow focus, ideologies in the same sense as liberalism and socialism, both of which offer a comprehensive vision of the desired future?

On the other hand, to study 'ideologies' is to be concerned with analysing the *content* of political thought, to be interested in the ideas, doctrines and theories that have been advanced by and within the various ideological traditions. For example, what can liberalism tell us about freedom? Why have socialists traditionally supported equality? How do anarchists defend the idea of a stateless society? Why have fascists regarded struggle and war as healthy? In order to examine such 'content' issues, however, it is necessary to consider the overarching 'type' of political thought we are dealing with. Before discussing the characteristic ideas and doctrines of the so-called ideologies, we need to reflect on why these sets of ideas have been categorized as ideologies. More importantly, what does the categorization tell us? What can we learn about, for instance, liberalism, socialism, feminism and fascism from the fact that they are classified as ideologies?

The first problem confronting any discussion of the nature of ideology is that there is no settled or agreed definition of the term, only a collection of rival definitions. As David McLellan (1995) commented, 'Ideology is the most elusive concept in the whole of the social sciences.' Few political terms have been the subject of such deep and impassioned controversy. This has occurred for two reasons. In the first place, as all concepts of ideology acknowledge a link between theory and practice, the term uncovers highly contentious debates about the role of ideas in politics and the relationship between beliefs and theories on the one hand, and material life or political conduct on the other. Second, the concept of ideology has not been able to stand apart from the ongoing struggle between and among political ideologies. For much of its history, the term 'ideology' has been used as a political weapon, a device with which to condemn or criticize rival sets of ideas or belief systems. Not until the second half of the twentieth century was a neutral and apparently objective concept of ideology widely employed, and even then disagreements persisted over the social role and political significance of ideology. Among the meanings that have been attached to ideology are the following:

- a political belief system
- an action-orientated set of political ideas
- the ideas of the ruling class
- the world-view of a particular social class or social group
- political ideas that embody or articulate class or social interests
- ideas that propagate false consciousness among the exploited or oppressed
- ideas that situate the individual within a social context and generate a sense of collective belonging

- an officially sanctioned set of ideas used to legitimize a political system or regime
- an all-embracing political doctrine that claims a monopoly of truth
- an abstract and highly systematic set of political ideas.

The origins of the term are nevertheless clear. The word 'ideology' was coined during the French Revolution by Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836), and was first used in public in 1796. For de Tracy, *idéologie* referred to a new 'science of ideas', literally an *idea*-ology. With a rationalist zeal typical of the **Enlightenment**, he believed that it was possible to uncover the origins of ideas objectively, and proclaimed that this new science would come to enjoy the same status as established sciences such as biology and zoology. More boldly, since all forms of enquiry are based on ideas, de Tracy suggested that ideology would eventually come to be recognized as the queen of the sciences. However, despite these high expectations, this original meaning of the term has had little impact on later usage, which has been influenced by both Marxist and non-Marxist thinking.

Marxist views

The career of ideology as a key political term stems from the use made of it in the writings of Karl Marx (see p. 76). Marx's use of the term, and the interest shown in it by later generations of Marxist thinkers, largely explains the prominence ideology enjoys in modern social and political thought. Yet the meaning Marx ascribed to the concept is very different from the one usually accorded it in mainstream political analysis. Marx used the term in the title of his early work *The German Ideology* ([1846]1970), written with his lifelong collaborator Friedrich Engels (1820–95). This also contains Marx's clearest description of his view of ideology:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time the ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. (Marx and Engels, [1846]1970)

Marx's concept of ideology has a number of crucial features. First, ideology is about *delusion* and mystification: it perpetrates a false or mistaken view of the world, what Engels later referred to as '**false consciousness**'. Marx used ideology as a critical concept, the purpose of which is to unmask a process of systematic mystification. His own ideas he classified as scientific, because they were designed to accurately uncover the workings of history and society. The contrast between ideology and science, between falsehood and truth, was thus vital to Marx's use of the term. Second, ideology is linked to the *class system*. Marx believed that the distortion implicit in ideology stems from the fact that it reflects the interests and perspective on society of the ruling class. The ideology of a capitalist society is therefore **bourgeois ideology**. The ruling class is unwilling to recognize itself as an oppressor and, equally, is anxious to reconcile the oppressed to their oppression. The class system is thus presented upside down, a notion Marx conveyed through the image of the camera obscura, the inverted picture

Enlightenment: An intellectual movement that reached its height in the eighteenth century and challenged traditional beliefs in religion, politics and learning in general in the name of reason and progress.

False consciousness: A Marxist term denoting the delusion and mystification that prevents subordinate classes from recognizing the fact of their own exploitation.

Bourgeois ideology: A Marxist term denoting ideas and theories that serve the interests of the bourgeoisie by disguising the contradictions of capitalist society.

that is produced by a camera lens or the human eye. Liberalism, which portrays rights that can only be exercised by the propertied and privileged as universal entitlements, is therefore the classic example of ideology.

Third, ideology is a manifestation of *power*. In concealing the contradictions on which capitalism, in common with all class societies, is based, ideology serves to hide from the exploited proletariat the fact of its own exploitation, and thereby upholds a system of unequal class power. Ideology literally constitutes the ‘ruling’ ideas of the age. Finally, Marx treated ideology as a *temporary* phenomenon. Ideology will only continue so long as the class system that generates it survives. The proletariat – in Marx’s view, the ‘grave digger’ of capitalism – is destined not to establish another form of class society, but rather to abolish class inequality altogether by bringing about the collective ownership of wealth. The interests of the proletariat thus coincide with those of society as a whole. The proletariat, in short, does not need ideology because it is the only class that needs no illusions.

Later generations of Marxists showed, if anything, a greater interest in ideology than did Marx himself. This largely stems from the fact that Marx’s confident prediction of capitalism’s doom proved to be highly optimistic, encouraging later Marxists to focus on ideology as one of the factors explaining the unexpected resilience of the capitalist mode of production. However, important shifts in the meaning of the term also took place. In particular, all classes came to be seen to possess ideologies. For Lenin and most later Marxists, ideology therefore came to refer to the distinctive ideas of a particular social class, ideas that advance its interests regardless of its class position. However, as all classes – the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie – have an ideology, the term was robbed of its negative or pejorative connotations.

The Marxist theory of ideology was perhaps developed furthest by Antonio Gramsci (see p. 5). Gramsci ([1935]1971) argued that the capitalist class system is upheld not simply by unequal economic and political power, but by what he termed the ‘**hegemony**’ of bourgeois ideas and theories. Hegemony means leadership or domination and, in the sense of ideological hegemony, it refers to the capacity of bourgeois ideas to displace rival views and become, in effect, the common sense of the age. Gramsci highlighted the degree to which ideology is embedded at every level in society: in its art and literature; in its education system and mass media; in everyday language; and in popular culture. This bourgeois hegemony, Gramsci insisted, could only be challenged at the political and intellectual level, which means through the establishment of a rival ‘proletarian hegemony’, based on socialist principles, values and theories.

The capacity of capitalism to achieve stability by manufacturing legitimacy was also a particular concern of the Frankfurt School, a group of mainly German neo-Marxists who fled the Nazis and later settled in the USA. Its most widely known member, Herbert Marcuse (see p. 94), argued in *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) that advanced industrial society has developed a ‘totalitarian’ character through the capacity of its ideology to

manipulate thought and deny expression to oppositional views. According to Marcuse, even the tolerance that appears to characterize liberal capitalism serves a repressive purpose, in that it creates the impression of free debate and argument, thereby concealing the extent to which indoctrination and ideological control take place.

Hegemony: The ascendancy or domination of one element of a system over others; for Marxists, hegemony implies ideological domination.



KEY FIGURE



Dea Picture Library/De Agostini/Getty Images

ANTONIO GRAMSCI (1891–1937)

An Italian Marxist and revolutionary, Gramsci tried to redress the emphasis within orthodox Marxism on economic and material factors. In his major work, *Prison Notebooks* (1929–35), Gramsci rejected any form of ‘scientific’ determinism by stressing, through the theory of ‘hegemony’ (the dominance of bourgeois ideas and beliefs), the importance of political and intellectual struggle. While he did not ignore the ‘economic nucleus’, he argued that bourgeois assumptions and values needed to be overthrown by the establishment of a rival ‘proletarian hegemony’.

Non-Marxist views

One of the earliest attempts to construct a non-Marxist concept of ideology was undertaken by the German sociologist Karl Mannheim (1893–1947). Like Marx, he acknowledged that people’s ideas are shaped by their social circumstances, but, in contrast to Marx, he strove to rid ideology of its negative implications. In *Ideology and Utopia* ([1929]1960), Mannheim portrayed ideologies as thought systems that serve to defend a particular social order, and that broadly express the interests of its dominant or ruling group. Utopias, on the other hand, are idealized representations of the future that imply the need for radical social change, invariably serving the interests of oppressed or subordinate groups. He further distinguished between ‘particular’ and ‘total’ conceptions of ideology. ‘Particular’ ideologies are the ideas and beliefs of specific individuals, groups or parties, while ‘total’ ideologies encompass the entire *Weltanschauung*, or ‘world-view’, of a social class, society or even historical period. In this sense, Marxism, liberal capitalism and Islamism can each be regarded as ‘total’ ideologies. Mannheim nevertheless held that all ideological systems, including utopias, are distorted, because each offers a partial, and necessarily self-interested, view of social reality. However, he argued that the attempt to uncover objective truth need not be abandoned altogether. According to Mannheim, objectivity is strictly the preserve of the ‘socially unattached intelligentsia’, a class of intellectuals who alone can engage in disciplined and dispassionate enquiry because they have no economic interests of their own.

The subsequent career of the concept was marked deeply by the emergence of totalitarian dictatorships in the interwar period, and by the heightened ideological tensions of the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s. Liberal theorists in particular portrayed the regimes that developed in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia as historically new and uniquely oppressive systems of rule, and highlighted the role played by ‘official’ ideologies in suppressing debate and criticism, and promoting regimented obedience. Writers as different as Karl Popper (1945), Hannah Arendt (1951), J. L. Talmon (1952), Bernard Crick (1962) and the ‘end of ideology’ theorists examined in the final section of this chapter, came to use the term ‘ideology’ in a highly restrictive manner, seeing fascism and communism as its prime examples. According to this usage, ideologies are ‘closed’ systems of thought, which, by claiming a monopoly of truth, refuse to tolerate opposing ideas and rival beliefs. Ideologies are thus ‘secular religions’; they possess a

'totalizing' character and serve as instruments of social control, ensuring compliance and subordination. However, not all political creeds are ideologies by this standard. For instance, liberalism, based as it is on a fundamental commitment to freedom, tolerance and diversity, is the clearest example of an 'open' system of thought (Popper, 1945).

A distinctively conservative concept of ideology can also be identified. This is based on a long-standing conservative distrust of abstract principles and philosophies, born out of a sceptical attitude towards rationalism (see p. 26) and progress. The world is viewed as infinitely complex and largely beyond the capacity of the human mind to fathom. The foremost modern exponent of this view was Michael Oakeshott (see p. 55). 'In political activity', Oakeshott argued in *Rationalism in Politics* (1962), 'men sail a boundless and bottomless sea'. From this perspective, ideologies are seen as abstract systems of thought, sets of ideas that are destined to simplify and distort social reality because they claim to explain what is, frankly, incomprehensible. Ideology is thus equated with dogmatism: fixed or doctrinaire beliefs that are divorced from the complexities of the real world. Conservatives have therefore rejected the 'ideological' style of politics, based on attempts to reshape the world in accordance with a set of abstract principles or pre-established theories. Until infected by the highly ideological politics of the New Right (see p. 62), conservatives had preferred to adopt what Oakeshott called a 'traditionalist stance', which spurns ideology in favour of pragmatism, and looks to experience and history as the surest guides to human conduct.

KEY CONCEPT

PRAGMATISM

Pragmatism, broadly defined, refers to behaviour that is shaped in accordance with practical circumstances and goals, rather than principles or ideological objectives. As a philosophical tradition, associated with 'classical pragmatists' such as William James (1842–1910) and John Dewey (1859–1952), pragmatism is a method for settling metaphysical

disputes that seeks to clarify the meaning of concepts and hypotheses by identifying their practical consequences. The benefits of pragmatism in politics are that it allows policies and political assertions to be judged 'on their merits' (on the basis of 'what works'), and that it prevents ideology from becoming divorced from reality and turning into mere wishful thinking. Critics, however, equate pragmatism with a lack of principle or a tendency to follow public opinion rather than lead it.

Since the 1960s, however, the term 'ideology' has gained a wider currency through being refashioned according to the needs of conventional social and political analysis. This has established ideology as a neutral and objective concept, the political baggage once attached to it having been removed. Martin Seliger (1976), for example, defined an ideology as 'a set of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify the ends and means of organized social action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order'. An ideology is therefore an action-orientated system of thought. So defined, ideologies are neither good nor bad, true nor false, open nor closed, liberating nor oppressive – they can be all these things.

The clear merit of this social-scientific concept is that it is inclusive, in the sense that it can be applied to all 'isms', to liberalism as well as Marxism, to conservatism as well as fascism, and so on. The drawback of any negative concept of ideology is that it is highly restrictive. Marx saw liberal and conservative ideas as ideological but regarded his own as scientific; liberals classify communism and fascism as ideologies but refuse to accept that liberalism is also one; traditional conservatives condemn liberalism, Marxism and fascism as ideological but portray conservatism as merely a 'disposition'. However, any neutral concept of ideology also has its dangers. In particular, in offloading its political

PERSPECTIVES ON ... IDEOLOGY



LIBERALS, particularly during the Cold War period, have viewed ideology as an officially sanctioned belief system that claims a monopoly of truth, often through a spurious claim to be scientific. Ideology is therefore inherently repressive, even totalitarian; its prime examples are communism and fascism.

CONSERVATIVES have traditionally regarded ideology as a manifestation of the arrogance of rationalism. Ideologies are elaborate systems of thought that are dangerous or unreliable because, being abstracted from reality, they establish principles and goals that lead to repression, or are simply unachievable. In this light, socialism and liberalism are clearly ideological.

SOCIALISTS, following Marx, have seen ideology as a body of ideas that conceal the contradictions of class society, thereby promoting false consciousness and political passivity among subordinate classes. Liberalism is the classic ruling-class ideology. Later Marxists adopted a neutral concept of ideology, regarding it as the distinctive ideas of any social class, including the working class.

FASCISTS are often dismissive of ideology as an over-systematic, dry and intellectualized form of political understanding based on mere reason rather than passion and the will. The Nazis preferred to portray their own ideas as a *Weltanschauung* or 'world-view', and not as a systematic philosophy.

FEMINISTS, particularly from the Marxist feminist tradition, have seen ideology as a means of legitimizing the subordination of women in a patriarchal society. Ideology therefore has an intrinsically sexist character, apparent in the tendency to view supposedly male qualities and attributes as the human norm.

ECOLOGISTS have tended to regard all conventional political doctrines as part of a super-ideology of industrialism. Ideology is thus tainted by its association with arrogant humanism and growth-orientated economics – liberalism and socialism being its most obvious examples.

FUNDAMENTALISTS have treated key religious texts as ideology, on the grounds that, by expressing the revealed word of God, they provide a programme for comprehensive social reconstruction. Secular ideologies, by contrast, are rejected because they are not founded on religious principles and so lack moral substance.

baggage the term may be rendered so bland and generalized that it loses its critical edge completely. If ideology is interchangeable with terms such as 'belief system', 'world-view', 'doctrine' or 'political philosophy', what is the point of continuing to pretend that it has a separate and distinctive meaning?

CONTOURS OF IDEOLOGY

Any short or single-sentence definition of ideology is likely to provoke more questions than it answers. Nevertheless, it provides a useful and necessary starting point. In this book, ideology is understood as the following:

An ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power. All ideologies therefore have the following features.

They:

- (a) advance an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a ‘world-view’
- (b) outline a model of the desired future, a vision of the ‘good society’
- (c) explain how political change can and should be brought about – how to get from (a) to (b). (See Figure 1.1.)

This definition is neither original nor novel, and is entirely in line with the social-scientific usage of the term. It nevertheless draws attention to some of the important and distinctive features of the phenomenon of ideology. In the process, it also highlights differences between political theory or philosophy and political ideologies as contrasting approaches to the study of political thought. Political theory considers ideas and concepts that have been central to political thought. Traditionally, this has taken the form of a history of political thought, focusing on a collection of ‘major’ thinkers – from, for instance, Machiavelli to Rawls – and a canon of ‘classic’ texts. As it studies the ends and means of political action, political theory is clearly concerned with ethical or **normative** questions, such as ‘Why should I obey the state?’ and ‘What should be the limits of individual freedom?’ This approach has about it the character of literary analysis: it is primarily interested in examining what major thinkers said, how they developed and justified their views and the intellectual context in which they worked.

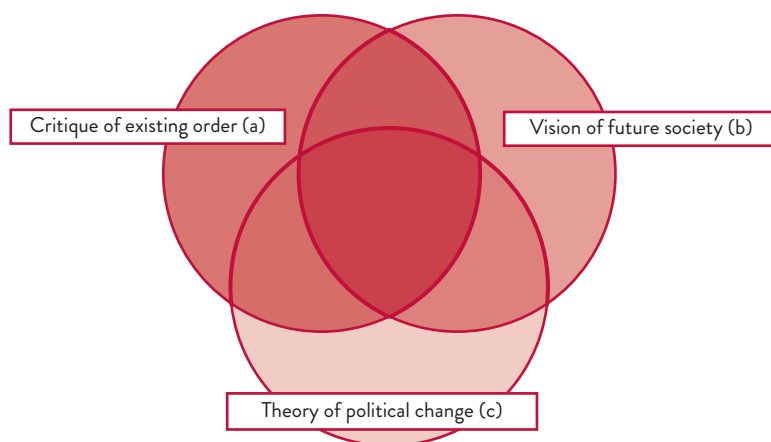


Figure 1.1 Features of ideology

Political ideologies differ from political theory in at least three respects. First, rather than focusing primarily on particular ideas and concepts – the state, authority, equality, justice and so on – or on the work of key thinkers, political ideologies look, first and foremost, at contrasting perspectives on political thought; each ideology thus offers a distinctive approach to political understanding. Composed of a particular configuration of ideas, doctrines and theories, these approaches provide a context in which political concepts, as well as the work of political thinkers, can be analysed. Ideologies can therefore be treated as frameworks within which the search for political knowledge takes place, otherwise known as paradigms (see p. 268).

Normative: The prescription of values and standards of conduct; what ‘should be’ rather than what ‘is’.

Second, whereas political theory deals with ethical or normative questions (creating a sharp contrast between political theory and supposedly value-free political science), ideologies straddle the boundaries between

descriptive and normative thought, so blurring the distinction between what 'is' and what 'ought to be'. This reflects the fact that the ideologies contain both descriptive understanding about the workings of the existing order ((a) above) and normative or prescriptive beliefs about the nature of the future society ((b) above). Third, although political theory examines the ends and means of political action, ideologies go further. They are concerned with ideas that seek to change the world, action-orientated ideas that link (b) and (c) in the list above. Ideologies are thus not political philosophies but, rather, applied political philosophies.

Nevertheless, to view political ideologies as applied political philosophies is to suggest that they have a clarity of shape and internal consistency that they invariably lack; ideologies are only *more* or *less* coherent. Their apparent shapelessness stems in part from the fact that ideologies are not hermetically sealed systems of thought; instead, they are, typically, fluid sets of ideas that overlap with other ideologies and shade into one another. This not only fosters ideological development but also leads to the emergence of hybrid ideological forms, such as conservative nationalism (see pp. 137–9), socialist feminism (see pp. 196–7) and liberal multiculturalism (see pp. 237–8). Moreover, each ideology contains a range of divergent, even rival, traditions and viewpoints. Not uncommonly, disputes between supporters of the same ideology are more passionate and bitter than arguments between supporters of rival ideologies, because what is at stake is the true nature of the ideology in question – what is 'true' socialism, 'true' liberalism or 'true' anarchism?

Such conflicts, both between and within ideological traditions, are made more confusing by the fact that they are often played out with the use of the same political vocabulary, each side investing terms such as 'freedom', 'democracy', 'justice' and 'equality' with their own meanings. This highlights the problem of what W. B. Gallie (1955–6) termed 'essentially contested concepts'. These are concepts about which there is such deep controversy that no settled or agreed definition can ever be developed. In this sense, the concept of ideology is certainly 'essentially contested', as indeed are the other terms examined in the 'Perspectives on ...' boxes found in this book.

Clearly, however, there must be a limit to the incoherence or shapelessness of ideologies. There must be a point at which, by abandoning a particularly cherished principle or embracing a previously derided theory, an ideology loses its identity or, perhaps, is absorbed into a rival ideology. Could liberalism remain liberalism if it abandoned its commitment to liberty? Would socialism any longer be socialism if it developed an appetite for violence and war? One way of dealing with this problem, following Michael Freeden (1996), is to highlight the morphology, the form and structure, of an ideology in terms of its key concepts, in the same way that the arrangement of furniture in a room helps us to distinguish between a kitchen, a bedroom, a lounge, and so on. Each ideology is therefore characterized by a cluster of core, adjacent and peripheral concepts, not all of which need be present for a theory or a doctrine to be recognized as belonging to that ideology. A kitchen remains a kitchen over time despite the relatively recent concept of an open plan kitchen or a dining area.

However, ideologies may be either 'thick' or 'thin', in terms of the configuration of their conceptual furniture. Whereas liberalism, conservatism and socialism are based on a broad and distinctive set of values, doctrines and beliefs, others, such as anarchism and feminism, are more thin-centred, often having

Descriptive: An account of something that is devoid of value judgements, focusing just on what 'is'.

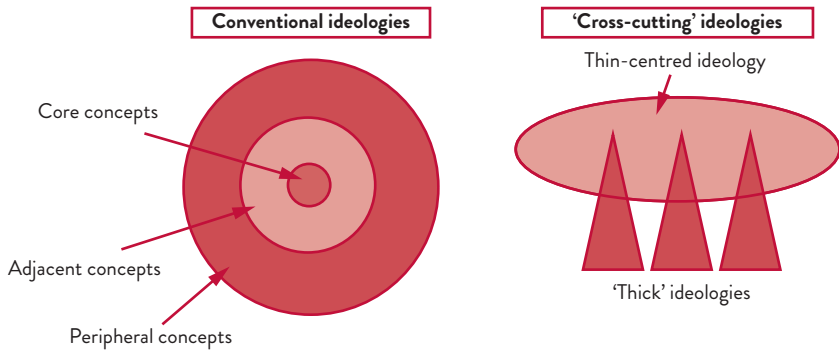


Figure 1.2 Contrasting ideological structures

a ‘cross-cutting’ character, in that they incorporate elements from ‘thicker’ ideological traditions (see Figure 1.2). This also explains why there is (perhaps unresolvable) debate and confusion about whether nationalism and multiculturalism in particular are ideologies in their own right or merely embellishments to other, ‘host’ ideologies.

FROM ‘CLASSICAL’ TO ‘NEW’ IDEOLOGIES?

Ideology may have been an inseparable feature of politics since the late eighteenth century (it is often traced back to the 1789 French Revolution), but its content has changed significantly over time, with the rate of ideological transformation having accelerated since the 1960s. New ideologies have emerged, some once-potent ideologies have faded in significance, and all ideologies have gone through a process of sometimes radical redefinition and renewal. Political ideology arose out of a transition from feudalism to industrial capitalism. In simple terms, the earliest, or ‘classical’, ideological traditions – notably liberalism, conservatism and socialism – developed as contrasting attempts to shape emergent industrial society. While liberalism championed the cause of individualism, the market and, initially at least, minimal government, conservatism stood in defence of an increasingly embattled *ancien régime*, and socialism advanced the quite different vision of a society based on community, equality and cooperation.

As the nineteenth century progressed, each of these ideologies acquired a clearer doctrinal character, and came to be associated with a particular social class or stratum of society. Simply put, liberalism was the ideology of the rising middle class, conservatism was the ideology of the aristocracy or nobility, and socialism was the ideology of the growing working class. In turn, political parties developed to articulate the interests of these classes and to give expression to the various ideologies. These parties therefore typically had a programmatic character.

The central theme that emerged from ideological argument and debate during this period was the battle between two rival economic philosophies: capitalism and socialism. This reflected the choice between market-based economic organization and state-centric economic organization. Political ideology thus had a strong economic focus. The battle lines between capitalism and socialism were significantly sharpened by the 1917 Russian Revolution, which created the world’s first socialist state. Indeed, throughout what is sometimes called the ‘short’ twentieth century (from the outbreak of World War I in

1914 to the fall of communism in 1989–91), and particularly during the Cold War period (1945–90), international politics was structured along ideological lines, as the capitalist West confronted the communist East.

However, since around the 1960s, the ideological landscape has been transformed. Not only have major changes occurred within established or classical ideologies (for instance, in the rise of the New Left (see p. 94) and the New Right (see p. 62), but a series of so-called ‘new’ political ideologies have also emerged. The most significant of these are set out in Figure 1.3. The designation of these ideologies as ‘new’ can nevertheless be misleading, as each of them has roots that stretch back to the nineteenth century, if not beyond. New ideologies typically have a complex and ambiguous relationship with classical ideologies. This stems from the fact that these ideologies evolved both by applying established ideological thinking to new or more modern issues or concerns, or by opening up fresh ideological terrain that in some ways goes *beyond* the parameters of established ideological thinking (as in the case of radical feminism (see pp. 197–8) or deep ecology (see pp. 221–2)). New ideologies are thus new in the sense that they have given particular areas of ideological debate – gender equality, environmental sustainability, cultural diversity and so on – a prominence they never previously enjoyed. In the process, they have altered the focus and sometimes the terms of ideological debate. This has happened in at least three ways:

‘Classical’ ideologies	‘New’ ideologies
Liberalism	Feminism
Conservatism	Green ideology
Socialism	Multiculturalism
Nationalism	Fundamentalism
Anarchism	Populism (?)
Fascism (?)	Postcolonialism

Figure 1.3 ‘Classical’ and ‘new’ ideologies

- First, there has been a shift away from economics and towards culture. Liberalism, conservatism and socialism were primarily concerned with issues of economic organization, or at least their moral vision was grounded in a particular economic model. By contrast, and in their various ways, new ideologies are more interested in culture than in economics: their primary concerns tend to be orientated around people’s values, beliefs and ways of life, rather than economic well-being or even social justice. This has happened, in part, because the ideological gulf between capitalism and socialism has narrowed markedly, market-based economic arrangements (of one kind or another) having become almost universal.
- Second, fuelled by the general trend towards diversity, there has been a shift from social politics to identity politics (see p. 232). Identity links the personal to the social, in seeing the individual as ‘embedded’ in a particular cultural, social, institutional and ideological context, but it also highlights the scope for personal choice and self-definition, reflecting a general social trend towards **individualization**. In this sense, new ideologies such as feminism, green ideology and fundamentalism provide individuals with a range of ideological options rather than offering worked-out sets of

Individualization: The process through which people are encouraged to see themselves as individuals, possibly at the expense of their sense of social/moral responsibility.

political solutions that ‘fit’ their social position. This means that political activism has become, in effect, a lifestyle choice.

Universalism: The belief that it is possible to uncover certain values and principles that are applicable to all people and all societies, regardless of historical, cultural and other differences.

- Third, classical ideologies have been subjected to greater critical scrutiny as a result of the trend towards ‘decolonizing the curriculum’. This has been reflected not only in the increasing significance of postcolonialism (see pp. 227–9), but also in the reappraisal of key political thinkers such as Immanuel Kant (see p. 23). Closely associated with Enlightenment thinking and ‘**universalist**’ claims about our rights and obligations, Kant’s



POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN ACTION ...

DECOLONIZING THE CURRICULUM

EVENTS: In March 2015, the first protests took place in the student-led Rhodes Must Fall campaign. The campaign was initially directed against a statue at the University of Cape Town that commemorated Cecil Rhodes, the British mining magnate and prime minister of Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896. Although the statue was removed in April 2015, the protest movement spread to other universities, both within South Africa and elsewhere in the world. The Rhodes Must Fall in Oxford campaign called on Oriel College, Oxford University, to take down the statue of Rhodes that sits overlooking the High Street, but this demand was rejected in January 2016. The protesters objected to the statues on the grounds that they glorified a man who was an architect of apartheid and had been deeply implicated in the racist and bloody history of British colonialism.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Rhodes Must Fall protests were linked to the wider goal of ‘decolonizing the curriculum’. The term decolonization usually refers to the post-World War II dismantlement of the European colonial empires. In this context, however, it refers to the process through which the cultural and ideological legacy of colonial rule is challenged, especially in the realm of education. Commonly called ‘decolonizing the mind’, this involves interrogating the attitudes and assumptions that have sustained racial and civilizational hierarchies and broadening our intellectual vision to include a wider range of perspectives. For many, this requires that the under-representation of people of colour and other marginalized groups in the arena of scholarship is rectified, ending the domination of ‘male, pale and stale’ voices.



Getty Images Europe/Getty

Those who argue that the decolonization agenda urgently needs to be applied to political ideologies claim that, as a product of the Enlightenment, ideology is intrinsically a part of the Western intellectual tradition, so separating it from non-Western cultures (Chinese, Indian, African, Islamic and so on). Such thinking is consolidated by the tendency of liberalism to operate as an ideology of Western domination. Not only do liberals insist that their values and institutions are universally applicable, and are therefore destined to prevail worldwide, but significant omissions (such as those about the brutal and exploitative nature of colonial rule and the racist assumptions that this rule was based upon) conceal the darker side of liberal hegemony. Nevertheless, over time, political ideologies have been increasingly effective in giving expression to non-Western (and sometimes anti-Western) views and voices. In the post-World War II period, this was evident in the emergence of African socialism, Arab socialism and Chinese communism. More recently, it has occurred through the rise of, for example, postcolonial nationalism, pluralist multiculturalism (see pp. 237–8) and various forms of religious fundamentalism (see Chapter 12).

contribution must now be reassessed in the light of remarks he made on colonial practices and slavery that suggested that he regarded these practices as tolerable, if not as necessary moments in the process of cultural and historical progress. Kant has also come to be viewed as a 'scientific racist' for writings in which he sought intellectually to establish the cultural superiority of white Europeans over Asians and Africans.

LEFT, RIGHT AND BEYOND

An additional way of categorizing political ideologies is on the basis of their position on the left–right political spectrum. The origins of the terms 'left' and 'right' in politics date back to the French Revolution and the seating arrangements of radicals and aristocrats at the first meeting of the Estates General in 1789. The left/right divide therefore originally reflected the stark choice between revolution and reaction. The terms have subsequently been used to highlight a divide that supposedly runs throughout the world of political thought and action, helping both to provide insight into the nature of particular ideologies and to uncover relationships between political ideologies more generally. Left and right are usually understood as the poles of a political spectrum, enabling people to talk about the 'centre-left', the 'far-right' and so on. This is in line with a linear political spectrum that travels from left-wing to right-wing, as shown in Figure 1.4. However, the terms left and right have been used to draw attention to a variety of distinctions.



Figure 1.4 Linear spectrum

Stemming from their original meanings, left and right have been used to sum up contrasting attitudes to political change in general, left-wing thinking welcomes change, usually based on a belief in **progress**, while right-wing thinking resists change and seeks to defend the **status quo**. Inspired by works such as Adorno et al.'s *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), attempts have been made to explain ideological differences, and especially rival attitudes to change, in terms of people's psychological needs, motives and desires (Jost et al., 2003). In this light, conservative ideology, to take one example, is shaped by a deep psychological aversion to uncertainty and instability (an idea examined in Chapter 3). An alternative construction of the left/right divide focuses on different attitudes to economic organization and the role of the state. Left-wing views thus support intervention and collectivism (see p. 80), while right-wing views favour the market and individualism (see p. 24). Bobbio (1996), by contrast, argues that the fundamental basis for the distinction between left and right lies in differing attitudes to equality, left-wingers advocate greater equality while right-wingers treat equality as either impossible or undesirable. This may also help to explain the continuing relevance of the left/right divide, as the 'great problem of inequality' remains unresolved at both national and global levels.

Progress: Moving forward; the belief that history is characterized by human advancement underpinned by the accumulation of knowledge and wisdom.

Status quo: The existing state of affairs.

As a means of providing insight into the character of political ideologies and how they relate to one another, the traditional linear political spectrum nevertheless has a range of drawbacks. For instance, as all ideologies contain rival, or even contradictory, elements, locating them clearly on a linear political spectrum against a single criterion can be notoriously difficult. Anarchism, for instance, can be seen as either ultra-left-wing or ultra-right-wing, since it encompasses both anarcho-communist and anarcho-capitalist tendencies. It has also been argued that the ideologies that are traditionally placed at the extreme wings of the linear spectrum may have more in common with one another than they do with their 'centrist' neighbours. During the Cold War period in particular, it was widely claimed that communism and fascism resembled one another by virtue of a shared tendency towards totalitarianism (see p. 159). Such a view led to the idea that the political spectrum should be horseshoe-shaped, not linear (see Figure 1.5).

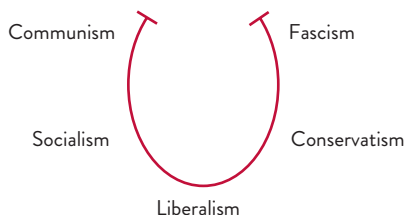


Figure 1.5 Horseshoe spectrum

Moreover, as political ideologies manifest themselves differently in different geographical contexts, it may be impossible to assign them an agreed left/right identity. Thus, while in the European context populism is predominantly associated with anti-immigrant and xenophobic political projects, giving it a distinctively right-wing character, in Latin America populism has been linked, historically, to state interventionist economic policies and the use of left-wing-orientated rhetoric.

A final drawback is that, as ideological debate has developed and broadened over the years, the linear spectrum has seemed increasingly simplistic and generalized, the left/right divide capturing only one dimension of a more complex series of political interactions. This has given rise to the idea of the two-dimensional spectrum, with, as pioneered by Eysenck (1964), a liberty/authority vertical axis being added to the established left/right horizontal axis (see Figure 1.6).

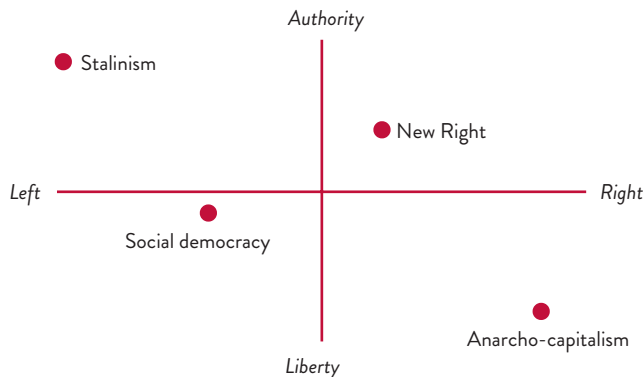


Figure 1.6 Two-dimensional spectrum

Nevertheless, a growing body of thought suggests that contemporary political ideologies have gone beyond the left/right divide. This may apply in the case of new ideologies, which, by virtue of their focus on issues of culture and identity rather than economic organization, no longer easily relate to the left/right battle between socialism and capitalism. For Anthony Giddens, sociological developments associated with the advance of globalization (see p. 21) have exhausted both left-wing and right-wing ideological tradition. In this view, the tendency for people's lives to be shaped increasingly by developments that occur, and events that happen, at a great distance from them has created societies that are so fluid and complex that they have, effectively, outgrown the major ideological traditions. Politics, therefore, has gone beyond left and right, a trend that has been particularly evident in the 'hollowing out' of parliamentary socialism since the 1990s.

However, instead of the emergence of an interconnected and interdependent world leading to ideological exhaustion, globalization may be in the process of replacing the left/right divide with one based on the gulf between 'open' and 'closed' political leanings (see Figure 1.7). People with 'open' political attitudes generally favour globalization, are tolerant or welcoming of cultural diversity, sympathize with an inclusive view of national identity, and typically support liberal social norms and values. By contrast, people with 'closed' attitudes are suspicious of, or oppose, globalization, fear cultural diversity, are drawn to an exclusive view of national identity, and usually support conservative social norms and values.

Open		Closed
Outward looking	v	Inward looking
Inclusive	v	Exclusive
Diversity	v	Homogeneity
Cosmopolitanism	v	Nationalism
Social liberalism	v	Social conservatism
Free trade	v	Protectionism
Pooled sovereignty	v	State sovereignty

Figure 1.7 The open/closed divide

KEY FIGURE



Jeff Morgan 12/Alamy Stock Photo

ANTHONY GIDDENS (BORN 1938)

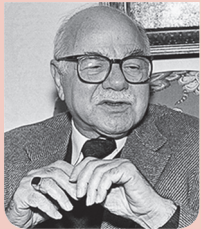
A UK social theorist, Giddens was an adviser to Tony Blair in the early years of 'new' Labour. His theory of 'structuration' reinvigorated social theory by setting out to transcend the conventional dualism of structure and agency. In works including *Beyond Left and Right* (1994), *The Third Way* (1998) and *The Runaway World* (1999), Giddens sought to remodel social democracy in the light of the advent of late modernity, taking into account developments such as globalization, de-traditionalization and increased social reflexivity.



THE END OF IDEOLOGY?

Is it possible to envisage ideology coming to an end? Or, for better or for worse, has ideology become a permanent feature of politics? The notion of the ‘end of ideology’ was particularly fashionable in the 1950s and 1960s. The most influential statement of this position was advanced by Daniel Bell. Bell (1960) was impressed by the fact that, after World War II, politics in the West was characterized by broad agreement among major political parties and the absence of ideological division or debate. Fascism and communism had both lost their appeal, while the remaining parties disagreed only about which ideologies could best be relied on to deliver economic growth and material prosperity. In effect, economics had triumphed over politics. Politics had been reduced to technical questions about ‘how’ to deliver affluence, and had ceased to address moral or philosophical questions about the nature of the ‘good society’. To all intents and purposes, ideology had become an irrelevance.

KEY FIGURE



Jane Reed/ Harvard University News Office

DANIEL BELL (1919–2011)

A US academic and essayist, Bell drew attention, in *The End of Ideology* (1960), to the exhaustion of rationalist approaches to social and political issues, also warning, in the afterword to the 1988 edition, against the tyranny of utopian end-states. He helped to popularize the idea of ‘post-industrialism’, highlighting the emergence of ‘information societies’ dominated by a new ‘knowledge class’. In *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), Bell analysed the tension between capitalism’s productivist and consumerist values and tendencies.

However, the process to which Bell drew attention was not the ‘end of ideology’ so much as the emergence of a broad ideological consensus among major parties, and therefore the suspension of ideological debate. In the immediate postwar period, representatives of the three major Western ideologies – liberalism, socialism and conservatism – came to accept the common goal of managed capitalism. This goal, however, was itself ideological – for example, it reflected an enduring faith in market economics, private property and material incentives, tempered by a belief in social welfare and economic intervention. In effect, an ideology of ‘welfare capitalism’ or ‘social democracy’ had triumphed over its rivals, although this triumph proved to be only temporary.

The 1960s witnessed the rise of more radical New Left ideas, reflected in a revival of interest in Marxist and anarchist thought and the growth of ‘new’ ideologies such as feminism and ecologism. The onset of economic recession in the 1970s provoked renewed interest in long-neglected, free-market doctrines and stimulated the development of New Right theories, which also challenged the postwar consensus. Finally, the ‘end of ideology’ thesis focused attention exclusively on developments in the industrialized West and ignored the fact that in the 1950s and 1960s communism remained firmly entrenched in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China and elsewhere, and that revolutionary political movements were operating in Asia, Africa and parts of Latin America.

A broader perspective was adopted by Francis Fukuyama (see p. 17) in his essay ‘The End of History’ (1989), later developed into *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). Unlike Bell, Fukuyama did not suggest that political ideas had become irrelevant, but that

one particular set of ideas, Western liberalism, had triumphed over all its rivals. Fascism had been defeated in 1945, and Fukuyama clearly believed that the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe in 1989 marked the passing of Marxism-Leninism as an ideology of world significance. By the 'end of history', Fukuyama meant that the history of ideas had ended, and with it, fundamental ideological debate. Throughout the world there was, he argued, an emerging agreement about the desirability of liberal democracy (see p. 44), in the form of a market or capitalist economy and an open, competitive political system.

PERSPECTIVES ON ... HISTORY



LIBERALS see history as progress, brought about as each generation advances further than the last through the accumulation of knowledge and understanding. Liberals generally believe that this will happen through gradual or incremental reform, not through revolution.

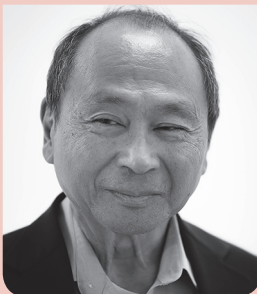
CONSERVATIVES understand history in terms of tradition and continuity, allowing little scope for progress. The lessons of the past provide guidance for present and future conduct. Reactionary conservatives believe that history is marked by decline, and wish to return to an earlier and preferred time.

SOCIALISTS are committed to a progressive view of history, which places heavy emphasis on the scope for social and personal development. Marxists believe that class conflict is the motor of history and that a classless, communist society is history's determinant end-point.

FASCISTS generally view history as a process of degeneration and decay, a decline from a past 'golden age'. They nevertheless subscribe to a cyclical theory of history that holds out the possibility of national rebirth and regeneration, usually through violent struggle and war.

FUNDAMENTALISTS have an ambivalent attitude towards history. Although they are strongly inclined to see the present as morally and spiritually corrupt in comparison with an idealized past, they conceive of social regeneration in modernist terms, thus rejecting conservative traditionalism.

KEY FIGURE



Thomas Trutschel/Photothek/
Getty Images

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA (BORN 1952)

A US social analyst and political commentator, Fukuyama's essay, 'The End of History?' (1989), argued that the Eastern European revolutions indicated that the history of ideas had ended with the recognition of liberal democracy as the 'final form of human government'. In *Trust* (1996) and *The Great Disruption* (1999), he discussed the relationship between economic development and social cohesion, highlighting contrasting forms of capitalist development. His other writings include *The Origins Of Political Order* (2011), *Political Order and Political Decay* (2014) and *Identity* (2018).

Without doubt, the Eastern European revolutions of 1989–91, which gave greatly renewed impetus to the process of democratization (see p. 18), and the dramatic reform of surviving communist regimes such as China profoundly altered the worldwide balance of ideological debate. However, it is far less certain that this process amounted to the 'end of history'. In particular, no sooner had the 'end of history' thesis been proclaimed than ideological forces that have little or nothing to do with Western liberalism started to rise

to the surface. The first indication of this was the eruption of ethnic violence across much of former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, which suggested that the successor ideology to fallen communism may be nationalism rather than liberalism. Further evidence of the strengthening of non-liberal and anti-liberal forces was provided by the rise of religious fundamentalism in its various forms. This encouraged some to argue that world politics in the twenty-first century would witness, not the global triumph of liberalism, but a deepening 'clash of civilizations' (Huntington, 1996).

KEY CONCEPT

DEMOCRATIZATION

Democratization refers to the process of transition from authoritarianism to liberal democracy. Democratization encompasses three, sometimes overlapping, processes. (1) The breakdown of the old regime; this usually involves a loss of legitimacy

and the faltering loyalty of the police and military. (2) 'Democratic transition' witnesses the construction of new liberal-democratic structures and processes. (3) 'Democratic consolidation' sees these new structures and processes becoming so embedded in the minds of elites and the masses that democracy becomes 'the only game in town' (Przeworski, 1991).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How does the Marxist concept of ideology differ from the mainstream concept?
- Is ideology necessarily false? If so, why?
- Can 'socially unattached' intellectuals rise above ideology?
- Are all political ideas ideological, or only some of them?
- To what extent do ideologies differ in terms of their conceptual structure?
- What is the distinction between political ideology and political theory?
- How should the political spectrum be presented, and why?
- What is new about the 'new' ideologies?
- To what extent has ideological commitment become a lifestyle choice?
- Does the rise of 'new' ideologies mean that the old ones are now defunct?
- To what extent does the left/right divide aid our understanding of political ideologies?
- How should the political spectrum be presented, and why?
- Are ideologies destined never to end?

FURTHER READING

Ball, T., Dagger, R. & O'Neill, D. *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader* (2019). A broad anthology of important writings, both classic and contemporary, covering all major ideological traditions.

Freedman, M., Sargent, L. & Stears, M. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies* (2015). Dozens of experts collaborate to bring the key developments and recent research in political ideology.

Ingersoll, D., Matthews, R. & Davison, A., *The Philosophic Roots of Modern Ideology* (2016). Comprehensively charts the intellectual evolution of major ideological traditions, and relevant contemporary debates, with analysis focused around key figures and texts.

Žižek, S. *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (2012). A unique and thought-provoking documentary in which one of the world's foremost philosophers looks at how ideological thought subtly underpins all aspects of modern life and culture.

The Political Compass, www.politicalcompass.org. A long-running website that asks questions to map people on a two-dimensional ideological spectrum, as well as linking to further reading. Find out where you sit!

CHAPTER 2

LIBERALISM



Preview	19
Historical overview	20
Core themes	22
Types of liberalism	31
The future of liberalism	46
Questions for discussion	47
Further reading	48

PREVIEW

The term ‘liberal’ has been in use since the fourteenth century but has had a wide variety of meanings. The Latin *liber* referred to a class of free men; in other words, men who were neither serfs nor slaves. It has meant generous, as in ‘liberal’ helpings of food and drink; or, in reference to social attitudes, it has implied openness or open-mindedness. It also came to be associated increasingly with the ideas of

freedom and choice. The term ‘liberalism’, to denote a political allegiance, made its appearance much later: it was not used until the early part of the nineteenth century, being first employed in Spain in 1812. By the 1840s, the term was widely recognized throughout Europe as a reference to a distinctive set of political ideas. However, it was taken up more slowly in the UK. Although the Whigs, a long-established parliamentary faction, started to call themselves Liberals during the 1830s, the first distinctly Liberal government was not formed in the UK until W. E. Gladstone was appointed premier and established his first ministry.

The central theme of liberal ideology is a commitment to the individual and the desire to construct a society in which people can satisfy their interests and achieve fulfilment. Liberals believe that human beings are, first and foremost, individuals, endowed with reason. This implies that each individual should enjoy the maximum possible freedom consistent with a like freedom for all. However, although individuals are entitled to equal legal and political rights, they should be rewarded in line with their talents and their willingness to work. Liberal societies are organized politically around the twin principles of constitutionalism and consent, designed to protect citizens from the danger of government tyranny. Nevertheless, there are significant differences between classical liberalism and modern liberalism. Classical liberalism is characterized by a belief in a ‘minimal’ state, whose function is limited to the maintenance of domestic order and personal security. Modern liberalism, in contrast, accepts that the state should help people to help themselves.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Liberalism was a product of the breakdown of **feudalism** in Europe, and the growth, in its place, of a market or capitalist society. In many respects, liberalism reflected the aspirations of the rising middle classes, whose interests conflicted with the established power of absolute monarchs and the landed aristocracy. Liberal ideas were radical: they sought fundamental reform and even, at times, revolutionary change. The English Revolution of the seventeenth century, and the American Revolution of 1776 and French Revolution of 1789 each embodied elements that were distinctively liberal, even though the word ‘liberal’ was not at the time used in a political sense. Liberals challenged the absolute power of the monarchy, supposedly based on the doctrine of the ‘**divine right of kings**’. In place of **absolutism**, they advocated constitutional and, later, representative **government** (discussed later in the chapter, in relation to liberal democracy). Liberals criticized the political and economic privileges of the landed aristocracy and the unfairness of a feudal system in which social position was determined by the ‘accident of birth’. They also supported the movement towards freedom of conscience in religion and questioned the authority of the established church.

Feudalism: A system of agrarian-based production that is characterized by fixed social hierarchies and a rigid pattern of obligations.

Divine right: The doctrine that earthly rulers are chosen by God and thus wield unchallengeable authority; divine right is a defence for monarchical absolutism.

Absolutism: A form of government in which political power is concentrated in the hands of a single individual or small group, in particular, an absolute monarchy.

Government: The machinery through which collective decisions are made on behalf of the state, usually comprising a legislature, executive and judiciary.

Classical liberalism: A tradition within liberalism that seeks to maximize the realm of unconstrained individual action, typically by establishing a minimal state and a reliance on market economics.

Modern liberalism: A tradition within liberalism that provides (in contrast to classical liberalism) a qualified endorsement for social and economic intervention as a means of promoting personal development.

The nineteenth century was in many ways the liberal century. As industrialization spread throughout Western countries, liberal ideas triumphed. Liberals advocated an industrialized and market economic order ‘free’ from government interference, in which businesses would be allowed to pursue profit and states encouraged to trade freely with one another. Such a system of market-based industrial capitalism developed first in the UK, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, and subsequently spread to North America and throughout Europe, initially into Western Europe and then, more gradually, into Eastern Europe. From the twentieth century onwards industrial capitalism exerted a powerful appeal for developing states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, especially when social and political development was defined in essentially Western terms. However, developing-world states have sometimes been resistant to the attractions of liberal capitalism because their political cultures have emphasized community rather than the individual. In such cases, they have provided more fertile ground for the growth of ideologies such as socialism, nationalism or religious fundamentalism, rather than Western liberalism.

Liberalism has undoubtedly been the most powerful ideological force shaping the Western political tradition. Nevertheless, historical developments since the nineteenth century have clearly influenced the nature and substance of liberal ideology. The character of liberalism changed as the rising middle classes succeeded in establishing their economic and political dominance. The radical, even revolutionary, edge of liberalism faded with each liberal success. Liberalism thus became increasingly conservative, standing less for change and reform, and more for the maintenance of existing – largely liberal – institutions. Liberal ideas, too, could not stand still. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the progress of industrialization led liberals to question, and in some ways to revise, the ideas of early liberalism. Whereas early or **classical liberalism** (sometimes called ‘nineteenth-century liberalism’) had been defined by the desire to minimize government interference in the lives of its citizens, **modern liberalism** (sometimes called

‘twentieth-century liberalism’) came to be associated with welfare provision and economic management. As a result, some commentators argued that liberalism was an incoherent ideology, embracing contradictory beliefs, notably about the desirable role of the **state**.

The Cold War period (1945–90) witnessed the consolidation of liberalism within the US-led capitalist West, even though its global ambitions were firmly resisted within the Soviet-led communist East and across much of what became known as the Third World. This consolidation was evident in two ways. The first was the spread of Western liberal democracy (see p. 44). A wave of democratization (see p. 18) occurred between 1943 and 1962, and involved countries such as West Germany, Italy, Japan and India; with a further wave of democratization starting in 1974, and affecting Greece, Portugal, Spain and much of Latin America. The second way in which liberalism was consolidated was through the ‘silent revolution’, which, beginning in the 1960s and affecting advanced industrialized countries in particular, saw the seemingly irresistible spread of liberal values in areas ranging from gender relations, homosexuality and religious observance to capital punishment and cultural diversity.

The end of the Cold War had yet more significant implications for liberalism, encouraging some to declare that it amounted to the ‘liberal moment’ in world affairs. The overthrow of communist regimes across Eastern Europe sparked a new and more dramatic process of democratization, with the formation of governments through multiparty elections and the adoption of market-based economic reforms becoming substantially more common. This created a situation in which, whereas in 1973 only 45 out of the 151 states then comprising the world community exhibited some of the key features of liberal-democratic governance, by 2003, 63 per cent of states, accounting for more than 70 per cent of the world’s population, displayed these characteristics. In this context, ‘end of history’ theorists, such as Francis Fukuyama (see p. 17), proclaimed that liberal democracy had established itself as the final form of human government. Such a view, in effect, implies that liberal democracy is the ‘default position’ for human societies. The end of the Cold War also injected significantly greater impetus into the process of economic globalization. This made it possible, for the first time, to conceive of the world economy as a single, interlocking entity, built on liberal – or, more accurately, neoliberal – lines (economic liberalism is discussed at greater length later in the chapter).

State: A political association that establishes sovereign jurisdiction over a defined territorial area, usually possessing a monopoly of coercive power.

KEY CONCEPT

GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is the emergence of a web of interconnectedness which means that our lives are shaped increasingly by events that occur, and decisions that are made, at a great distance from us, thus giving rise to ‘supraterritorial’ connections between people. However, globalization is a complex process that has a range of manifestations. Economic

globalization is the process through which national economies have, to a greater or lesser extent, been absorbed into a single global economy. Cultural globalization is the process whereby information, commodities and images produced in one part of the world have entered into a global flow that tends to ‘flatten out’ cultural differences worldwide. Political globalization is the process through which policy-making responsibilities have been passed from national governments to international organizations.

However, the early decades of the twenty-first century have brought with them evidence of the retreat of liberalism. This has been particularly apparent in the fact that, since reaching its high-water mark in 2006–08, the spread of Western liberal democracy has been reversed, with

authoritarian ideas and practices advancing across much of the world. For example, despite early expectations that the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 would develop into the ‘Arab world’s 1989’, bringing **democracy** to North Africa and parts of the Middle East, dictatorship was restored in most of the countries affected within months. A further challenge to liberalism has come in the form of a backlash against the advance of liberal values, especially affecting those sections of advanced industrial societies that have been ‘left behind’ due to the pace and direction of cultural change from the 1960s onwards. This ‘silent counter-revolution’ has seen a resurgence of conservative values, particularly in areas related to national identity – such as immigration and multiculturalism – and it has been expressed largely through the rise of right-wing populism. Finally, liberalism was damaged by the 2007–10 global financial crisis, which saw a series of major bank bailouts take place just as the world was falling into what was then the most serious recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This gave the impression that liberal political forces were more closely aligned to the interests of financial and corporate elites than they were to the interests of people. (See Chapter 8 for a fuller account of the relationship between populism and liberalism.)

CORE THEMES

Liberalism is the ideology of the industrialized West. So deeply have liberal ideas permeated political, economic and cultural life that their influence can become hard to discern, liberalism appearing to be indistinguishable from ‘Western civilization’ in general. Liberal thinkers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, influenced by an Enlightenment belief in universal reason, tended to subscribe to an explicitly foundational form of liberalism, which sought to establish fundamental values and championed a particular vision of human flourishing or excellence, usually linked to personal autonomy. This form of liberalism was boldly universalist in that it implied that human history would be marked by the gradual but inevitable triumph of liberal principles and institutions. Progress, in short, was understood in strictly liberal terms.

During the twentieth century, however, it became fashionable to portray liberalism as morally neutral. This was reflected in the belief that liberalism gives priority to ‘the right’ over ‘the good’. In other words, liberalism strives to establish the conditions in which people and groups can pursue the good life as each defines it, but it does not prescribe or try to promote any particular notion of what is good. From this perspective, liberalism is not simply an ideology but a ‘meta-ideology’; that is, a body of rules that lays down the grounds on which political and ideological debate can take place. However, this does not mean that liberalism is simply a philosophy of ‘do your own thing’. While liberalism undoubtedly favours openness, debate and self-determination, it is also characterized by a powerful moral thrust. The moral and ideological stance of liberalism is embodied in a commitment to a distinctive set of values and beliefs. The most important of these are:

- individualism
- freedom
- reason
- justice
- toleration.

Democracy: Rule by the people; democracy implies both popular participation in government and the public interest, and can take a wide variety of forms.

Individualism

In the modern world, the concept of the individual is so familiar that its political significance is often overlooked. In the feudal period, there was little idea of individuals having their own interests or possessing personal and unique identities. Rather, people were seen as members of the social groups to which they belonged: their family, village, local community or social class. Their lives and identities were largely determined by the character of these groups in a process that changed little from one generation to the next. However, as feudalism was displaced by increasingly market-orientated societies, individuals were confronted by a broader range of choices and social possibilities. They were encouraged, perhaps for the first time, to think *for* themselves, and to think *of* themselves in personal terms. A serf, for example, whose family might always have lived and worked on the same piece of land, became a 'free man' and acquired some ability to choose for whom to work, or perhaps the opportunity to leave the land altogether and look for work in the growing towns or cities.

As the certainties of feudal life broke down, a new intellectual climate emerged. Rational and scientific explanations gradually displaced traditional religious theories, and society was increasingly understood from the viewpoint of the human individual. Individuals were thought to possess personal and distinctive qualities: each was of special value. This was evident in the growth, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of natural rights theories, which are discussed later, in relation to classical liberalism. Immanuel Kant expressed a similar belief in the dignity and equal worth of human beings in his conception of individuals as 'ends in themselves' and not merely as means for the achievement of the ends of others. However, emphasizing the importance of the individual has two contrasting implications. First, it draws attention to the uniqueness of each human being: individuals are defined primarily by inner qualities and attributes specific to themselves. Second, they nevertheless each share the same status in that they are all, first and foremost, individuals, and so are equal. Many of the tensions within liberal ideology can, indeed, be traced back to these rival ideas of uniqueness and equality.

KEY FIGURE



Superstock

IMMANUEL KANT (1724–1804)

A German philosopher, Kant's 'critical' philosophy holds that knowledge is not merely an aggregate of sense impressions; it depends on the conceptual apparatus of human understanding. Kant's political thought was shaped by the central importance of morality. He believed that the law of reason dictates categorical imperatives, the most important of which is the obligation to treat others as 'ends', and never only as 'means'. Kant's most important works include *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1785).



A belief in the primacy of the individual is the characteristic theme of liberal ideology, but it has influenced liberal thought in different ways. It has led some liberals to view society as simply a collection of individuals, each seeking to satisfy his or her own needs and interests. Such a view has been equated with **atomism**; indeed, it can lead to the belief that 'society' itself does not exist, but is merely a collection of self-sufficient individuals. Such extreme individualism is based on the assumption that the individual is egoistical, essentially self-

Atomism: A belief that society is made up of a collection of self-interested individuals, or atoms, rather than social groups.

KEY CONCEPT

INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism is the belief in the supreme importance of the individual over any social group or collective body. In the form of methodological individualism, this suggests that the individual is central to any political theory or social explanation – all statements about society should be made in terms of the individuals who compose it. Ethical

individualism, on the other hand, implies that society should be constructed so as to benefit the individual, giving moral priority to individual rights, needs or interests. Classical liberals and the New Right subscribe to *egoistical* individualism, which places emphasis on self-interestedness and self-reliance. Modern liberals, in contrast, have advanced a *developmental* form of individualism that prioritizes human flourishing over the quest for interest satisfaction.

seeking, and largely self-reliant. C. B. Macpherson (1973) characterized early liberalism as ‘possessive individualism’, in that it regarded the individual as ‘the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them.’ In contrast, later liberals have held a more optimistic view of **human nature**, and have been more prepared to believe that **egoism** is tempered by a sense of social responsibility, especially a responsibility for those who are unable to look after themselves. Whether egoism is unrestrained or is qualified by a sense of social responsibility, liberals are united in their desire to create a society in which each person is capable of developing and flourishing to the fullness of his or her potential.

Freedom

A belief in the supreme importance of the individual leads naturally to a commitment to individual **freedom**. Individual liberty (liberty and freedom being interchangeable) is for liberals the supreme political value and, in many ways, the unifying principle within liberal ideology. For early liberals, liberty was a natural right, an essential requirement for leading a truly human existence. It also gave individuals the opportunity to pursue their own interests by exercising choice: the choice of where to live, for whom to work, what to buy and so on. Later liberals have seen liberty as the only condition in which people are able to develop their skills and talents and fulfil their potential.

Nevertheless, liberals do not accept that individuals have an absolute entitlement to freedom. If liberty is unlimited it can become ‘licence’, the right to abuse others. In *On Liberty* ([1859] 1972) John Stuart Mill argued that ‘the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is

Human nature: The essential and innate character of all human beings: what they owe to nature rather than to society.

Egoism: A concern for one’s own welfare or interests, or the theory that the pursuit of self-interest is an ethical priority.

Freedom (or liberty): The ability to think or act as one wishes, a capacity that can be associated with the individual, a social group or a nation.

to prevent harm to others.’ Mill’s position is libertarian (see p. 61) in that it accepts only the most minimal restrictions on individual freedom, and then only in order to prevent ‘harm to others.’ He distinguished clearly between actions that are ‘self-regarding’, over which individuals should exercise absolute freedom, and those that are ‘other-regarding’, which can restrict the freedom of others or do them damage. Mill did not accept any restrictions on the individual that are designed to prevent a person from damaging himself or herself, either physically or morally. Such a view suggests, for example, that laws forcing car drivers to put on seat belts or motorcyclists to wear crash helmets are as unacceptable as any form of censorship that limits what an individual may read or listen to. Radical libertarians may defend the right of people to use addictive drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, on the same grounds. Although the individual may be sovereign over his or her body

PERSPECTIVES ON ... FREEDOM



LIBERALS give priority to freedom as the supreme individualist value. While classical liberals support negative freedom, understood as the absence of constraints – or freedom of choice – modern liberals advocate positive freedom in the sense of personal development and human flourishing.

CONSERVATIVES have traditionally endorsed a weak view of freedom as the willing recognition of duties and responsibilities, negative freedom posing a threat to the fabric of society. The New Right, however, endorses negative freedom in the economic sphere, freedom of choice in the marketplace.

SOCIALISTS have generally understood freedom in positive terms to refer to self-fulfilment achieved through either free creative labour or cooperative social interaction. Social democrats have drawn close to modern liberalism in treating freedom as the realization of individual potential.

ANARCHISTS regard freedom as an absolute value, believing it to be irreconcilable with any form of political authority. Freedom is understood to mean the achievement of personal autonomy, not merely being 'left alone' but being rationally self-willed and self-directed.

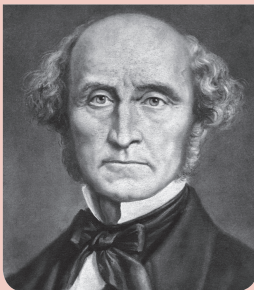
FASCISTS reject any form of individual liberty as a nonsense. 'True' freedom, in contrast, means unquestioning submission to the will of the leader and the absorption of the individual into the national community.

GREENS, particularly deep ecologists, treat freedom as the achievement of oneness, self-realization through the absorption of the personal ego into the ecosphere or universe. In contrast with political freedom, this is sometimes seen as 'inner' freedom, freedom as self-actualization.

FUNDAMENTALISTS see freedom as essentially an inner or spiritual quality. Freedom means conformity to the revealed will of God, spiritual fulfilment being associated with submission to religious authority.

and mind, each must respect the fact that every other individual enjoys an equal right to liberty. This has been expressed by John Rawls (see p. 39) in the principle that everyone is entitled to the widest possible liberty consistent with a like liberty for all.

KEY FIGURE



Historical/Corbis Historical/
Getty Images

JOHN STUART MILL (1806–73)

A British philosopher, economist and politician, Mill's varied and complex work straddles the divide between classical and modern forms of liberalism. His opposition to collectivist tendencies and traditions was firmly rooted in nineteenth-century principles, but his emphasis on the quality of individual life, reflected in a commitment to individuality, as well as his sympathy for causes such as female suffrage and workers' cooperatives, looked forward to later developments. Mill's major writings include *On Liberty* (1859), *Utilitarianism* (1861) and *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861).

While liberals agree about the value of liberty, they have not always agreed about what it means for an individual to be 'free'. In his 'Two Concepts of Liberty' ([1958] 1969), Isaiah Berlin (see p. 240) distinguished between a 'negative' theory of liberty and a 'positive' one. Early or classical liberals have believed in **negative freedom**, in that freedom consists in each person being

Negative freedom:

The absence of external restrictions or constraints on the individual, allowing freedom of choice.

left alone, free from interference and able to act in whatever way he or she may choose. This conception of freedom is ‘negative’ in that it is based on the absence of external restrictions or constraints on the individual. Modern liberals, on the other hand, have been attracted to a more ‘positive’ conception of liberty – **positive freedom** – defined by Berlin as the ability to be one’s own master; to be autonomous. Self-mastery requires that the individual is able to develop skills and talents, broaden his or her understanding, and gain fulfilment. This led to an emphasis on the capacity of human beings to develop and ultimately achieve self-realization. These rival conceptions of liberty have not merely stimulated academic debate within liberalism, but have also encouraged liberals to hold very different views about the desirable relationship between the individual and the state.

Reason

The liberal case for freedom is closely linked to a faith in reason. Liberalism is, and remains, very much part of the Enlightenment project. The central theme of the Enlightenment was the desire to release humankind from its bondage to superstition and ignorance, and unleash an ‘age of reason’ (although early liberals were often willing to associate rationality only with men, and, not uncommonly, only with white men). Key Enlightenment thinkers included Jean-Jacques Rousseau (see p. 133), Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith (see p. 34)

Positive freedom: Self-mastery or self-realization; the achievement of autonomy or the development of human capacities.

Paternalism: Authority exercised from above for the guidance and support of those below, modelled on the relationship between fathers and children (see p. 70).

and Jeremy Bentham (see p. 33). Enlightenment rationalism influenced liberalism in a number of ways. In the first place, it strengthened its faith in both the individual and freedom. To the extent that human beings are rational, thinking creatures, they are capable of defining and pursuing their own best interests. By no means do liberals believe that individuals are infallible in this respect, but the belief in reason builds into liberalism a strong bias against **paternalism**. Not only does paternalism prevent individuals from making their own moral choices and, if necessary, from learning from their own mistakes, but it also creates the prospect that those invested with responsibility for others will abuse their position for their own ends.

KEY CONCEPT RATIONALISM

Rationalism is the belief that the world has a rational structure, and that this can be disclosed through the exercise of human reason and critical enquiry. As a philosophical theory, rationalism is the belief that knowledge flows from reason rather than experience, and thus contrasts with empiricism. As a general

principle, however, rationalism places a heavy emphasis on the capacity of human beings to understand and explain their world, and to find solutions to problems. While rationalism does not dictate the ends of human conduct, it certainly suggests how these ends should be pursued. It is associated with an emphasis on principle and reason-governed behaviour, as opposed to a reliance on custom or tradition, or on non-rational drives and impulses.

A further legacy of rationalism is that liberals are inclined to view human history in terms of progress. Progress literally means advance, a movement forward. In the liberal view, the expansion of knowledge, particularly through the scientific revolution, enabled people not only to understand and explain their world but also to help shape it for the better. In short, the power of reason gives human beings the capacity to take charge of their own lives and fashion their own destinies. Reason emancipates humankind from the grip of the past and from the weight of custom and tradition. Each generation is thus able to advance beyond the last as the stock of human knowledge and understanding

increases progressively. This also explains the characteristic liberal emphasis on education. People can better or improve themselves through the acquisition of knowledge and the abandonment of prejudice and superstition. Education, particularly in the modern liberal view, is therefore a good in itself. It is a vital means of promoting personal self-development and, if extended widely, of bringing about social advancement.

Reason, moreover, is significant in highlighting the importance of discussion, debate and argument. While liberals are generally optimistic about human nature, seeing people as reason-guided creatures, they have seldom subscribed to the utopian creed of human perfectibility because they recognize the power of self-interest and egoism. The inevitable result of this is rivalry and conflict. Individuals battle for scarce resources, businesses compete to increase profits, states struggle for security or strategic advantage, and so on. The liberal preference is clearly that such conflicts be settled through debate and negotiation. The great advantage of reason is that it provides a basis on which rival claims and demands can be evaluated – do they ‘stand up’ to analysis; are they ‘reasonable’? Furthermore, it highlights the cost of not resolving disputes peacefully: namely, violence, bloodshed and death. Liberals therefore typically deplore the use of force and aggression; for example, war is invariably seen as an option of the very last resort. From the liberal perspective, the use of force is justified either on the grounds of self-defence or as a means of countering oppression, but always and only after reason and argument have been exhausted.

Justice

Justice denotes a particular kind of moral judgement, notably one about the distribution of rewards and punishment. In short, justice is about giving each person what he or she is ‘due’. The narrower idea of social justice refers to the distribution of material rewards and benefits in society, such as wages, profits, housing, medical care, welfare benefits and so on. The liberal theory of justice is based on a belief in **equality** of various kinds. In the first place, individualism implies a commitment to foundational equality. Human beings are seen to be ‘born’ equal in the sense that each individual is of equal moral worth, an idea embodied in the notion of natural rights or **human rights**. As the norm of human rights transcends the norm of state sovereignty, liberals are inclined to believe in ideas such as global justice and decolonization.

Second, foundational equality implies a belief in formal equality or equal citizenship, the idea that individuals should enjoy the same formal status within society, particularly in terms of the distribution of rights and entitlements. Consequently, liberals fiercely disapprove of any social privileges or advantages that are enjoyed by some but denied to others on the basis of ‘irrational’ factors such as gender, race, colour, creed, religion or social background. Rights should not be reserved for any particular class of person, such as men, whites, Christians or the wealthy. This is the sense in which liberalism is ‘difference blind’. The most important forms of formal equality are legal equality and political equality. The former emphasizes ‘equality before the law’ and insists that all non-legal factors be strictly irrelevant to the process of legal decision-making. The latter is embodied in the idea of ‘one person, one vote; one vote, one value’, and underpins the liberal commitment to democracy. Such thinking has provided fertile ground for the growth of feminist beliefs. Liberal feminism (discussed more fully in Chapter 9) has been articulated by thinkers ranging from Mary Wollstonecraft to Betty Friedan.

Justice: A moral standard of fairness and impartiality; social justice is the notion of a fair or justifiable distribution of wealth and rewards in society.

Equality: The principle that human beings are of identical worth or are entitled to be treated in the same way; equality can have widely differing applications.

Human rights: Rights to which people are entitled by virtue of being human; human rights are universal, fundamental and absolute.

KEY FIGURE

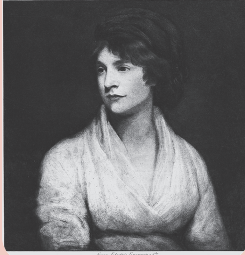


Photo 12/Universal Images Group/
Getty Images

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT (1759–97)

A British social theorist, Wollstonecraft was a pioneer feminist thinker, drawn into radical politics by the French Revolution. Her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) stressed the equal rights of women, especially in education, on the basis of the notion of ‘personhood’. Wollstonecraft’s work drew on an Enlightenment liberal belief in reason, but developed a more complex analysis of women as the objects and subjects of desire; it also presented the domestic sphere as a model of community and social order.

Third, liberals subscribe to a belief in equality of opportunity. Each and every individual should have the same chance to rise or fall in society. The game of life, in that sense, must be played on a level playing field. This is not to say that there should be equality of outcome or reward, or that living conditions and social circumstances should be the same for all. Liberals believe social equality to be undesirable because people are not born the same. They possess different talents and skills, and some are prepared to work much harder than others. Liberals believe that it is right to reward merit (ability and the willingness to work); indeed, they think it is essential to do so if people are to have an incentive to realize their potential and develop the talents with which they were born. Equality, for a liberal, means that individuals should have an equal opportunity to develop their unequal skills and abilities.

KEY FIGURE



Underwood Archives/Archive
Photos/Getty Images

BETTY FRIEDAN (1921–2006)

A US political activist, Friedan is sometimes seen as the ‘mother’ of women’s liberation. In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) (often credited with having stimulated the emergence of second-wave feminism), Friedan attacked the cultural myths that sustained domesticity, highlighting the sense of frustration and despair that afflicted suburban American women confined to the roles of housewife and mother. In *The Second Stage* (1983), she nevertheless warned that the quest for ‘personhood’ should not encourage women to deny the importance of children, the home and the family.

This leads to a belief in ‘**meritocracy**’. A meritocratic society is one in which, in principle, inequalities of wealth and social position solely reflect the unequal distribution of talent and application among human beings, or are based on factors beyond human control; for example, luck or chance (though some liberals believe that all aspects of luck, including natural ability, should be irrelevant to distributive justice, a position called ‘luck

Meritocracy: Literally, rule by those with merit, merit being intelligence plus effort; a society in which social position is determined exclusively by ability and hard work.

egalitarianism’ (Dworkin, 2000)). Such a society is supposedly just because individuals are judged not by their gender, the colour of their skin or their religion, but according to their talents and willingness to work, or what US Christian minister and activist Martin Luther King Jr called ‘the content of their character’. By extension, social equality is thought to be unjust because

it treats individuals alike despite their different qualities and capabilities. However, liberal thinkers have disagreed about how these broad principles of justice should be applied in practice. While classical liberals endorse strict meritocracy, both on the grounds that, being based on incentives, it promotes prosperity, and reflects individuals' just deserts, modern liberals have reservations about meritocracy on a number of grounds.

First, it endorses levels of material inequality which are difficult, and may be impossible, to defend. For example, in *A Theory of Justice* (1970), John Rawls argued that economic inequality is only justifiable if it works to the benefit of the poorest in society (an idea that is discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, in connection with social liberalism). Second, meritocracy is narrowly interested only in markets, economic efficiency and gross domestic product, and takes insufficient account of people's wider contribution to the public good. Third, the clearly implied link within meritocracy between poverty and a combination of laziness and a lack of talent damages the less well-off's sense of social esteem, breeding resentment and hostility towards the wealthy elite. This is what Michael Sandel (2020) dubbed the 'tyranny of merit'.

Toleration

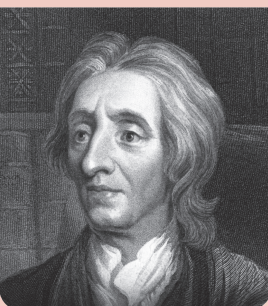
The liberal social ethic is characterized very much by a willingness to accept and, in some cases, celebrate moral, cultural and political diversity. Indeed, an acceptance of **pluralism** can be said to be rooted in the principle of individualism, and the assumption that human beings are separate and unique creatures. However, the liberal preference for diversity has been associated more commonly with **toleration**. This commitment to toleration, attributed to the French writer Voltaire (1694–1778), is memorably expressed in the declaration that, 'I detest what you say but will defend to the death your right to say it.' Toleration and free speech are both an ethical ideal and a social principle. On the one hand, they represent the goal of personal **autonomy**; on the other, they establish a set of rules about how human beings should behave towards one another. The liberal case for toleration first emerged in the seventeenth century in the attempt by writers such as John Milton (1608–74) and John Locke to defend religious freedom. Locke argued that, since the proper function of government is to protect life, liberty and property, it has no right to meddle in 'the care of men's souls'. Toleration should be extended to all matters regarded as 'private', on the grounds that, like religion, they concern moral questions that should be left to the individual.

Pluralism: A belief in diversity or choice, or the theory that political power is or should be widely and evenly dispersed (see p. 240).

Toleration: Forbearance; a willingness to accept views or actions with which one is in disagreement.

Autonomy: Literally, self-government; the ability to control one's own destiny by virtue of enjoying independence from external influences.

KEY FIGURE



JOHN LOCKE (1632–1704)

Locke was a consistent opponent of absolutism and is often portrayed as the philosopher of the 1688 'Glorious Revolution' (which established a constitutional monarchy in England). Using social contract theory and accepting that, by nature, humans are free and equal, Locke upheld constitutionalism, limited government and the right of revolution, but the stress he placed on property rights prevented him from endorsing political equality or democracy in the modern sense. Locke's foremost political work is *Two Treatises of Government* (1690).



In *On Liberty* ([1859] 1972), J. S. Mill developed a wider justification for the toleration of other people's speech and actions that highlighted its importance to society as well as the individual. From the individual's point of view, toleration is primarily a guarantee of personal autonomy and is thus a condition for moral self-development. Nevertheless, toleration is also necessary to ensure the vigour and health of society as a whole. Only within a free market of ideas will 'truth' emerge, as good ideas displace bad ones and ignorance is progressively banished. Contest, debate and argument, the fruit of diversity or multiplicity, are therefore the motor of social progress. (For a discussion of liberal thinking regarding the limits of free speech in a plural society.) For Mill, this was particularly threatened by democracy and the spread of 'dull conformism', linked to the belief that the majority must always be right. Mill ([1859] 1972) was thus able to argue as follows:

If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN ACTION ...



FREE SPEECH IN A PLURAL SOCIETY

EVENTS: In June 2020, J. K. Rowling, the author of the *Harry Potter* fantasy novels, published a blog post arguing that gender was determined by biology. It came after a tweet in which she took issue with an article referring to 'people who menstruate', rather than to women. She was swiftly condemned by transgender activists who claimed that her focus on biological sex was 'transphobic', a stance that was backed up by the beginning of a campaign to 'cancel', or boycott, her cultural output, with a view to subjecting her to financial pressure. In July 2020, some 152 academics and writers signed a letter on justice and open debate to the US magazine *Harper's* which defended the 'free exchange of information and ideas, the lifeblood of a liberal society'.

SIGNIFICANCE: A commitment to free speech is one of the core principles of liberal ideology. This does not, however, imply that liberals believe in unchecked free speech but, rather, that free speech should be constrained only when there is a strong likelihood that it will result in physical harm (for example, by threatening national security or, possibly, in the case of 'hate speech'). The liberal justification for free speech lies in scepticism, the doctrine that certain knowledge is impossible to achieve, in which case all truth-claims must be subject to doubt. In this view, the only way of advancing knowledge and ensuring social progress is by testing ideas and beliefs in open competition against rival ideas and

beliefs, a process that is more rigorous the wider the range of views considered. Even 'bad' or 'evil' ideas thus have a purpose, and so should not be silenced, either legally or through social pressure.

However, the emergence of plural societies, shaped by increased diversity in areas ranging from ethnicity and culture to gender and sexuality, has brought with it growing pressure to narrow the parameters of free speech. This trend reflects not so much a retreat from liberalism, as the sharpening of a philosophical divide within liberal culture. At the heart of the call for greater restraint over free speech is the argument that if different people are to occupy the same political space without conflict, they mutually have to limit the extent to which they subject each others' fundamental beliefs (beliefs that relate to their core identity) to criticism. In the case of marginalized or weak groups, this may extend to the creation of 'safe spaces', spaces where the discussion of topics which could cause offence is banned. According to such thinking, speech is only free when everyone is capable of enjoying its benefits equally.



Samir Hussein/WireImage

TYPES OF LIBERALISM

Liberalism comes in a variety of forms. These include the following:

- classical liberalism
- modern liberalism
- liberal democracy.

Classical liberalism

Classical liberalism was the earliest liberal tradition. Classical liberal ideas developed during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and reached their high point during the early industrialization of the nineteenth century. As a result, classical liberalism has sometimes been called ‘nineteenth-century liberalism’. The cradle of classical liberalism was the UK, where the capitalist and industrial revolutions were the most advanced. Its ideas have always been more deeply rooted in Anglo-Saxon countries, particularly the UK and the USA, than in other parts of the world. However, classical liberalism is not merely a nineteenth-century form of liberalism, whose ideas are now only of historical interest. Its principles and theories, in fact, have had growing appeal from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. Though what is called neoclassical liberalism, or neoliberalism (see p. 63), initially had the greatest impact in the UK and the USA, its influence has spread much more broadly, in large part fuelled by the advance of globalization (see p. 21).

Classical liberalism draws on a variety of doctrines and theories. The most important of these are:

- natural rights
- utilitarianism
- economic liberalism
- social Darwinism.

Natural rights

The **natural rights** theorists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as John Locke and Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), the US political philosopher and statesman, had a considerable influence on the development of liberal ideology. Modern political debate is littered with references to ‘rights’ and claims to possess ‘rights’. A right, most simply, is an entitlement to act or be treated in a particular way. Such entitlements may be either moral or legal in character. For Locke and Jefferson, rights are ‘natural’ in that they are invested in human beings by nature or God. Natural rights are now more commonly called human rights. They are, in Jefferson’s words, ‘inalienable’ because human beings are entitled to them by virtue of being human: they cannot, in that sense, be taken away. Natural rights are thus thought to establish the essential conditions for leading a truly human existence. For Locke, there were three such rights: ‘life, liberty and property’. Jefferson did not accept that property was a natural or God-given right, but rather one that had developed for

Natural rights: God-given rights that are fundamental to human beings and are therefore inalienable (they cannot be taken away).

human convenience. In the American Declaration of Independence he therefore described inalienable rights as those of ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’.

The idea of natural or human rights has affected liberal thought in a number of ways. For example, the weight given to such rights distinguishes authoritarian thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes from early liberals such as John Locke. As explained earlier, both Hobbes and Locke believed that government was formed through a ‘**social contract**’. However, Hobbes ([1651] 1968) argued that only a strong government, preferably a monarchy, would be able to establish order and security in society. He was prepared to invest the king with sovereign or absolute power, rather than risk a descent into a ‘**state of nature**’. The citizen should therefore accept *any* form of government because even repressive government is better than no government at all. Locke, on the other hand, argued against arbitrary or unlimited government. Government is established in order to protect natural rights. When these are protected by the state, citizens should respect government and obey the law. However, if government violates the rights of its citizens, they in turn have the right of rebellion. Locke thus approved of the English Revolution of the seventeenth century, and applauded the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1688.

For Locke, moreover, the contract between state and citizen is a specific and limited one: its purpose is to protect a set of defined natural rights. As a result, Locke believed in limited government. The legitimate role of government is limited to the protection of ‘life, liberty and property’. Therefore, the realm of government should not extend beyond its three ‘minimal’ functions:

- maintaining public order and protecting property
- providing defence against external attack
- ensuring that contracts are enforced.

Other issues and responsibilities are properly the concern of private individuals. Jefferson expressed a similar sentiment a century later when he declared: ‘That government is best which governs least.’

Utilitarianism

Social contract: A (hypothetical) agreement among individuals through which they form a state in order to escape from the disorder and chaos of the ‘state of nature’.

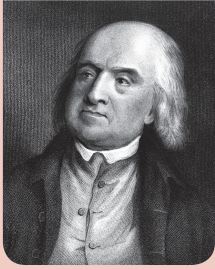
State of nature: A pre-political society characterized by unrestrained freedom and the absence of established authority.

Utility: Use-value; in economics, utility describes the satisfaction that is gained from the consumption of material goods and services.

Natural rights theories were not the only basis of early liberalism. An alternative and highly influential theory of human nature was put forward in the early nineteenth century by utilitarian thinkers, notably Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. Bentham regarded the idea of rights as ‘nonsense’ and called natural rights ‘nonsense on stilts’. In their place, he proposed what he believed to be the more scientific and objective idea that individuals are motivated by self-interest, and that these interests can be defined as the desire for pleasure, or happiness, and the wish to avoid pain, both calculated in terms of **utility**. The principle of utility is, furthermore, a moral principle in that it suggests that the ‘rightness’ of an action, policy or institution can be established by its tendency to promote happiness. Just as each individual can calculate what is morally good by the quantity of pleasure an action will produce, so the principle of ‘the greatest happiness for the greatest number’ can be used to establish which policies or institutions will benefit society at large.



KEY FIGURE



API/Gamma-Rapho/Getty Images

JEREMY BENTHAM (1748–1832)

A British philosopher, legal reformer and founder of utilitarianism, Bentham developed a moral and philosophical system based on the belief that human beings are rationally self-interested creatures, or utility maximizers. Using the principle of general utility – ‘the greatest happiness for the greatest number’ – he advanced a justification for *laissez-faire* economics, constitutional reform and, in later life, political democracy. Bentham’s key works include *A Fragment on Government* (1776) and *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789).

Utilitarian ideas have had a considerable impact on classical liberalism. In particular, they have provided a moral philosophy that explains how and why individuals act as they do. The utilitarian conception of human beings as rationally self-interested creatures was adopted by later generations of liberal thinkers. Moreover, each individual is thought to be able to perceive his or her own best interests. This cannot be done on their behalf by some paternal authority, such as the state. Bentham argued that individuals act so as to gain pleasure or happiness in whatever way they choose. No one else can judge the quality or degree of their happiness. If each individual is the sole judge of what will give him or her pleasure, then the individual alone can determine what is morally right.

On the other hand, utilitarian ideas can also have illiberal implications. Bentham held that the principle of utility could be applied to society at large and not merely to individual human behaviour. Institutions and legislation can be judged by the yardstick of ‘the greatest happiness’. However, this formula has majoritarian implications, because it uses the happiness of ‘the greatest number’ as a standard of what is morally correct, and therefore allows that the interests of the majority outweigh those of the minority or the rights of the individual.

KEY CONCEPT

UTILITARIANISM

Utilitarianism is a moral philosophy that was developed by Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. It equates ‘good’ with pleasure or happiness, and ‘evil’ with pain or unhappiness. Individuals are therefore assumed to act so as to maximize pleasure and minimize pain, these being calculated in terms of

utility or use-value, usually seen as satisfaction derived from material consumption. The ‘greatest happiness’ principle can be used to evaluate laws, institutions and even political systems. Act utilitarianism judges an act to be right if it produces at least as much pleasure-over-pain as any other act. Rule utilitarianism judges an act to be right if it conforms to a rule which, if generally followed, produces good consequences.

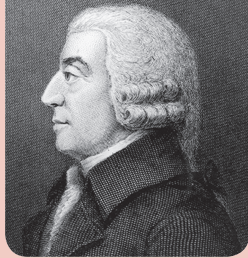
Economic liberalism

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed the development of classical economic theory in the work of political economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo (1770–1823). Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* ([1776] 1976) was in many respects the first economics textbook. His ideas drew heavily on liberal and rationalist assumptions about human nature and made a powerful contribution to the debate about the desirable role of government within civil society. Smith wrote at a time of wide-ranging government restrictions on economic activity. **Mercantilism**, the dominant economic idea of the sixteenth and

Mercantilism: A school of economic thought that emphasizes the state’s role in managing international trade and delivering prosperity.

seventeenth centuries, had encouraged governments to intervene in economic life in an attempt to encourage the export of goods and restrict imports. Smith's economic writings were designed to attack mercantilism, arguing instead for the principle that the economy works best when it is left alone by government.

KEY FIGURE



Hulton Archive/Hulton Archive/
Getty Images

ADAM SMITH (1723–90)

A Scottish economist and philosopher, Smith is usually seen as the founder of the 'dismal science'. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), he developed a theory of motivation that tried to reconcile human self-interestedness with unregulated social order. Smith's most famous work, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), was the first systematic attempt to explain the workings of the economy in market terms. Although he is sometimes portrayed as a free-market theorist, Smith was nevertheless aware of the limitations of *laissez-faire*.

Smith thought of the economy as a **market**, indeed as a series of interrelated markets. He believed that the market operates according to the wishes and decisions of free individuals. Freedom within the market means freedom of choice: the ability of the businesses to choose what goods to make, the ability of workers to choose an employer, and the ability of consumers to choose what goods or services to buy. Relationships within such a market – between employers and employees, and between buyers and sellers – are therefore voluntary and contractual, made by self-interested individuals for whom pleasure is equated with the acquisition and consumption of wealth. Economic theory therefore drew on utilitarianism, in constructing the idea of 'economic man', the notion that human beings are essentially egoistical and bent on material acquisition.

Mercantilism: A school of economic thought that emphasizes the state's role in managing international trade and delivering prosperity.

Market: A system of commercial exchange between buyers and sellers, controlled by impersonal economic forces: 'market forces'.

Commercial liberalism: A form of liberalism that emphasizes the economic and international benefits of free trade, leading to mutual benefit and general prosperity, as well as peace among states.

Free trade: A system of trade between states not restricted by tariffs or other forms of protectionism.

The attraction of classical economics was that, while each individual is materially self-interested, the economy itself is thought to operate according to a set of impersonal pressures – market forces – that tend naturally to promote economic prosperity and well-being. For instance, no single producer can set the price of a commodity – prices are set by the market, by the number of goods offered for sale and the number of consumers who are willing to buy. These are the forces of supply and demand. The market is a self-regulating mechanism; it needs no guidance from outside. The market should be 'free' from government interference because it is managed by what Smith referred to as an 'invisible hand'. This idea of a self-regulating market reflects the liberal belief in a naturally existing harmony among the conflicting interests within society. Smith ([1776] 1976) expressed the economic version of this idea as:

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interests.

Such thinking was further developed by David Ricardo and the so-called 'Manchester liberals', Richard Cobden (1804–65) and John Bright (1811–89). Their ideas are often referred to as **commercial liberalism**. The key theme within commercial liberalism is a belief in the virtues of **free trade**.