

Social Studies 11: Politics and Government

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

A political ideology is a set of beliefs about how society should be organized and run. It asks fundamental questions like: How much individual freedom should people have? How much freedom should businesses have? Are people basically good? Should wealth be divided equally?

COMMUNISM

- believes that historically the rich always took advantage of poor
- totally against capitalism because it brings out the greed in people
- believed that people are basically good
- government controls economy so it can redistribute wealth (everyone equal)
- no private ownership - everybody owns everything and everyone has equal access to everything
- government is very involved in the lives of people
- everyone contributes to and has a place in society and all are equally important
- total equality
- little individual freedom in exchange for the good of the whole

SOCIALISM

- like communism but not as extreme
- believes that people are basically good
- lots of government control and regulations for businesses for the good of all citizens (eg. environmental regulations)
- private ownership exists but the government tries to redistribute private property (including wages through taxes) to those in need (unemployed, sick, poor, old, young etc.)
- community very important

LIBERALISM

- believes that people are basically good
- little or no government control in business - capitalism (free markets)
- fair amount of government control in social programs
- more private ownership than socialism
- capitalism with some regulations
- individual and intellectual freedom

CONSERVATISM (today Neo-conservatism or neo-liberalism)

- used to mean resistance to change from the status quo but has changed to mean
- people are half good and half bad
- capitalism (free markets) with as few regulations as possible
- little government control in business
- little government influence in social programs
- survival of the fittest
- individual freedom through individual rights
- even more private ownership than liberalism

FASCISM

- dictatorship --> One guy or small group of people run the show
- believed that people are basically bad
- pride in the nation heavily promoted
- government controls many businesses and has lots of regulations on business to make country strong
- little individual freedom
- everything is done for the good of the country even if it means oppressing people

Capitalism (market economy) - Is not a political ideology or a political system. Rather, it's an economic theory that believes small local companies should compete with each other. If they are left alone people will naturally buy what they want which will lead companies to make more of what people want and less of what they don't want. Prices are determined by supply and demand. If everyone acts in their own self interest all will be well under this economic system. Governments role should only be to keep people safe from foreign attack and to protect property (army and policing). Some governments use this economic theory as the basis for their political ideology.

The Traditional Political Spectrum

