

# Freedom, Order, or Equality?

## CHAPTER TOPICS

The Globalization  
of American  
Government, 5



The Purposes of  
Government, 7



A Conceptual  
Framework for  
Analyzing  
Government, 13



The Concepts of  
Freedom, Order,  
and Equality, 14



Two Dilemmas of  
Government, 20

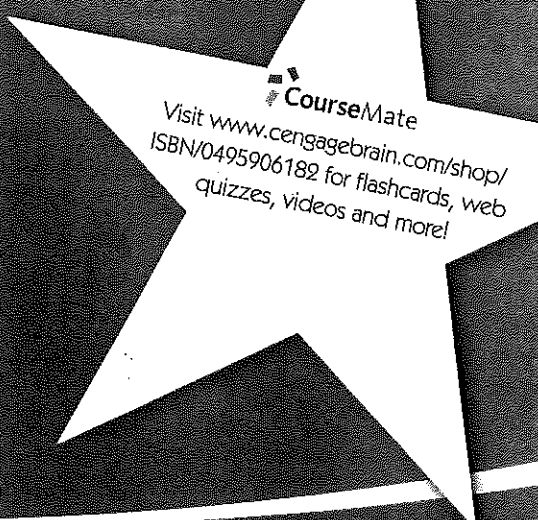


Ideology and the  
Scope of  
Government, 22



American Political  
Ideologies and the  
Purpose of  
Government, 27





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The Great Depression of the 1930s was sparked by the collapse of the stock market in October 1929. Soon afterward, the nation's banks began to fail—more than 1,000 each year and an estimated 4,000 in 1933 alone.<sup>1</sup> Unemployment rose from 3 percent of the labor force before the collapse to almost 25 percent in 1933 and remained high for years, averaging nearly 18 percent from 1930 to 1940.<sup>2</sup> Unemployment was still almost 10 percent in 1941, until World War II put people to work at national defense.

The Great Recession of our era technically began in December 2007 when employers' payroll employment declined.<sup>3</sup> But the home mortgage market began to collapse months earlier. By the summer of 2008, the nation's financial institutions neared widespread failure, the stock market plunged, and the entire economy was in crisis. The term Great Recession was in use by December.<sup>4</sup> Unemployment approached levels of the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> The official unemployment rate, which counts only people looking for work, rose from 4.8 percent in December 2007 to 10.2 percent in October 2009. Adding in those who gave up looking, 17.3 percent of the population was unemployed in December 2009.<sup>6</sup>

National rates don't reveal that unemployment for couples with children under age 18 had doubled from 2007 to 2009 or that married parents with both working dropped from 67 to 60 percent in two years.<sup>7</sup> They don't show that from 1999 to 2009 the number of manufacturing jobs declined by 33 percent, by 12 percent in construction, and by 50 percent in motor vehicles and parts.<sup>8</sup> They don't tell that more than half of all unemployed workers borrowed money from friends or

relatives after losing their jobs or that 60 percent drew down their savings accounts to make ends meet.<sup>9</sup> Despite the hardships suffered by millions of Americans in the Great Recession, the Great Depression was worse: Eighteen percent of the people were out of work for a decade, industrial production declined 32 percent (versus 17 percent in 2009), and about 9,000 banks failed (versus fewer than 175 through 2009).<sup>10</sup> What can government do to end such intense economic downturns? Should it do anything at all?

On March 5, 1933, the day after his inauguration, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proclaimed a four-day bank holiday, suspending "all transactions in the Federal Reserve and other banks, trust companies, credit unions, and building and loan associations."<sup>11</sup> On March 9, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Emergency Banking Relief Act, which gave the president control over financial transactions in currency, credit, silver, and gold; permitted the Treasury Department to decide which banks could reopen; and effectively placed the government in control of the banking industry. Most economists credit Roosevelt's unprecedented use of government power with stopping the run on banks, thus preventing citizens from withdrawing even more of their deposits and preventing further collapse of financial institutions.

President George W. Bush's administration used government power to forestall a collapse of the home mortgage market in 2008. On Sunday, September 7, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson announced the takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, two private companies responsible for most of the nation's new home mortgages.<sup>12</sup> Two weeks later, Secretary Paulson along with Federal Reserve

Chair Ben Bernanke announced a \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) to buy out failing banks and automobile companies. Some described their actions as socialism, not capitalism. Nevertheless, the nation avoided a financial collapse akin to that of the 1930s.

President Barack Obama inherited Bush's \$700 billion TARP program and embarked on his own \$787 billion economic stimulus program to improve the economy. (See the opening pages of Chapter 2 for more on Obama's decision.) It funded tax cuts; benefits for unemployment, education, and health care; and job creation through contracts, grants, and loans.<sup>13</sup> Unemployment continued to rise in the months after its passage, but the

economy actually grew by the end of 2009, and economists credited the stimulus program.<sup>14</sup> Still, a poll in mid-January 2010 found more people disapproved than approved of Obama's handling of the economy.<sup>15</sup> People worried about federal spending, the growing deficit, and government's role in the economy in general. Clobbered by imports of foreign glass (particularly from China), one West Virginia glassmaker said, "I need some relief from government to stay in business, but I'm not sure it is the government's role to keep me in business."<sup>16</sup> What do you think? Should government spend billions to stabilize the financial system and to combat unemployment when taxpayers must bear the burden?

Our main interest in this text is the purpose, value, and operation of government as practiced in the United States. As the worried West Virginia glassmaker indicates, however, we live in an era of **globalization**—a term for the increasing interdependence of citizens and nations across the world.<sup>17</sup> So we must consider how politics at home and abroad interrelate, which is increasingly important to understanding our government.<sup>18</sup>

We probe the relationship between individual freedoms and personal security in the United States. We also examine the relationship between individual freedom and social equality as reflected in government policies, which often confront underlying dilemmas such as these:

*Which is better:* to live under a government that fiercely protects individual freedom or under one that infringes on freedom while fiercely guarding against threats to physical and economic security? *Which is better:* to let all citizens keep the same share of their income or to tax wealthier people at a higher rate to fund programs for poorer people? These questions pose dilemmas tied to opposing political philosophies that place different values on freedom, order, and equality.

This book explains American government and politics in the light of these dilemmas. It does more than explain the workings of our government; it encourages you to think about what government should—and should not—do. And it judges the American government against democratic ideals, encouraging you to think about how government should make its decisions. As the title of this book implies, *The Challenge of Democracy* argues that good government often poses difficult choices.

College students often say that American government and politics are hard to understand. In fact, many other people voice the same complaint. About 70 percent of people interviewed in 2008 agreed with the statement, "Politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't understand what's going on."<sup>19</sup> We hope to improve your understanding of "what's going on" by analyzing the norms, or values, that people use to

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**globalization**  
The increasing interdependence of citizens and nations across the world.

judge political events. Our purpose is not to preach what people ought to favor in making policy decisions; it is to teach what values are at stake.

Teaching without preaching is not easy; no one can completely exclude personal values from political analysis. But our approach minimizes the problem by concentrating on the dilemmas that confront governments when they are forced to choose between important policies that threaten equally cherished values, such as freedom of speech and personal security.

A prominent scholar defined *politics* as “the authoritative allocation of values for a society.”<sup>20</sup> Every government policy reflects a choice between conflicting values. All government policies reinforce certain values (norms) at the expense of others. We want you to interpret policy issues (for example, Should assisted suicide go unpunished?) with an understanding of the fundamental values in question (freedom of action versus order and protection of life) and the broader political context (liberal or conservative politics).

By looking beyond the specifics to the underlying normative principles, you should be able to make more sense out of politics. Our framework for analysis does not encompass all the complexities of American government, but it should help your knowledge grow by improving your comprehension of political information. We begin by considering the basic purposes of government. In short, why do we need it?

## The Globalization of American Government

Most people do not like being told what to do. Fewer still like being coerced into acting a certain way. Yet billions of people in countries across the world willingly submit to the coercive power of government. They accept laws that state on which side of the road to drive, how many wives (or husbands) they can have, what constitutes a contract, how to dispose of human waste—and how much they must pay to support the government that makes these coercive laws. In the first half of the twentieth century, people thought of government mainly in territorial terms. Indeed, a standard definition of government is the legitimate use of force—including firearms, imprisonment, and execution—within specified geographical boundaries to control human behavior. Since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 ended the Thirty Years’ War in Europe, international relations and diplomacy have been based on the principle of national sovereignty, defined as “a political entity’s externally recognized right to exercise final authority over its affairs.”<sup>21</sup> Simply put, national sovereignty means that each national government has the right to govern its people as it wishes, without interference from other nations.

Some scholars argued strongly early in the twentieth century that a body of international law controlled the actions of supposedly sovereign nations, but their argument was essentially theoretical.<sup>22</sup> In the practice of international relations, there was no sovereign power over nations. Each enjoyed complete independence to govern its territory without interference from other nations. Although the League of Nations and later the United Nations were supposed to

### government

The legitimate use of force to control human behavior; also, the organization or agency authorized to exercise that force.

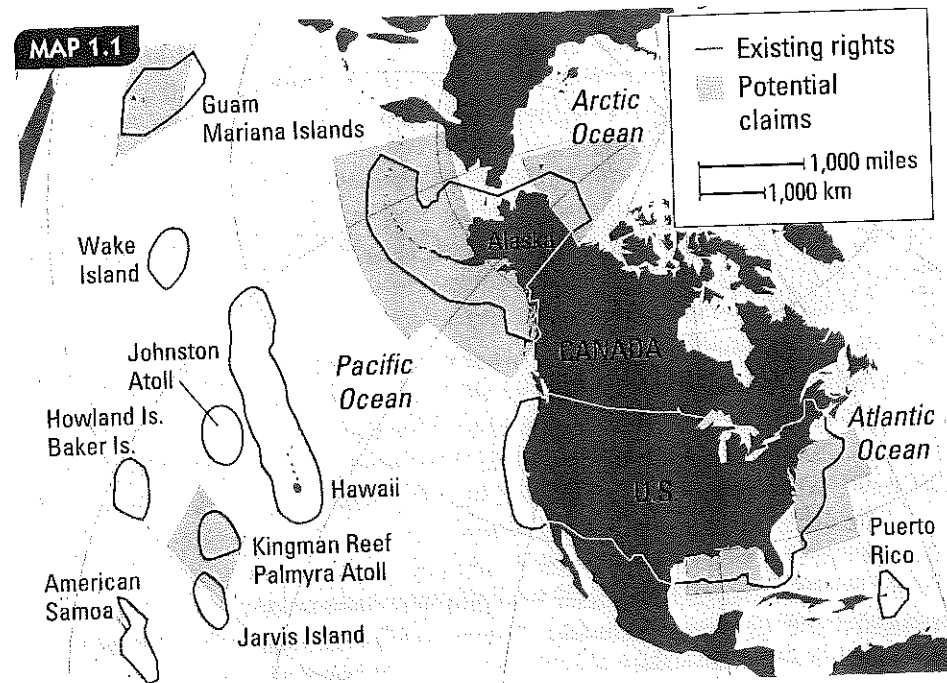
### national sovereignty

A political entity’s externally recognized right to exercise final authority over its affairs.

introduce supranational order into the world, even these international organizations explicitly respected national sovereignty as the guiding principle of international relations. The U.N. Charter, Article 2.1, states: "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members."

National sovereignty, however, is threatened under globalization. Consider the international community's concern with starving refugees in the Darfur region of Sudan. The U.N. Security Council resolved to send troops to end the ethnic conflict, which cost some four hundred thousand lives. The Sudanese government, suspected of causing the conflict, opposed the U.N. action as violating its sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan became closely monitored by the U.N., which deployed troops there in early 2008 and had over 15,000 there in 2010.

Global forces also generate pressures for international law. Consider the 1982 Law of the Sea Treaty, which governs maritime law from mineral rights



### Sea Change

This map shows how much seabed would be open to the United States for oil, gas, and mineral mining under the Law of the Sea Treaty. The additional territory amounts to 291,000 square miles, most of that in waters opened by ice melting because of global warming. Although 155 nations had entered the treaty by the end of 2007, the United States had not. The treaty had been blocked in the Senate by opponents who feared it would undermine U.S. sovereignty by delegating authority to an International Seabed Authority. Commercial interests and the U.S. Navy, however, favored the treaty. President Bush recommended its passage, and so did President Obama.

Source: Nick Timiraos, "Arctic Thaw Defrosts a Sea Treaty," in *Wall Street Journal* (Eastern Edition), 11/3/2007. Copyright 2007 by Dow Jones & Company, Inc. Reproduced with permission of Dow Jones & Company, Inc., in the format textbook via Copyright Clearance Center.

to shipping lanes under an International Seabed Authority (see Map 1.1). Although President Ronald Reagan did not sign it, the treaty came into force in 1994 when ratified by sixty nations. President Clinton signed the treaty then, but conservative senators kept it from being ratified, fearing loss of U.S. sovereignty. After global warming began to melt the Arctic ice, the U.S. Navy backed the treaty for guaranteeing free passage through international straits, and oil and mining companies favored its 350-mile grant of mineral rights around Alaska. It was reported out for ratification in 2007 with President George W. Bush's support.<sup>24</sup> However, opponents argued against getting EOST (Law of Sea Treaty), and it remained unratified during Obama's first year.<sup>25</sup>

Our government, you might be surprised to learn, is worried about this trend of holding nations accountable to international law. In fact, in 2002, the United States "annulled" its signature to the 1998 treaty (no country had ever unsigned a treaty) to create an International Criminal Court that would define and try crimes against humanity.<sup>26</sup> Why would the United States oppose such an international court? One reason is its concern that U.S. soldiers stationed abroad might be arrested and tried in that court.<sup>27</sup> Another reason is the death penalty, practiced in the United States but abolished by more than half the countries in the world and all countries in the European Union. Indeed, in 1996, the International Commission of Jurists condemned the U.S. death penalty as "arbitrarily and racially discriminatory," and there is a concerted campaign across Europe to force the sovereign United States to terminate capital punishment.<sup>28</sup>

The United States is the world's most powerful nation, but as proved by the events of September 11, 2001, it is not invulnerable to foreign attack. Although the United States is not the most "globalized" nation (see "Politics of Global Change: The Globalization of Nations"), it is nevertheless vulnerable to erosion of its sovereignty. As the world's superpower, should the United States be above international law (like the Law of the Sea Treaty) if its sovereignty is compromised?

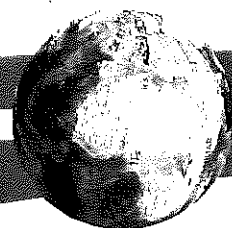
Although this text is about American national government, it recognizes the growing impact of international politics and world opinion on U.S. politics. The Cold War era, of course, had a profound effect on domestic politics because the nation spent heavily on the military and restricted trading with communist countries. Now we are closely tied through trade to former enemies (we import more goods from China—still communist—than from France and Britain combined), and we are thoroughly embedded in a worldwide economic, social, and political network. (See Chapter 20, "Global Policy," for an extended treatment of the economic and social dimensions of globalization.) More than ever before, we must discuss American politics while casting an eye abroad to see how foreign affairs affect our government and how American politics affects government in other nations.

## The Purposes of Government

Governments at any level require citizens to surrender some freedom as part of being governed. Although some governments minimize their infringements

### IDEALOG.ORG

Our IDEALog.org self-test poses twenty questions about the political values seen in Figure 1.2. One of the questions in the IDEALog self-test is about the death penalty. Take the quiz, and see how you respond.

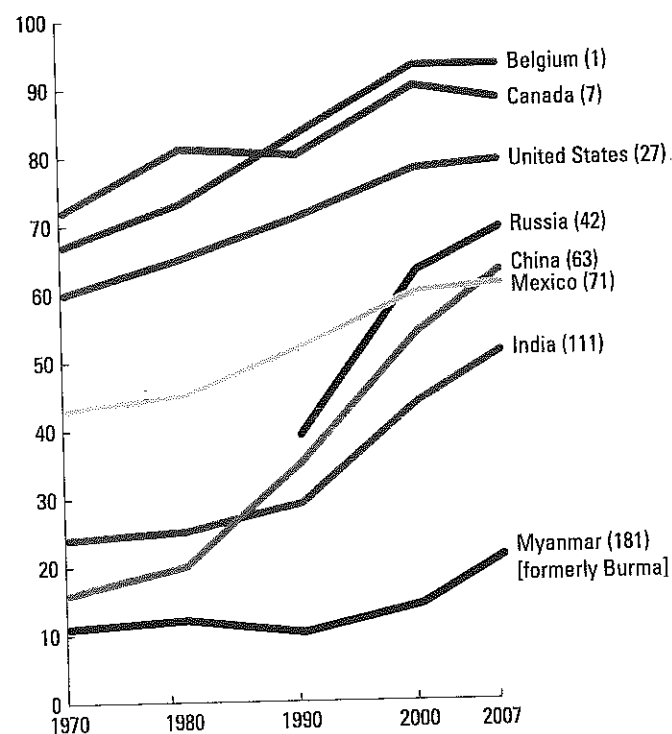


## Politics of Global Change

### The Globalization of Nations

This text presents a working definition of *globalization* as “the increasing interdependence of citizens and nations across the world.” But citizens and nations differ in their degree of global interdependence, and their interdependence can change over time. Axel Dreher at KOF, the Swiss Economic Institute, generated an annual Index of Globalization (scaled from 1 to 100) using *economic* data on investment flows and restrictions; *social* data on personal contact, information flows, and cultural factors; and *political* data on embassies and international obligations—24 variables in all. The KOF index scored 181 countries annually for 1970 to 2007. Here are 8 of the

181 countries; their 2007 rankings are in parentheses. Belgium and Myanmar anchored the top and bottom in 2007. Canada ranked considerably higher than the United States, which was 27th. The report states: “All in all, globalization in the USA has stagnated since the end of the 1990s. Similar to most other industrialised countries, social globalization in the USA has remained unchanged for several years now. This is also true for political globalization which was rising until 1993 and has stagnated since.” In contrast, note the impressive increases by Russia (not scored prior to 1990), China, and India, which are playing ever larger roles in the world.



Source: KOF Swiss Economic Institute, KOF Index of Globalization 2010 Press Release; Axel Dreher, “Does Globalization Affect Growth? Evidence from a New Index of Globalization,” *Applied Economics* 38 (2006): 1091–1110, updated 22 January 2010, both available at <http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch>.



on personal freedom, no government has as a goal the maximization of personal freedom. Governments exist to control; *to govern* means “to control.” Why do people surrender their freedom to this control? To obtain the benefits of government. Throughout history, government has served two major purposes: maintaining order (preserving life and protecting property) and providing public goods. More recently, some governments have pursued a third purpose, promoting equality, which is more controversial.

## Maintaining Order

Maintaining order is the oldest objective of government. Order in this context is rich with meaning. Let's start with “law and order.” Maintaining order in this sense means establishing the rule of law to preserve life and protect property. To the seventeenth-century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), preserving life was the most important function of government. In his classic philosophical treatise, *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes described life without government as life in a “state of nature.” Without rules, people would live as predators do, stealing and killing for their personal benefit. In Hobbes's classic phrase, life in a state of nature would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” He believed that a single ruler, or sovereign, must possess unquestioned authority to guarantee the safety of the weak and protect them from the attacks of the strong. Hobbes named his all-powerful government “Leviathan,” after a biblical sea monster. He believed that complete obedience to Leviathan's strict laws was a small price to pay for the security of living in a civil society.

Most of us can only imagine what a state of nature would be like. But in some parts of the world, whole nations have experienced lawlessness. That has been the situation in Somalia since 1991, when the government was toppled and warlords feuded over territory. Today, the government controls only a portion of the capital, Mogadishu, and Somali pirates seize ships off its shore with impunity.<sup>29</sup> Throughout history, authoritarian rulers have used people's fear of civil disorder to justify taking power. Ironically, the ruling group itself—whether monarchy, aristocracy, or political party—then became known as the *established order*.

Hobbes's conception of life in the cruel state of nature led him to view government primarily as a means of guaranteeing people's survival. Other theorists, taking survival for granted, believed that government protects order by preserving private property (goods and land owned by individuals). Foremost among them was John Locke (1632–1704), an English philosopher. In *Two Treatises on Government* (1690), he wrote that the protection of life, liberty, and property was the basic objective of government. His thinking strongly influenced the Declaration of Independence; it is reflected in the Declaration's famous phrase identifying “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” as “unalienable Rights” of citizens under government. Locke's defense of property rights became linked with safeguards for individual liberties in the doctrine of liberalism, which holds that the state should leave citizens free to further their individual pursuits.<sup>30</sup>

### order

Established ways of social behavior. Maintaining order is the oldest purpose of government.

### liberalism

The belief that states should leave individuals free to follow their individual pursuits. Note that this differs from the definition of *liberal* later in this chapter.



### Leviathan, Hobbes's All-Powerful Sovereign

This engraving is from the 1651 edition of *Leviathan*, by Thomas Hobbes. It shows Hobbes's sovereign brandishing a sword in one hand and the scepter of justice in the other. He watches over an orderly town, made peaceful by his absolute authority. But note that the sovereign's body is composed of tiny images of his subjects. He exists only through them. Hobbes explains that such government power can be created only if people "confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will."

(Mary Evans Picture Library/Alamy)



### communism

A political system in which, in theory, ownership of all land and productive facilities is in the hands of the people, and all goods are equally shared. The production and distribution of goods are controlled by an authoritarian government.

### public goods

Benefits and services, such as parks and sanitation, that benefit all citizens but are not likely to be produced voluntarily by individuals.

Not everyone believes that the protection of private property is a valid objective of government. The German philosopher Karl Marx (1818–1883) rejected the private ownership of property used in the production of goods or services. Marx's ideas form the basis of communism, a complex theory that gives ownership of all land and productive facilities to the people—in effect, to the government. In line with communist theory, the 1977 constitution of the former Soviet Union declared that the nation's land, minerals, waters, and forests "are the exclusive property of the state." Years after the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia remains deeply split over abandoning the old communist-era policies to permit the private ownership of land. Even today's market-oriented China still clings to the principle that all land belongs to the state, and not until 2007 did it pass a law that protected private homes and businesses.<sup>31</sup>

## Providing Public Goods

After governments have established basic order, they can pursue other ends. Using their coercive powers, they can tax citizens to raise money to spend on public goods, which are benefits and services available to everyone, such

as education, sanitation, and parks. Public goods benefit all citizens but are not likely to be produced by the voluntary acts of individuals. The government of ancient Rome, for example, built aqueducts to carry fresh water from the mountains to the city. Road building was another public good provided by the Roman government, which also used the roads to move its legions and protect the established order.

Government action to provide public goods can be controversial. During President James Monroe's administration (1817–1825), many people thought that building the Cumberland Road (between Cumberland, Maryland, and Wheeling, West Virginia) was not a proper function of the national government, the Romans notwithstanding. Over time, the scope of government functions in the United States has expanded. During President Dwight Eisenhower's administration in the 1950s, the federal government outdid the Romans' noble road building. Although a Republican opposed to big government, Eisenhower launched the massive interstate highway system, at a cost of \$27 billion (in 1950s dollars). Yet some government enterprises that have been common in other countries—running railroads, operating coal mines, generating electric power—are politically controversial or even unacceptable in the United States. Hence, many people objected when the Bush administration took over General Motors and Chrysler in 2008 to facilitate an orderly bankruptcy. People disagree about how far the government ought to go in using its power to tax to provide public goods and services and how much of that realm should be handled by private business for profit.

## Promoting Equality

The promotion of equality has not always been a major objective of government. It gained prominence only in the twentieth century, in the aftermath of industrialization and urbanization. Confronted by the paradox of poverty amid plenty, some political leaders in European nations pioneered extensive government programs to improve life for the poor. Under the emerging concept of the welfare state, government's role expanded to provide individuals with medical care, education, and a guaranteed income "from cradle to grave." Sweden, Britain, and other nations adopted welfare programs aimed at reducing social inequalities. This relatively new purpose of government has been by far the most controversial. People often oppose taxation for public goods (building roads and schools, for example) because of cost alone. They oppose more strongly taxation for government programs to promote economic and social equality on principle.

The key issue here is government's role in redistributing income, that is, taking from the wealthy to give to the poor. Charity (voluntary giving to the poor) has a strong basis in Western religious traditions; using the power of the state to support the poor does not. (In his 1838 novel, *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens dramatized how government power was used to imprison the poor, not to support them.) Using the state to redistribute income was originally a radical idea, set forth by Karl Marx as the ultimate principle of developed

### Rosa Parks: She Sat for Equality

Rosa Parks had just finished a day's work as a seamstress and was sitting in the front of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, going home. A white man claimed her seat, which he could do according to the law in December 1955. When she refused to move and was arrested, outraged blacks, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., began a boycott of the Montgomery bus company. Rosa Parks died in 2005 at age ninety-two and was accorded the honor of lying in state in the Capitol rotunda, the first woman to receive that tribute.

(Gene Herrick/AP Photo)



communism: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."<sup>32</sup> This extreme has never been realized in any government, not even in communist states. But over time, taking from the rich to help the needy has become a legitimate function of most governments.

That function is not without controversy. Especially since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the government's role in redistributing income to promote economic equality has been a major source of policy debate in the United States. In 2007, for example, Congress increased the minimum wage for workers paid on an hourly basis from \$5.15 per hour (set in 1997) to \$7.25. Despite inflation, the minimum wage had been frozen for ten years, and the increase passed only because Democrats included it in a deal on funding the Iraq war.

Government can also promote social equality through policies that do not redistribute income. For example, in 2000, Vermont passed a law allowing persons of the same sex to enter a "civil union" granting access to similar benefits enjoyed by persons of different sexes through marriage. By 2010, the legislatures or courts in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire put similar laws into effect. In this instance, laws advancing social equality may clash with different social values held by other citizens. Indeed, 31 states blocked same-sex marriages through public referenda.<sup>33</sup>

### IDEALOG.ORG

How do you feel about government programs that reduce income differences between rich and poor? Take IDEALog's self-test.

# A Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Government

Citizens have very different views of how vigorously they want government to maintain order, provide public goods, and promote equality. Of the three objectives, providing for public goods usually is less controversial than maintaining order or promoting equality. After all, government spending for highways, schools, and parks carries benefits for nearly every citizen. Moreover, services merely cost money. The cost of maintaining order and promoting equality is greater than money; it usually means a trade-off in basic values.

To understand government and the political process, you must be able to recognize these trade-offs and identify the basic values they entail. Just as people sit back from a wide-screen motion picture to gain perspective, to understand American government you need to take a broad view—a view much broader than that offered by examining specific political events. You need to use political concepts.

A concept is a generalized idea of a set of items or thoughts. It groups various events, objects, or qualities under a common classification or label. The framework that guides this book consists of five concepts that figure prominently in political analysis. We regard the five concepts as especially important to a broad understanding of American politics, and we use them repeatedly throughout this book. This framework will help you evaluate political events long after you have read this text.

The five concepts that we emphasize deal with the fundamental issues of what government tries to do and how it decides to do it. The concepts that relate to what government tries to do are *order*, *freedom*, and *equality*. All governments by definition value order; maintaining order is part of the meaning of government. Most governments at least claim to preserve individual freedom while they maintain order, although they vary widely in the extent to which they succeed. Few governments even profess to guarantee equality, and governments differ greatly in policies that pit equality against freedom. Our conceptual framework should help you evaluate the extent to which the United States pursues all three values through its government.

How government chooses the proper mix of order, freedom, and equality in its policymaking has to do with the process of choice. We evaluate the American governmental process using two models of democratic government: *majoritarian* and *pluralist*. Many governments profess to be democracies. Whether they are or are not depends on their (and our) meaning of the term. Even countries that Americans agree are democracies—for example, the United States and Britain—differ substantially in the type of democracy they practice. We can use our conceptual models of democratic government both to classify the type of democracy practiced in the United States and to evaluate the government's success in fulfilling that model.

The five concepts can be organized into two groups:

- Concepts that identify the values pursued by government:
  - Freedom
  - Order
  - Equality
- Concepts that describe models of democratic government:
  - Majoritarian democracy
  - Pluralist democracy

The rest of this chapter examines freedom, order, and equality as conflicting values pursued by government. Chapter 2 discusses majoritarian democracy and pluralist democracy as alternative institutional models for implementing democratic government.

## The Concepts of Freedom, Order, and Equality

These three terms—*freedom*, *order*, and *equality*—have a range of connotations in American politics. Both *freedom* and *equality* are positive terms that politicians have learned to use to their own advantage. Consequently, *freedom* and *equality* mean different things to different people at different times, depending on the political context in which they are used. *Order*, in contrast, has negative connotations for many people because it symbolizes government intrusion into private lives. Except during periods of social strife or external threat (for example, after September 11), few politicians in Western democracies openly call for more order. Because all governments infringe on freedom, we examine that concept first.

### Freedom

*Freedom* can be used in two major senses: freedom of and freedom from. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt used the word in both senses in a speech he made shortly before the United States entered World War II. He described four freedoms: freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom from fear, and freedom from want. The noted illustrator Norman Rockwell gave Americans a vision of these freedoms in a classic set of paintings published in the *Saturday Evening Post* and subsequently issued as posters to sell war bonds (see the feature “The Four Freedoms”).

Freedom of is the absence of constraints on behavior; it means freedom to do something. In this sense, *freedom* is synonymous with *liberty*.<sup>34</sup> Two of Rockwell’s paintings, *Freedom of Worship* and *Freedom of Speech*, exemplify this type of freedom. Freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly (collectively called “civil liberties”) are discussed in Chapter 15.

Freedom from is the message of the other paintings, *Freedom from Fear* and *Freedom from Want*.<sup>35</sup> Here freedom suggests immunity from fear and

freedom of  
An absence of constraints  
on behavior, as in *freedom*  
of speech or *freedom of*  
religion.

freedom from  
Immunity, as in *freedom from*  
want.

want. In the modern political context, *freedom from* often symbolizes the fight against exploitation and oppression. The cry of the civil rights movement in the 1960s—"Freedom Now!"—conveyed this meaning. This sense of freedom corresponds to the "civil rights" discussed in Chapter 16. If you recognize that freedom in this sense means immunity from discrimination, you can see that it comes close to the concept of equality.<sup>36</sup> In this book, we avoid using *freedom* to mean "freedom from"; for this sense, we simply use *equality*. When we use *freedom*, we mean "freedom of."

## Order

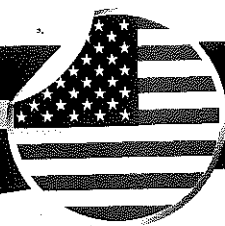
When *order* is viewed in the narrow sense of preserving life and protecting property, most citizens concede the importance of maintaining order and thereby grant the need for government. For example, "domestic Tranquility" (order) is cited in the preamble to the Constitution. However, when *order* is viewed in the broader sense of preserving the social order, some people argue that maintaining order is not a legitimate function of government (see "Compared with What? The Importance of Order and Freedom in Other Nations"). *Social order* refers to established patterns of authority in society and traditional modes of behavior. It is the accepted way of doing things. The prevailing social order prescribes behavior in many different areas: how students should dress in school (neatly, no purple hair) and behave toward their teachers (respectfully); who is allowed to marry (single adults of opposite sexes); what the press should not publish (sexually explicit photographs); and what the proper attitude toward religion and country should be (reverential). It is important to remember that the social order can change. Today, perfectly respectable men and women wear bathing suits that would have caused a scandal a century ago.

A government can protect the established order by using its police power—its authority to safeguard residents' safety, health, welfare, and morals. The extent to which government should use this authority is a topic of ongoing debate in the United States and is constantly being redefined by the courts. In the 1980s, many states used their police powers to pass legislation that banned smoking in public places. In the 1990s, a hot issue was whether government should control the dissemination of pornography on the Internet. After September 11, 2001, new laws were passed increasing government's power to investigate suspicious activities by foreign nationals in order to deter terrorism. After the underwear bomber was thwarted from blowing up an airliner on Christmas Day 2009, airports began using full-body scanners to probe through clothing. Despite their desire to be safe from further attacks, some citizens feared the erosion of their civil liberties. Living in a police state—a government that uses its power to regulate nearly all aspects of behavior—might maximize safety, but at a considerable loss of personal freedom.

Most governments are inherently conservative; they tend to resist social change. But some governments aim to restructure the social order. Social change is most dramatic when a government is overthrown through force and replaced. This can occur through an internal revolution or a "regime

### police power

The authority of a government to maintain order and safeguard citizens' health, morals, safety, and welfare.



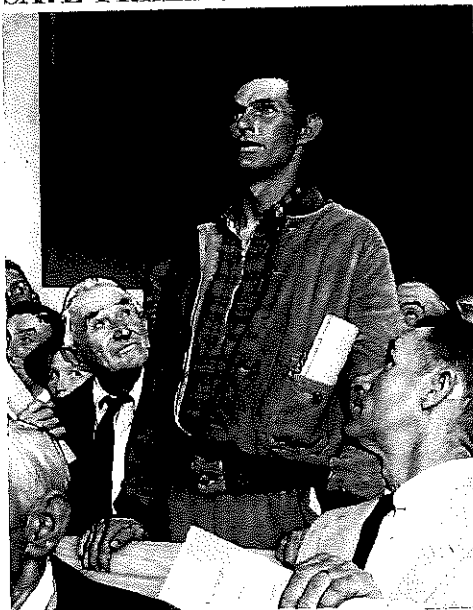
## Feature Story

### The Four Freedoms

Norman Rockwell became famous in the 1940s for the humorous, homespun covers he painted for the *Saturday Evening Post*, a weekly magazine. Inspired by an address to Congress in which President Roosevelt outlined his goals for world civilization, Rockwell painted *The Four Freedoms*, which were reproduced in the *Post* during February and March 1943. Their immense popularity led the government to print posters of the illustrations for the Treasury Department's war bond drive.

The Office of War Information also reproduced *The Four Freedoms* and circulated the posters in schools, clubhouses, railroad stations, post offices, and other public buildings. Officials even had copies circulated on the European front to remind soldiers of the liberties for which they were fighting. It is said that no other paintings in the world have ever been reproduced or circulated in such vast numbers as *The Four Freedoms*.

#### SAVE FREEDOM OF SPEECH



**BUY WAR BONDS**

(Norman Rockwell/CORBIS)

#### SAVE FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

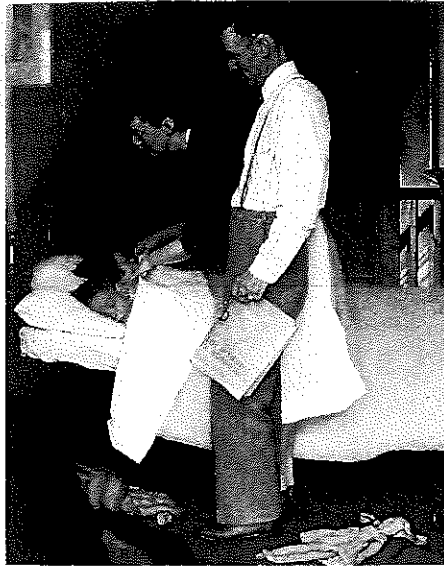


**BUY WAR BONDS**

(Norman Rockwell/CORBIS)



OURS...to fight for



**FREEDOM FROM FEAR**

(Norman Rockwell/CORBIS)

OURS...to fight for



**FREEDOM FROM WANT**

(Norman Rockwell/CORBIS)

change” effected externally. Societies can also work to change social patterns more gradually through the legal process. Our use of the term *order* in this book encompasses all three aspects: preserving life, protecting property, and maintaining traditional patterns of social relationships.

## Equality

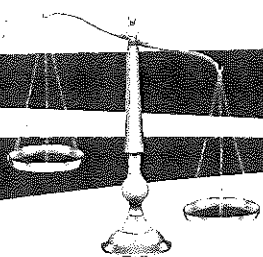
As with *freedom* and *order*, *equality* is used in different senses to support different causes. Political equality in elections is easy to define: each citizen has one and only one vote. This basic concept is central democratic theory, a subject explored at length in Chapter 2. But when some people advocate political equality, they mean more than one person, one vote. These people contend that an urban ghetto dweller and the chairman of the board of Microsoft are not politically equal despite the fact that each has one vote. Through occupation or wealth, some citizens are more able than others to influence political decisions. For example, wealthy citizens can exert influence by advertising in the mass media or by contacting friends in high places. Lacking great wealth and political connections, most citizens do not have such influence. Thus, some analysts argue that equality in wealth, education, and status—that is, social equality—is necessary for true political equality.

### political equality

Equality in political decision making: one vote per person, with all votes counted equally.

### social equality

Equality in wealth, education, and status.



## Compared with What?

### The Importance of Order and Freedom in Other Nations

Compared with citizens in twenty-nine other nations, Americans do not value order very much. The World Values Survey asked respondents to select which of four national goals was "very important":

- Maintaining order in the nation
- Giving people more say in important government decisions
- Fighting rising prices
- Protecting freedom of speech

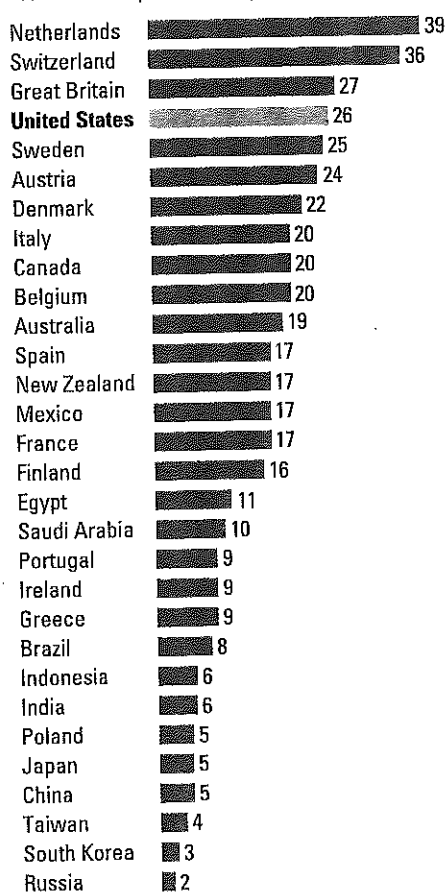
The United States ranked twenty-eighth in the list of those selecting "maintaining order" as very important. While American citizens do not value government control of social behavior as much as others, they do value freedom of speech more highly. Citizens in only three countries favor protecting freedom of speech more than citizens in the United States.

#### "Maintaining order is very important"



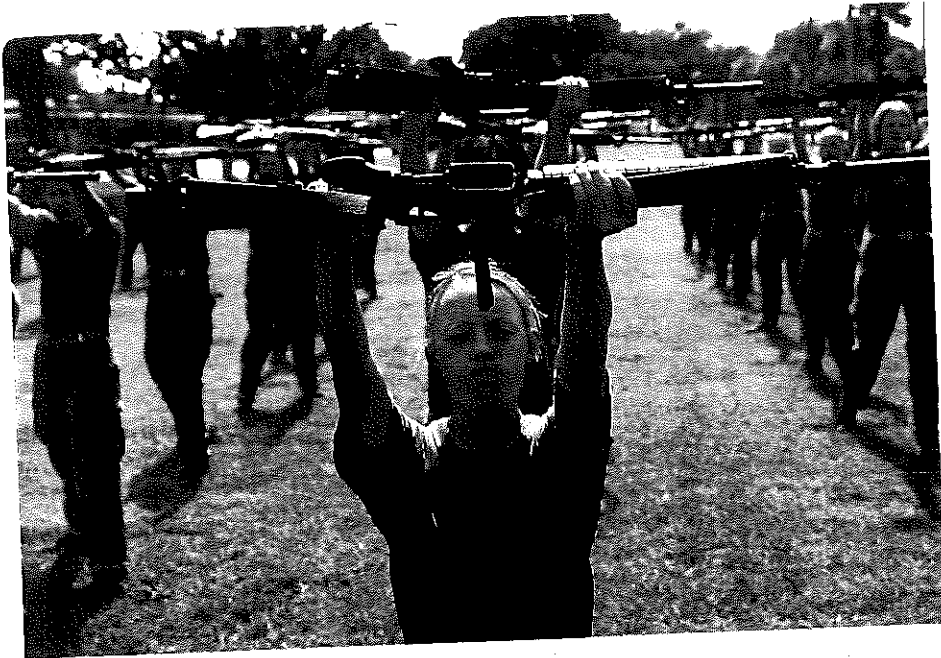
Percentage of respondents  
who value "order"

#### "Freedom of speech is very important"



Percentage of respondents  
who value "freedom"

Source: These are combined data from the 1999–2001 and 2005–2007 waves of the World Values Survey. See Ronald Inglehart, "Materialist/Postmaterialist Priorities Among Publics Around the World" (discussion paper presented at the Institute of Social Research (ISR), University of Michigan, 14 February 2008).



### Equality in the Military

While they still have a long way to go, women are being treated more equally in the military. Although they are not allowed in units engaged in direct combat, women nevertheless often find themselves in other combat situations and consequently risk being killed. As of February 2009, 102 women in the U.S. military had been killed by hostile fire in Iraq. That's more than twice as many women killed in the military from the end of World War II to the start of the Iraq war.

Source: Hannah Fischer, "United States Military Casualty Statistics: Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom," Congressional Research Service, 7-5700, RS22452, March 25, 2009.  
Photo: Scott Olson/Getty Images News/Getty Images.

There are two routes to promoting social equality: providing equal opportunities and ensuring equal outcomes. Equality of opportunity means that each person has the same chance to succeed in life. This idea is deeply ingrained in American culture. The U.S. Constitution prohibits titles of nobility and does not make owning property a requirement for holding public office. Public schools and libraries are open to all. For many people, the concept of social equality is satisfied by offering equal opportunities for advancement; it is not essential that people actually end up being equal. For others, true social equality means nothing less than equality of outcome.<sup>37</sup> President Lyndon B. Johnson expressed this view in 1965: "It is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity.... We seek ... not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result."<sup>38</sup> According to this outlook, it is not enough that governments provide people with equal opportunities; they must also design policies that redistribute wealth and status so that economic and social equality are actually achieved. In education, equality of outcome has led to federal laws that require comparable funding for men's and women's college sports. In business, equality of outcome has led to certain affirmative action programs to increase minority hiring and to the active recruitment of women, blacks, and Latinos to fill jobs. Equality of outcome has also produced federal laws that require employers to pay men and women equally for equal work. In recent years, the very concept of affirmative action has come under scrutiny. In 2003, however, the U.S. Supreme Court supported affirmative action in the form of preferential treatment to minorities in college admissions.

**equality of opportunity**  
The idea that each person is guaranteed the same chance to succeed in life.

**equality of outcome**  
The concept that society must ensure that people are equal, and governments must design policies to redistribute wealth and status so that economic and social equality is actually achieved.

Some link equality of outcome with the concept of government-supported rights—the idea that every citizen is entitled to certain benefits of government—that government should guarantee its citizens adequate (if not equal) housing, employment, medical care, and income as a matter of right. If citizens are entitled to government benefits as a matter of right, government efforts to promote equality of outcome become legitimized.

Clearly, the concept of equality of outcome is quite different from that of equality of opportunity, and it requires a much greater degree of government activity. It also clashes more directly with the concept of freedom. By taking from one to give to another, which is necessary for the redistribution of income and status, the government clearly creates winners and losers. The winners may believe that justice has been served by the redistribution. The losers often feel strongly that their freedom to enjoy their income and status has suffered.

## Two Dilemmas of Government

The two major dilemmas facing American government early in the twenty-first century stem from the oldest and the newest objectives of government: maintaining order and promoting equality. Both order and equality are important social values, but government cannot pursue either without sacrificing a third important value: individual freedom. The clash between freedom and order forms the original dilemma of government; the clash between freedom and equality forms the modern dilemma of government. Although the dilemmas are different, each involves trading some amount of freedom for another value.

### The Original Dilemma: Freedom Versus Order

The conflict between freedom and order originates in the very meaning of government as the legitimate use of force to control human behavior. How much freedom must a citizen surrender to government? The dilemma has occupied philosophers for hundreds of years. In the eighteenth century, the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) wrote that the problem of devising a proper government “is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain free as before.”<sup>39</sup>

The original purpose of government was to protect life and property, to make citizens safe from violence. How well is the American government doing today in providing law and order to its citizens? More than 66 percent of the respondents in a 2009 national survey said that they were “afraid to walk alone at night” in areas within a mile of their home.<sup>40</sup> Simply put, Americans view violent crime (which actually has decreased in recent years<sup>41</sup>) as a critical issue and do not believe that their government adequately protects them.

Contrast the fear of crime in urban America with the sense of personal safety while walking in Moscow, Warsaw, or Prague when the old communist

rights  
The benefits of government  
to which every citizen is  
entitled.

governments still ruled in Eastern Europe. It was common to see old and young strolling late at night along the streets and in the parks of these cities. The old communist regimes gave their police great powers to control guns, monitor citizens' movements, and arrest and imprison suspicious people, which enabled them to do a better job of maintaining order. Police and party agents routinely kept their citizens under surveillance—eavesdropping on phone conversations, opening mail from abroad—to ensure that they were not communicating privately with the capitalist world outside official channels. Communist governments deliberately chose order over freedom. With the collapse of communism came the end of strict social order. Respondents in a 2009 survey in nine former communist countries in Eastern Europe said that crime and illegal drugs were among their top national problems.<sup>42</sup>

The crisis over acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) adds a new twist to the dilemma of freedom versus order. Some health officials believe that AIDS, for which there is no known cure, is the greatest medical threat in the history of the United States. By 2007, more than 1.1 million cases of AIDS had been reported to the Centers for Disease Control, and more than 550,000 of these people died.<sup>43</sup>

To combat the spread of the disease in the military, the Department of Defense began testing all applicants for the AIDS virus in the mid-1980s. Other government agencies have begun testing current employees, and some officials are calling for widespread mandatory testing within the private sector as well. Such programs are strongly opposed by those who believe they violate individual freedom. But those who are more afraid of the spread of AIDS than of an infringement on individual rights support aggressive government action to combat the disease.

The conflict between the values of freedom and order represents the original dilemma of government. In the abstract, people value both freedom and order; in real life, the two values inherently conflict. By definition, any policy that strengthens one value takes away from the other. The balance of freedom and order is an issue in enduring debates (whether to allow capital punishment) and contemporary challenges (whether to prohibit links to controversial YouTube videos on MySpace sites). And in a democracy, policy choices hinge on how much citizens value freedom and how much they value order.

## The Modern Dilemma: Freedom Versus Equality

Popular opinion has it that freedom and equality go hand in hand. In reality, the two values usually clash when governments enact policies to promote social equality. Because social equality is a relatively recent government objective, deciding between policies that promote equality at the expense of freedom, and vice versa, is the modern dilemma of politics. Consider these examples:

During the 1960s, Congress (through the Equal Pay Act) required employers to pay women and men the same rate for equal work. This 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—that is, 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.

During 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.

During the first decade of the 2000s, Congress passed the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA). Signed by President Bush in 2008, it prohibited companies from discriminating in hiring based on an individual's genetic tests, genetic tests of a family member, and family medical history.

These examples illustrate the challenge 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.

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

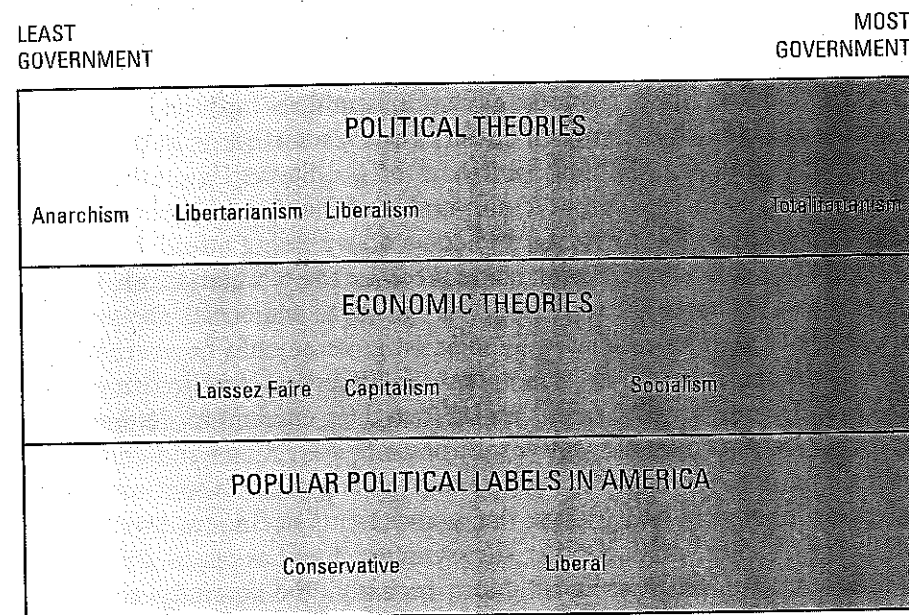
## Ideology and the Scope of Government

People hold different opinions about the merits of government policies. Sometimes their views are based on self-interest. For example, senior citizens favor discounts when riding public transportation. Policies also are judged according to individual values and beliefs. Some people hold assorted values and beliefs that produce contradictory opinions on 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

### political ideology

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

**FIGURE 1.1** Ideology and the Scope of Government

positions by referring to philosophies about the proper scope of government—that is, 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, in George Orwell’s *1984*, a novel about “Big Brother” watching everyone), but several societies have come perilously close to “perfection.” Think 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 communism),

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 least to most 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, and conservatives want a narrower scope. But over time, the traditional distinction has eroded and now oversimplifies the differences between liberals and conservatives. Figure 1.2 offers a more discriminating classification of liberals and conservatives.

### 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.



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 energy. 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 what Marx referred to as a “withering away” of the state, communist governments in practice tended toward totalitarianism, controlling not just economic life but also 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 for strong doses of capitalism.

## 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 the late Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman, argue that free enterprise is necessary for free politics.<sup>44</sup> 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, which are frequently owned by the government in other countries, are privately owned in the United States. But our government does extend its authority into the economic sphere, regulating private businesses and directing the overall economy. Both American liberals and conservatives embrace capitalism, but they differ on the nature and amount of government intervention in the economy they deem 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 and should

### 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 are opposed to using government to promote either order or equality.

not promote either order or equality. For example, libertarians grant the need for traffic laws to ensure safe and efficient automobile travel. But they oppose laws requiring motorcycle riders to wear helmets, and the libertarian ethos in New Hampshire keeps it the only state not requiring seat belts. 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 that most capitalists advocate.

Libertarians are vocal advocates of hands-off government in both the social and the economic spheres. Whereas 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 2008. However, not one of these candidates won more than 1 million votes.

Do not confuse libertarians with liberals—or with liberalism, the John Locke-inspired doctrine mentioned earlier. The words are similar, but their meanings are quite different. *Libertarianism* draws on *liberty* as its root (following Locke) and means “absence of governmental constraint.” While both liberalism and libertarianism leave citizens free to pursue their private goals, libertarianism treats freedom as a pure goal; it’s liberalism on steroids. In American political usage, *liberalism* evolved from the root word *liberal* in the sense of “freely,” like a liberal serving of butter. 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 absolute freedom. 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 street fights that disrupted meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) from Seattle (1999) to Geneva (2009). Labor unions protested meetings of the WTO, which writes rules that govern international trade, for failing to include labor rights on its agenda; environmental groups protested its promotion of economic development at the expense of the environment. But anarchists were against the WTO on *principle*—for concentrating

### *laissez faire*

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

### *anarchism*

A political philosophy that opposes government in any form.

### Anarchists in Pittsburgh

Anarchism as a philosophy views government as an unnecessary evil used by the wealthy to exploit everyone else. When the G-20 countries met in Pittsburgh during September 2009 to discuss the global financial crisis, self-described anarchists marched in protest but were kept miles from the summit meeting.

(Chris Hondros/Getty Images News/Getty Images)



the power of multinational corporations in a shadowy “world government.” Discussing old and new forms of anarchy, journalist Joseph Kahn said, “Nothing has revived anarchism like globalization.”<sup>45</sup> 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. However, almost 130 people ran for Congress in 2008 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 on other topics, liberals and conservatives reverse their positions. In theory, liberals favor government activism, yet they oppose government regulation of abortion. In theory, conservatives oppose government activism, yet they support government surveillance of telephone conversations to fight terrorism. 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 must 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.

## 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.

### 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 do favor more spending for public goods 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 citizens to be orderly. They favor firm police action, swift and severe punishment for criminals, and more laws regulating behavior. Conservatives would not stop with defining, preventing, and punishing crime, however. They tend to want to preserve traditional patterns of social relations—the domestic role of women and business owners' authority to hire whom they wish, for example. For this reason, they do not think government should impose equality.

Liberals are less likely than conservatives to want to use government power to maintain order. In general, liberals are more tolerant of alternative lifestyles—for example, homosexual behavior. Liberals do not shy away from using government coercion, but they use it for a different purpose: to promote equality. They support laws that ensure equal treatment of homosexuals in employment, housing, and education; laws that force private businesses to hire and promote women and members of minority groups; laws that require

#### conservatives

Those who are willing to use government to promote order but not equality.\*

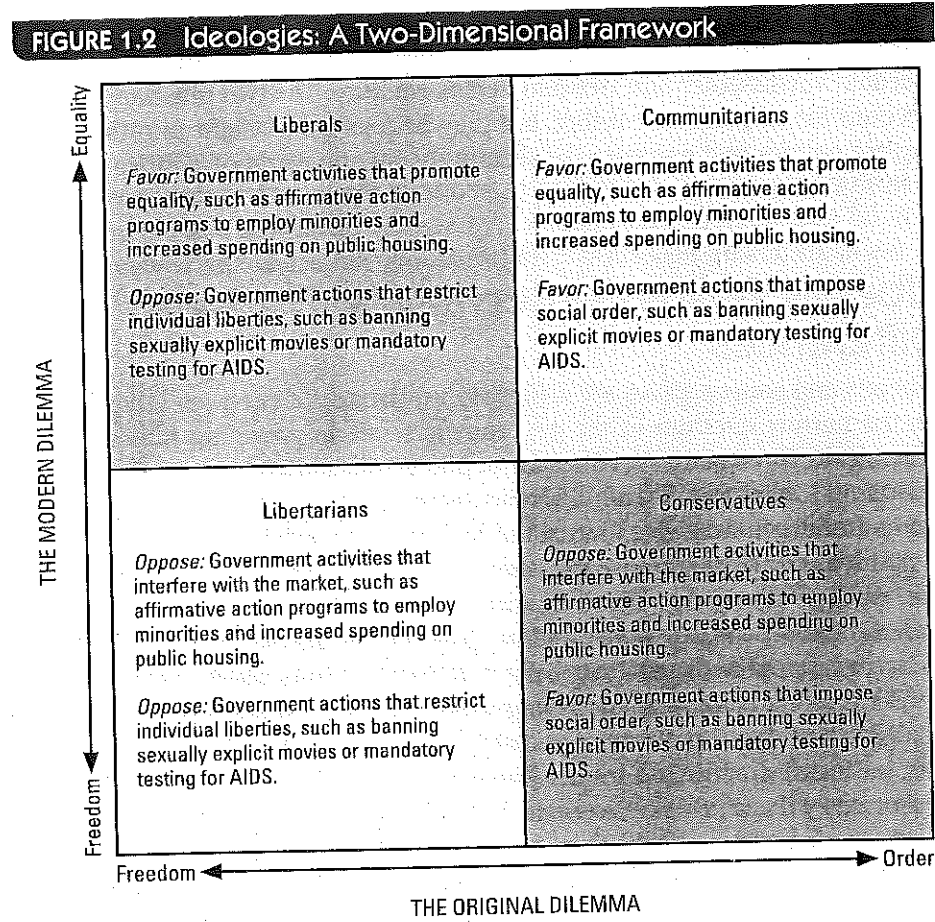
#### liberals

Those who are willing to use government to promote equality but not order.

public transportation to provide equal access to people with disabilities; and laws that order cities and states to reapportion election districts so that minority voters can elect minority candidates to public office. Conservatives do not oppose equality, but they do not value it to the extent of using the government's power to enforce equality. For liberals, the use of that power to promote equality is both valid and necessary.

### A Two-Dimensional Classification of Ideologies

To classify liberal and conservative ideologies more accurately, we have to incorporate the values of freedom, order, and equality into the classification.<sup>46</sup> We can do this using the model in Figure 1.2. It depicts the conflicting



The four ideological types are defined by the values they favor in resolving the two major dilemmas of government: how much freedom should be sacrificed in pursuit of order and equality, respectively. Test yourself by thinking about the values that are most important to you. Which box in the figure best represents your combination of values?

values along two separate dimensions, each anchored in maximum freedom at the lower left. One dimension extends horizontally from maximum freedom on the left to maximum order on the right. The other extends vertically from maximum freedom at the bottom to maximum equality at the top. Each box represents a different ideological type: libertarians, liberals, conservatives, and communarians.<sup>47</sup>

Libertarians value freedom more than order or equality. (We will use *libertarians* for people who have libertarian tendencies but may not accept the whole philosophy.) In practical terms, libertarians want minimal government intervention in both the economic and the social spheres. For example, they oppose affirmative action and laws that restrict transmission of sexually explicit material.

Liberals value freedom more than order but not more than equality. They oppose laws that ban sexually explicit publications but support affirmative action. Conservatives value freedom more than equality but would restrict freedom to preserve social order. Conservatives oppose affirmative action but favor laws that restrict pornography.

Finally, we arrive at the ideological type positioned at the upper right in Figure 1.2. This group values both equality and order more than freedom. Its members support both affirmative action and laws that restrict pornography. We will call this new group *communarians*.<sup>48</sup> The term is used narrowly in contemporary politics to reflect the philosophy of the Communitarian Network, a political movement founded by sociologist Amitai Etzioni.<sup>49</sup> This movement rejects both the liberal-conservative classification and the libertarian argument that "individuals should be left on their own to pursue their choices, rights, and self-interests."<sup>50</sup> Like liberals, Etzioni's communarians believe that there is a role for government in helping the disadvantaged. Like conservatives, they believe that government should be used to promote moral values—preserving the family through more stringent divorce laws, protecting against AIDS through testing programs, and limiting the dissemination of pornography, for example.<sup>51</sup>

The Communitarian Network is not dedicated to big government, however. According to its platform, "The government should step in only to the extent that other social subsystems fail rather than seek to replace them."<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, in recognizing the collective nature of society, the network's platform clearly distinguishes its philosophy from that of libertarianism:

It has been argued by libertarians that responsibilities are a personal matter, that individuals are to judge which responsibilities they accept as theirs. As we see it, responsibilities are anchored in community. Reflecting the diverse moral voices of their citizens, responsive communities define what is expected of people; they educate their members to accept these values; and they praise them when they do and frown upon them when they do not.<sup>53</sup>

Although it clearly embraces the Communitarian Network's philosophy, our definition of *communarian* (small c) is broader and more in keeping with the dictionary definition. Thus, *communarians* favor government

#### *communarians*

Those who are willing to use government to promote both order and equality.

programs that promote both order and equality, somewhat in keeping with socialist theory.<sup>54</sup>

By analyzing political ideologies on two dimensions rather than one, we can explain why people can seem to be liberal on one issue (favoring a broader scope of government action) and conservative on another (favoring less government action). The answer hinges on the purpose of a given government action: Which value does it promote: order or equality?<sup>55</sup> According to our typology, only libertarians and communitarians are consistent in their attitude toward the scope of government activity, whatever its purpose. Libertarians value freedom so highly that they oppose most government efforts to enforce either order or equality. Communitarians (in our usage) are inclined to trade freedom for both order and equality. Liberals and conservatives, on the other hand, favor or oppose government activity depending on its purpose. As you will learn in Chapter 5, large groups of Americans fall into each of the four ideological categories. Because Americans increasingly choose four different resolutions to the original and modern dilemmas of government, the simple labels of *liberal* and *conservative* no longer describe contemporary political ideologies as well as they did in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

## Summary

The challenge of democracy lies in making difficult choices—choices that inevitably bring important values into conflict. This chapter has outlined a normative framework for analyzing the policy choices that arise in the pursuit of the purposes of government.

The three major purposes of government are maintaining order, providing public goods, and promoting equality. In pursuing these objectives, every government infringes on individual freedom. But the degree of that infringement depends on the government's (and, by extension, its citizens') commitment to order and equality. What we have, then, are two dilemmas. The first—the original dilemma—centers on the conflict between freedom and order. The second—the modern dilemma—focuses on the conflict between freedom and equality.

Some people use political ideologies to help them resolve the conflicts that arise in political decision making. These ideologies define the scope and purpose of

government. At opposite extremes of the continuum are totalitarianism, which supports government intervention in every aspect of society, and anarchism, which rejects government entirely. An important step back from totalitarianism is socialism. Democratic socialism, an economic system, favors government ownership of basic industries but preserves civil liberties. Capitalism, another economic system, promotes free enterprise. A significant step short of anarchism is libertarianism, which allows government to protect life and property but little else.

In the United States, the terms *liberal* and *conservative* are used to describe a narrow range toward the center of the political continuum. The usage is probably accurate when the scope of government action is being discussed. That is, liberals support a broader role for government than do conservatives.

But when both the scope and the purpose of government are considered, a different, sharper distinction



emerges. Conservatives may want less government, but not at the price of less order. In other words, they are willing to use the coercive power of government to impose social order. Liberals too are willing to use the coercive power of government, but for a different purpose: promoting equality.

It is easier to understand the differences among libertarians, liberals, conservatives, and communitarians and their views on the scope of government if the values of freedom, order, and equality are incorporated into the description of their political ideologies. Libertarians choose freedom over both order and equality. Communitarians are willing to sacrifice freedom for both order and equality. Liberals value freedom more than order and equality more than freedom. Conservatives

value order more than freedom and freedom more than equality.

The concepts of government objectives, values, and political ideologies appear repeatedly in this book as we determine who favors what government action and why. So far, we have said little about how government should make its decisions. In Chapter 2, we complete our normative framework for evaluating American politics by examining the nature of democratic theory. There, we introduce two key concepts for analyzing how democratic governments make decisions.



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