

**POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS GOVERNMENT**

**Ideology**

An ideology is a consistent set of beliefs and values that shape a person’s views. A political ideology is a set of beliefs about politics and public policy that creates the structure for looking at government and public policy. Political ideologies can change over time. Differences in ideology generally occur in the arena of political, economic, and social issues.

**Ideology: A Political Spectrum**

- **radical:** favors rapid, fundamental change in existing social, economic, or political order; may be willing to resort to extreme means, even violence or revolution to accomplish such change (extreme change to create an entirely new social system)
- **liberal:** supports active government in promoting individual welfare and supporting civil rights, and accepts peaceful political and social change within the existing political system
- **moderate:** political ideology that falls between liberal and conservative and which may include some of both; usually thought of as tolerant of others' political opinions and not likely to hold extreme views on issues
- **conservative:** promotes a limited governmental role in helping individuals economically, supports traditional values and lifestyles, favors a more active role for government in promoting national security, and approaches change cautiously
- **reactionary:** advocates a return to a previous state of affairs, often a social order or government that existed earlier in history (may be willing to go to extremes to achieve their goals)

<b>LIBERALISM (GENERALLY DEMOCRATS)</b>	<b>CARDINAL ATTRIBUTES OF LIBERALISM</b>	<b>CRITICISMS OF LIBERALS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive uses of government to bring about justice and equality of opportunity (larger government) such as social programs in the past</li> <li>• Emphasis on protection of individual rights and liberties</li> <li>• Emphasis on human rights in issues regarding foreign aid</li> <li>• Less emphasis on military spending</li> <li>• Higher taxes for the rich than for the poor</li> <li>• Larger government</li> <li>• Believe in possibility of progress, better future, equality of opportunity, minimum income level</li> <li>• Liberals charge that conservatives act in self-interest, concerned with rich; Liberals concerned government should take care of weak</li> <li>• Liberal view holds all people equal; wish to lessen impact of great inequalities of wealth</li> <li>• Corporations seen as chief threat to liberty; Need for a strong central govt. to “smooth out the rough edges of capitalism.”</li> <li>• Set up programs to help criminals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much reliance on governmental solutions, higher taxes, and bureaucrats</li> <li>• Forgets that government has to be limited</li> <li>• When government grows too big, it tends to start dictating us</li> <li>• Too many governmental controls and too much taxation undermine the self-help ethic</li> <li>• Welfare and regulatory state pushed by liberals will destroy true equality of economic opportunities</li> </ul>

<b>CONSERVATISM (GENERALLY REPUBLICANS)</b>	<b>CARDINAL ATTRIBUTES OF CONSERVATISM</b>	<b>CRITICISMS OF CONSERVATIVES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private property rights and belief in free enterprise (free market economy)</li> <li>• Keep government small except in the area of national defense; Strong defense budget</li> <li>• Government needs to ensure order; more pessimistic about human nature</li> <li>• Preference for the status quo and desire change only in moderation</li> <li>• Taxes should be low for everyone</li> <li>• Prayers in public schools should not be banned</li> <li>• Abortion is the murder of a fetus</li> <li>• Don’t make America a welfare state</li> <li>• Lock up criminals for crimes</li> <li>• Government social activism has been expensive and counterproductive; Human needs cared for by families/charities</li> <li>• Emphatically pro-business</li> <li>• Favor dispersing power broadly to avoid concentration of power at the national level</li> <li>• Subordinate economic and social equality to liberty and freedom</li> <li>• In 2000 campaign, Bush built upon churches in providing aid to needy but also tried to avoid hostility to all government assistance (“compassionate conservatism”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hostility to government as counterproductive and inconsistent</li> <li>• Conservatives have a selective opposition to government</li> <li>• Government deficits grew during the 1980s when conservatives were in control</li> <li>• Insensitivity to the social needs of the homeless and mentally ill</li> <li>• Too much faith in our market economy</li> <li>• Failure to acknowledge and endorse policies that deal with racism and sexism</li> </ul>

**LIBERTARIANISM**

- An ideology that cherishes individual liberty and insists on a sharply limited government (Federal government should only be used for national defense); Preaches opposition to government and just about all its programs
- Opposes all government regulation (end government subsidies for businesses and farmers, no gun laws, no drug laws, no gambling laws)