

legislation means that some employers are forced to pay women more than they would if their compensation policies were based on their free choice.

- During the 1970s, the courts ordered the busing of schoolchildren to achieve a fair distribution of blacks and whites in public schools. This action was motivated by concern for educational equality, but it also impaired freedom of choice.
- During the 1980s, some states passed legislation that went beyond the idea of equal pay for equal work to the more radical notion of pay equity—equal pay for comparable work. Women had to be paid at a rate equal to men's even if they had different jobs, providing the women's jobs were of "comparable worth." For example, if the skills and responsibilities of a female nurse were found to be comparable to those of a male laboratory technician in the same hospital, the woman's salary and the man's salary would have to be the same.
- In the 1990s, Congress prohibited discrimination in employment, public services, and public accommodations on the basis of physical or mental disabilities. Under the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, businesses with twenty-five or more employees cannot pass over an otherwise qualified disabled person in employment or promotion, and new buses and trains have to be made accessible to them.

These examples illustrate the problem of using government power to promote equality. The clash between freedom and order is obvious, but the clash between freedom and equality is more subtle. Americans, who think of freedom and equality as complementary rather than conflicting values, often do not notice the clash. When forced to choose between the two, however, Americans are far more likely to choose freedom over equality than are people in other countries (see *Compared with What?* 1.2). The emphasis on equality over freedom was especially strong in the former Soviet Union, which guaranteed its citizens medical care, inexpensive housing, and other social services. Although the quality of the benefits was not much by Western standards, Soviet citizens experienced a sense of equality in shared deprivation. Indeed, there was such aversion to economic inequality that citizens' attitudes hindered economic development in a free market after the fall of the Soviet Union. As the director of the Moscow Arts Theater explained, "People are longing for the lost paradise—the lost Communist paradise."²³

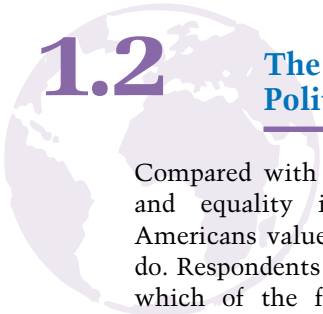
The conflicts among freedom, order, and equality explain a great deal of the political conflict in the United States. The conflicts also underlie the ideologies that people use to structure their understanding of politics.

IDEOLOGY AND THE SCOPE OF GOVERNMENT

People hold different opinions about the merits of government policies. Sometimes their views are based on self-interest. For example, most senior citizens vociferously oppose increasing their personal contributions to Medicare, the government program that defrays medical costs for the elderly, preferring to have all citizens pay for their coverage. Policies also are judged according to individual values and beliefs. Some people hold an assortment of values and beliefs that produce contradictory opinions on

★ compared with what?

1.2 The Importance of Freedom and Equality as Political Values



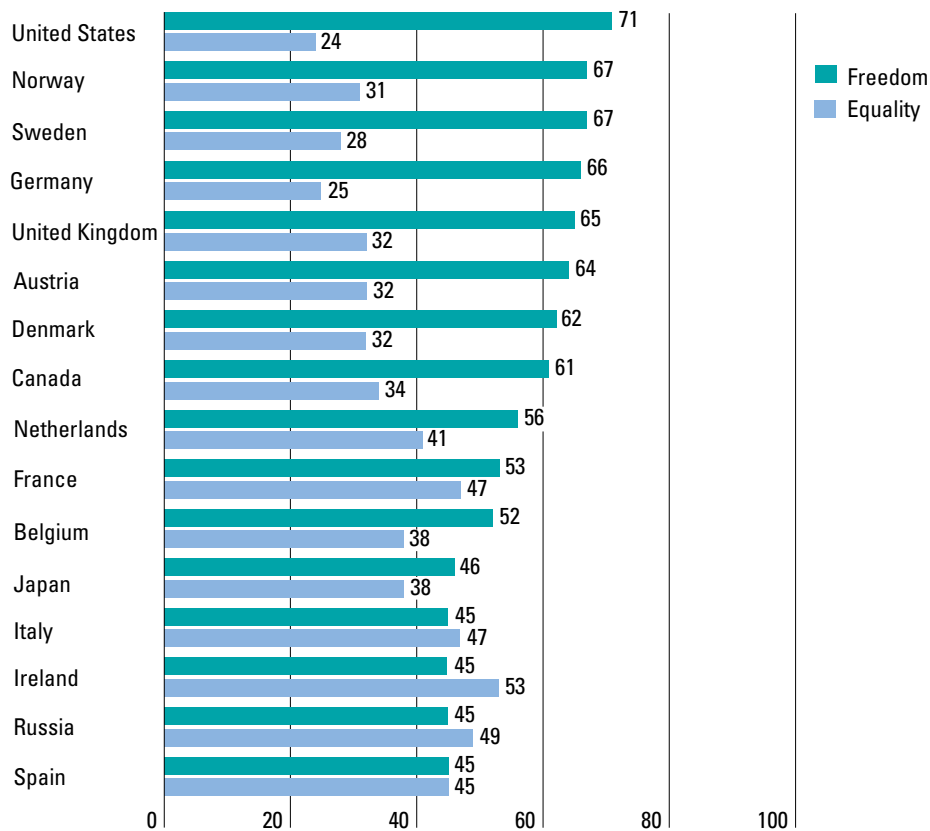
Compared with citizens' views of freedom and equality in fifteen other nations, Americans value freedom more than others do. Respondents in each country were asked which of the following statements came closer to their own opinion:

- "I find that both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to make up my mind for one or the other, I would consider personal freedom more important, that is, everyone can live in freedom and develop without hindrance."
- "Certainly both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to make up my mind for one of the two, I would consider

equality more important, that is, that nobody is underprivileged and that social class differences are not so strong."

Americans chose freedom by a ratio of nearly 3 to 1. No other nation showed such a strong preference for freedom, and citizens in four countries favored equality instead. When we look at this finding together with Americans' disdain for order (see Compared with What? 1.1), the importance of freedom as a political concept in the United States is clear.

Source: World Values Survey, 1990–1991. The tabulation was provided by Professor Ronald F. Inglehart, University of Michigan.



Percentage of respondents who chose freedom and equality

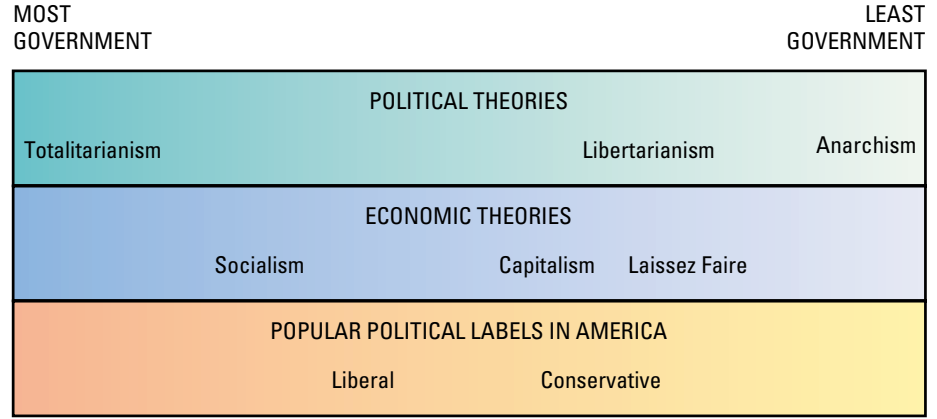
figure

1.1

Ideology and the Scope of Government

We can classify political ideologies according to the scope of action that people are willing to allow government in dealing with social and economic problems. In this chart, the three rows map out various philosophical positions along an underlying continuum ranging from “most” to “least” government. Notice that conventional politics in the United States spans only a narrow portion of the theoretical possibilities for government action.

In popular usage, liberals favor a greater scope of government; conservatives want a narrower scope. But over time, the traditional distinction has eroded and now oversimplifies the differences between liberals and conservatives. See Figure 1.2 for a more discriminating classification of liberals and conservatives.



government policies. Others organize their opinions into a **political ideology**—a consistent set of values and beliefs about the proper purpose and scope of government.

How far should government go to maintain order, provide public goods, and promote equality? In the United States (as in every other nation), citizens, scholars, and politicians have different answers. We can analyze their positions by referring to philosophies about the proper scope of government—the range of its permissible activities. Imagine a continuum. At one end is the belief that government should do everything; at the other is the belief that government should not exist. These extreme ideologies—from the most government to the least government—and those that fall in between are shown in Figure 1.1.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is the belief that government should have unlimited power. A totalitarian government controls all sectors of society: business, labor, education, religion, sports, the arts. A true totalitarian favors a network of laws, rules, and regulations that guides every aspect of individual behavior. The object is to produce a perfect society serving some master plan for “the common good.” Totalitarianism has reached its terrifying full potential only in literature and films (for example, George Orwell’s 1984), but several real societies have come perilously close to “perfection.” One thinks of Germany under Hitler and the Soviet Union under Stalin. Not many people openly profess totalitarianism today, but the concept is useful because it anchors one side of our continuum.

Socialism

Whereas totalitarianism refers to government in general, **socialism** pertains to government’s role in the economy. Like communism, socialism is an economic system based on Marxist theory. Under socialism (and

political ideology

A consistent set of values and beliefs about the proper purpose and scope of government.

totalitarianism

A political philosophy that advocates unlimited power for the government to enable it to control all sectors of society.

socialism

A form of rule in which the central government plays a strong role in regulating existing private industry and directing the economy, although it does allow some private ownership of productive capacity.

communism), the scope of government extends to ownership or control of the basic industries that produce goods and services. These include communications, mining, heavy industry, transportation, and power. Although socialism favors a strong role for government in regulating private industry and directing the economy, it allows more room than communism does for private ownership of productive capacity.

Many Americans equate socialism with the communism practiced in the old closed societies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But there is a difference. Although communism in theory was supposed to result in a “withering away” of the state, communist governments in practice tended toward totalitarianism, controlling not just economic life but both political and social life through a dominant party organization. Some socialist governments, however, practice **democratic socialism**. They guarantee civil liberties (such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion) and allow their citizens to determine the extent of the government’s activity through free elections and competitive political parties. Outside the United States, socialism is not universally viewed as inherently bad. In fact, the governments of Britain, Sweden, Germany, and France, among other democracies, have at times since World War II been avowedly socialist. More recently, the formerly communist regimes of Eastern Europe have abandoned the controlling role of government in their economies in favor of elements of capitalism.

democratic socialism

A socialist form of government that guarantees civil liberties such as freedom of speech and religion. Citizens determine the extent of government activity through free elections and competitive political parties.

capitalism

The system of government that favors free enterprise (privately owned businesses operating without government regulation).

libertarianism

A political ideology that is opposed to all government action except as necessary to protect life and property.

libertarians

Those who advocate minimal government action; those who subscribe to libertarianism.

Capitalism

Capitalism also relates to the government’s role in the economy. In contrast to both socialism and communism, **capitalism** supports free enterprise—private businesses operating without government regulation. Some theorists, most notably economist Milton Friedman, argue that free enterprise is necessary for free politics.²⁴ This argument, that the economic system of capitalism is essential to democracy, contradicts the tenets of democratic socialism. Whether it is valid depends in part on our understanding of democracy, a subject discussed in Chapter 2.

The United States is decidedly a capitalist country, more so than Britain or most other Western nations. Despite the U.S. government’s enormous budget, it owns or operates relatively few public enterprises. For example, railroads, airlines, and television stations are privately owned in the United States; these businesses are frequently owned by the government in other countries. But our government does extend its authority into the economic sphere, regulating private businesses and directing the overall economy. American liberals and conservatives both embrace capitalism, but they differ on the nature and amount of government intervention in the economy that is necessary or desirable.

Libertarianism

Libertarianism opposes all government action except what is necessary to protect life and property. **Libertarians** grudgingly recognize the necessity of government but believe that it should be as limited as possible. For example, libertarians grant the need for traffic laws to ensure safe and effi-

laissez faire

An economic doctrine that opposes any form of government intervention in business.

liberals

Generally, those people whose political ideology favors a broad scope for government; those who value freedom more than order but not more than equality.

anarchism

A political philosophy that opposes government in any form.

cient automobile travel. But they oppose as a restriction on individual actions laws that set a minimum drinking age, and they even oppose laws outlawing marijuana and other drugs. Libertarians believe that social programs that provide food, clothing, and shelter are outside the proper scope of government. Helping the needy, they insist, should be a matter of individual choice. Libertarians also oppose government ownership of basic industries; in fact, they oppose any government intervention in the economy. This kind of economic policy is called **laissez faire**, a French phrase that means “let (people) do (as they please).” Such an extreme policy extends beyond the free enterprise advocated by most capitalists.

Libertarians are vocal advocates of hands-off government, in both the social and the economic sphere. Whereas those Americans who favor a broad scope of government action shun the description *socialist*, libertarians make no secret of their identity. The Libertarian Party ran candidates in every presidential election from 1972 through 2000. However, not one of these candidates won more than 1 million votes.

Do not confuse libertarians with liberals. The words are similar, but their meanings are quite different. *Libertarianism* draws on *liberty* as its root and means “absence of governmental constraint.” In American political usage, *liberalism* evolved from the root word *liberal*. **Liberals** see a positive role for government in helping the disadvantaged. Over time, *liberal* has come to mean something closer to *generous*, in the sense that liberals (but not libertarians) support government spending on social programs. Libertarians find little benefit in any government social program.

Anarchism

Anarchism stands opposite totalitarianism on the political continuum. Anarchists oppose all government, in any form. As a political philosophy, **anarchism** values freedom above all else. Because all government involves some restriction on personal freedom (for example, forcing people to drive on one side of the road), a pure anarchist would object even to traffic laws. Like totalitarianism, anarchism is not a popular philosophy, but it does have adherents on the political fringes.

Anarchists sparked the violence that disrupted the December 1999 meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle (see Chapter 10). Labor unions protested the WTO meeting for failing to include labor rights on its agenda; environmental groups protested it for promoting economic development at the expense of the environment. But anarchists were against the WTO on *principle*—for concentrating the power of multinational corporations in a shadowy “world government.” Discussing old and new forms of anarchy, Joseph Kahn said, “Nothing has revived anarchism like globalization.”²⁵ When the World Bank held its August 1999 meeting in Prague, an anarchists’ Web site promised to “Turn Prague into Seattle.”²⁶ While anarchists were battling Czech police in Prague, anarchists back in Oregon were planning protests at the Democratic party convention in Los Angeles.²⁷ Although anarchism is not a popular philosophy, it is not merely a theoretical category.

Liberals and Conservatives— The Narrow Middle

As shown in Figure 1.1, practical politics in the United States ranges over only the central portion of the continuum. The extreme positions—totalitarianism and anarchism—are rarely argued in public debates. And in this era of distrust of “big government,” few American politicians would openly advocate socialism (although one did in 1990 and won election to Congress as an independent candidate). On the other hand, almost 300 people ran for Congress in 2000 as candidates of the Libertarian Party. Although none won, American libertarians are sufficiently vocal to be heard in the debate over the role of government.

Still, most of that debate is limited to a narrow range of political thought. On one side are people commonly called *liberals*; on the other are *conservatives*. In popular usage, liberals favor more government, conservatives less. This distinction is clear when the issue is government spending to provide public goods. Liberals favor generous government support for education, wildlife protection, public transportation, and a whole range of social programs. **Conservatives** want smaller government budgets and fewer government programs. They support free enterprise and argue against government job programs, regulation of business, and legislation of working conditions and wage rates.

But in other areas, liberal and conservative ideologies are less consistent. In theory, liberals favor government activism, yet they oppose government regulation of abortion. In theory, conservatives oppose government activism, yet they support government control of the publication of sexually explicit material. What’s going on? Are American political attitudes hopelessly contradictory, or is something missing in our analysis of these ideologies today? Actually, something is missing. To understand the liberal and conservative stances on political issues, we have to look not only at the scope of government action but also at the purpose of government action. That is, to understand a political ideology, it is necessary to understand how it incorporates the values of freedom, order, and equality.

conservatives

Generally, those people whose political ideology favors a narrow scope for government. Also, those who value freedom more than equality but would restrict freedom [MS. CUT OFF]

AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT

Much of American politics revolves around the two dilemmas just described: freedom versus order and freedom versus equality. The two dilemmas do not account for all political conflict, but they help us gain insight into the workings of politics and organize the seemingly chaotic world of political events, actors, and issues.

Can You Explain Why...

conservatives might favor more government than liberals

Liberals Versus Conservatives: The New Differences

Liberals and conservatives are different, but their differences no longer hinge on the narrow question of the government’s role in providing public goods. Liberals still favor more government and conservatives less, but this is no longer the critical difference between them. Today, that difference stems from their attitudes toward the purpose of government. Conservatives support the original purpose of government—maintaining social order. They are willing to use the coercive power of the state to force