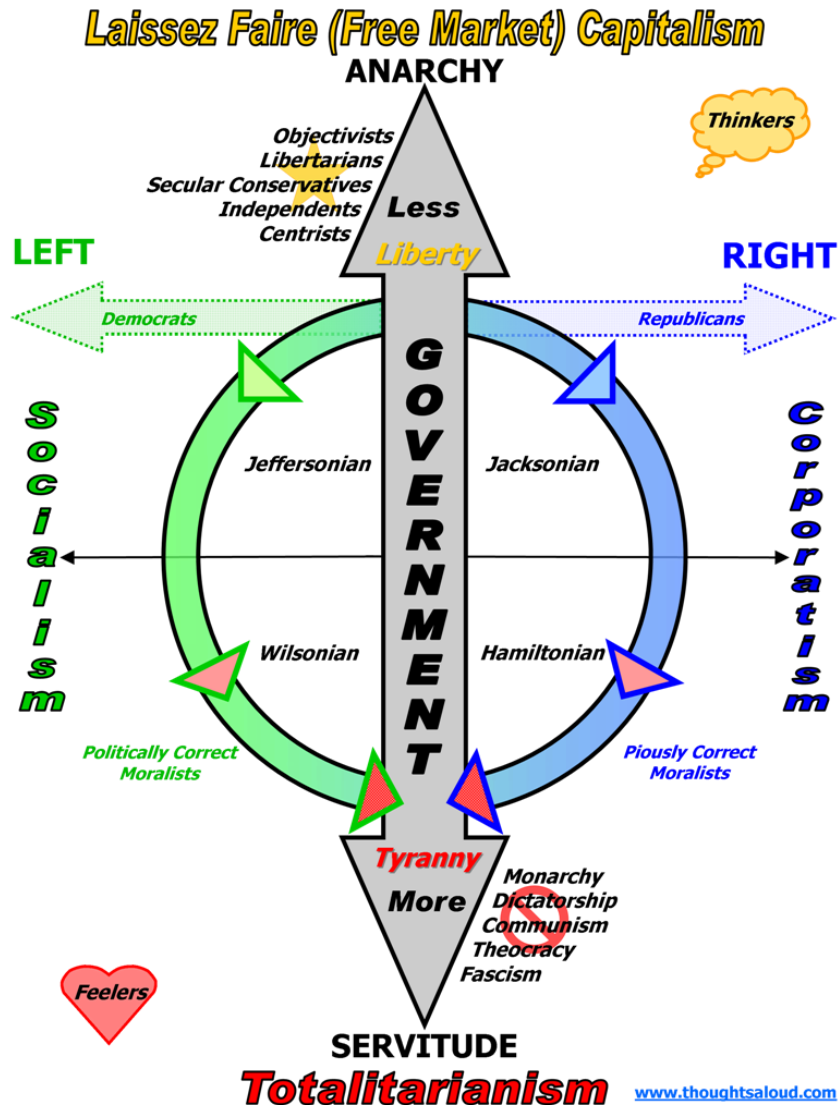


CPW4U Guide 2

Politics – The basics



CPW4U – Political Basics

Learning Guide #2

Unit Value: 1 Unit

Time: 4 Days + Homework

Evaluation:

Assessed Activities

Evaluation – Quiz /25

Expectations:

PO1.01 – describe the factors that help to determine the power and influence of a country

PO1.02 – evaluate the accuracy and usefulness of classifying states when describing relationships among states;

PO1.03 – analyse the rise and development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporations as world powers

IC3.05 – explain the role of federal and provincial government agencies in formulating and implementing Canada’s foreign policy;

PO2.02 – describe how decolonization after World War II transformed international politics, economics, technology, communications, and law;

PO2.03 – identify and describe challenges and conflicts caused by the end of the Cold War

PO3.01 – describe the factors (e.g., resources, economy, wealth) that contribute to Canada’s power;

Tracking Sheet

Activity	Date Started	Date Finished	Complete? Mark?
Complete Readings			
Political Compass Quiz			
Film: Richard Jeni –The Political Spectrum			
In-Class Lessons			
Activities			
Quiz			/25

SOCIETIES AND SYSTEMS

People often talk about "the social system," or "the political system," or "the education system." What do they mean by the word "system?"

A system is an orderly combination or arrangement of parts, elements, facts, or concepts into a whole. It is helpful to think in terms of comparisons. In biology, whole series of body parts and processes make up the respiratory system, the digestive system, and the nervous system. Biology can be better understood by studying these various systems, each of which is designed to meet a particular bodily need (oxygen, nutrients, etc.). A car has an enormous number of parts, which are all elements of various systems needed to make it work (fuel system, cooling system, braking system, etc.). Each of these systems is focused on a particular need that must be met if the car is to function properly (energy, dispersing heat, stopping, etc.)

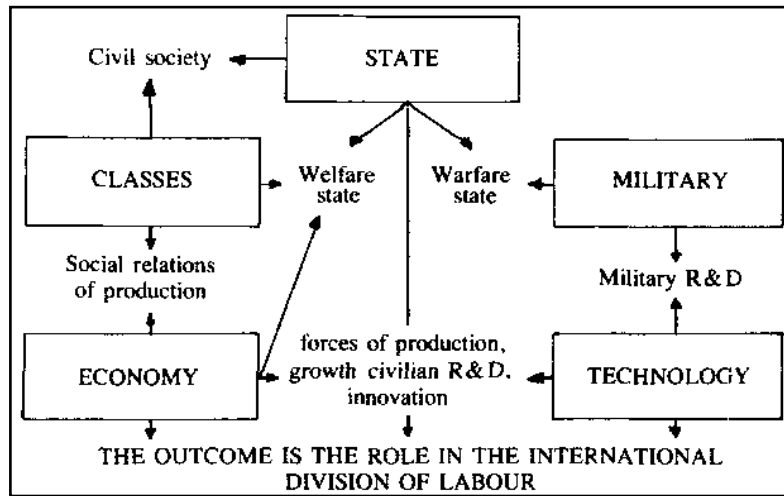
For similar reasons, societies have systems to organize and meet society's needs. For example, every society

must prepare its children to function effectively as adults. Agricultural societies need people with different skills than those of industrial societies, so they develop an educational system that is appropriate to their needs (training in agricultural skills).

In addition, every society develops ways of meeting people's spiritual

needs to deal with such important questions as the purpose of life, a supreme being, the afterlife, and moral conduct. A society's organized way of providing these needs can be called its religious system. Some societies enforce a strict conformity to one religion or belief system, whereas others tolerate a wide range of beliefs.

In a similar manner, political and economic systems are methods of arranging society's resources to meet the political and economic needs of the people.



Political and Economic Systems

The fundamental political and economic problems of every country resemble those problems facing every family in the world. Members of each household must decide how their income will be used, who will perform what chores, and how such decisions will be made. In many families with young children, the parents jointly decide what will be done (or one parent makes the major decisions), and the children are told what to do. As the children mature, they are given greater responsibilities, but not always more say in family decisions. A major source of disagreement in many households is how the family's income should be used. Because there almost never seems to be enough money to satisfy everyone's needs, most families choose to budget their income. The purchase of a new car might mean fewer restaurant meals and no summer holiday, or it might require one member of the family to take a second job.

The family income is comparable to a country's total production or income derived from such resources as farmland, factories, and minerals, and such human resources as trained scientists, factory workers, and teachers. These factors of production, as they are called, are limited. Each country must decide how best to use them. Should farmland be employed to produce food, or should it be subdivided into suburban housing? Should universities concentrate on training computer programmers or producing surgeons?



This relative scarcity of resources is the central economic problem of the world. It involves making choices and sacrifices. Each country must decide

- what goods will be produced
- how they will be produced
- who will own the means by which these goods will be produced
- how these goods will be divided among the people

As in the family analogy, someone or some group must make these decisions. The central political problem is determining who should govern. A study of a country's political structure must examine who exercises power, how power is maintained, who makes the important decisions, and why these decisions are made.

Although it is impossible to completely divorce politics from economics, to better understand each topic this book is divided into two major sections: political and economic. In the political section, separate chapters examine the theory and ideology underlying democratic and non-democratic governments. Individual case studies then explore how such political ideologies as democracy, communism, and fascism work in practice. In the economic section, separate chapters explain the ideology underlying private enterprise, centrally planned economies, and mixed economies, and case studies investigate how well they work in real-life situations.

All political and economic systems are artificial—they are made by human beings and can be altered by them. These are the central questions posed when looking at political systems.

1. How can each country's resources be distributed most fairly and efficiently?
2. What political system can cater to the needs and wishes of its people most effectively?
3. What are the basic values and beliefs underlying each political and economic system?
4. Why have people chosen different political and economic systems?

Your answers to these questions depend upon which goals or values you think are most important. No system is perfect, and society's needs change over time. The more we know about the goals and values of each, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of our own economic and political systems, the better equipped we will be to make appropriate decisions regarding these systems.

GOVERNMENT AND HUMAN NEEDS

Political theorists, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau each reasoned that humanity had once lived in a natural state without government. They also believed that people were capable of creating a government that served their interests better than the

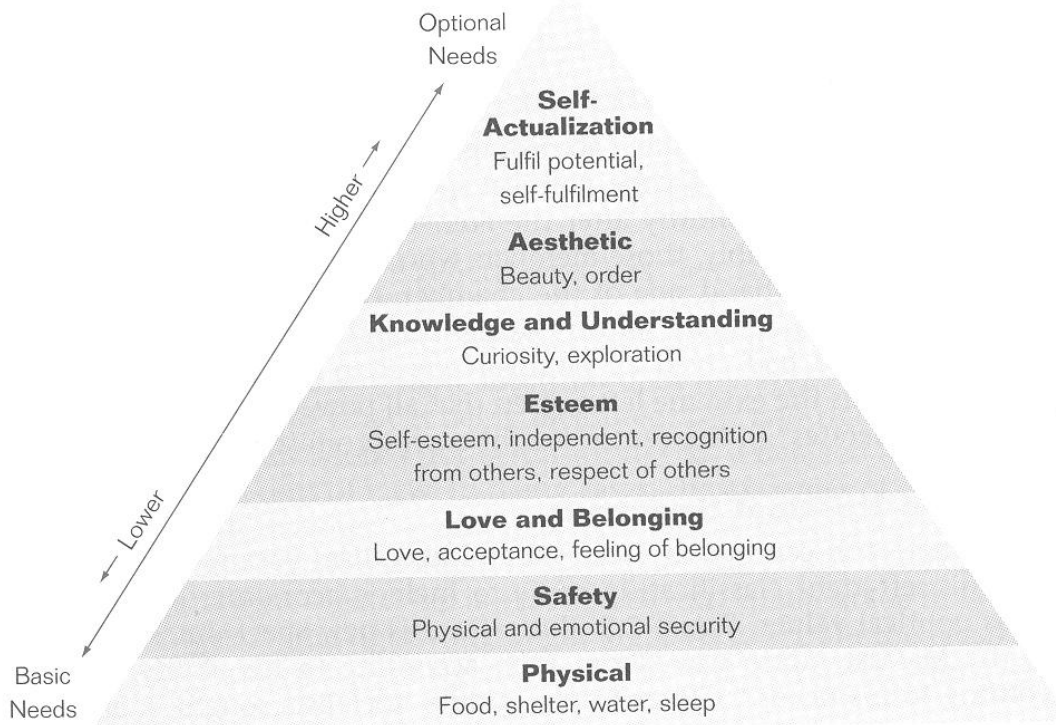
natural state did, and as we have seen, some people argue that government is justified only if it meets the people's needs. Psychologist **Abraham Maslow** (1908-70) classified human needs into seven groups and arranged them from basic biological needs that emerge only after the basic needs have been satisfied. At each developmental level, needs must be at least partly fulfilled before the requirements at the next level become important. As the diagram below illustrates, physical needs are at the base of this pyramid. Humans need food, shelter, water, and sleep for survival. Unless these needs are satisfied, we do not have the time or the motivation to proceed to the next stage.



Once these physical needs are satisfied, the next concern is safety—the need to feel secure and safe from harm. Safety needs dominate during times of crisis, war, and natural disaster.

The third category consists of the need for love and belonging. Maslow believed that humans are social beings, so we need to feel accepted, to have friends, and to love and be loved. These needs can be fulfilled through marriage, by having children, and by membership in clubs and other groups.

Esteem needs are next in the hierarchy. The drive for success and the need to have self-respect and the respect of others are in this category. People seek awards, compliments,



recognition, and appreciation for their abilities and actions.

Higher-level needs include people's desire for knowledge and understanding. People need to learn, experiment, inquire, and philosophize. Humans also have aesthetic needs. They need to surround themselves with what they regard as beautiful objects.

Only a few people reach the highest category of self-actualization. Self-actualized individuals develop themselves to their highest potential. They are open, creative, and spontaneous, and are capable of deep reflection.

Although not everyone accepts Maslow's theory about human needs, which he believed to

be relevant to individuals in all cultures, it is widely used as a way of explaining people's actions, be it voting behaviour, employee job satisfaction, or aggressive conduct.

The theories of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Maslow illustrate the importance of the connection between human needs and government. Our assumptions or conclusions about the nature of human beings and how best to meet their needs have enormous implications for our views about what government can and should do.

BASIC CONCEPTS OF POLITICS

Our day-to-day lives are affected much more than we realize by the actions and policies of governments. To understand better the role of politics in society, we need to begin with a brief examination of three fundamental concepts: order, power, and justice.

Simply stated, the study of politics seeks to understand how human life in the aggregate is ordered. Almost always, it begins by identifying a specific kind of social order commonly known as a community.

Community

A community is an association of individuals who share a common identity. Usually that identity is at least partially defined by geography because people who live in close proximity often know each other, enjoy shared experiences, speak the same language, and have similar values and interests. Sometimes a new community can be created by instilling a sense of common purpose or a single political allegiance among otherwise diverse groups, but such an undertaking is extremely difficult. Whatever their origins, however, communities arise to fulfill a wide variety of social functions (such as physical security, economic prosperity, cultural enrichment) that cannot be met by individuals acting on their own.

Not all communities are equally self-sufficient. Some are geographical or administrative subdivisions of larger communities. Both the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan, for example, are communities; but they are also administrative subdivisions of a more comprehensive (and more self-sufficient) community, the United States of America.

Government

Every community is maintained and perpetuated by a political order, or government, which is why the study of politics focuses on institutions and processes associated with governance. Whenever a government successfully asserts its claim to rule (that is, to make the rules) within a given territory, it is said to possess sovereignty. Sovereign states exercise authority, meaning that they command the obedience of society's members. Moreover, they enjoy legitimacy to the extent that their claim to rule is willingly accepted. Such acceptance, of course, is most likely when the rulers uphold moral and political principles that are embraced by the ruled. As a term, legitimacy is easy enough to define; it is much more difficult, however, to determine whether a particular government is, in fact, legitimate.

Nation-State

The most important modern form of political organization is the nation-state. A nation is a distinct group of people who share a common background including any or all of the following: geographic location, history, racial or ethnic characteristics, religion, language, culture, and belief in common political ideas. Geography heads this list because members of nation-states typically exhibit a strong collective sense of belonging that is associated with a particular

territory considered to be exclusively their own-property, for which they are willing to fight and die if necessary. Nations vary in terms of their age and homogeneity (the similarity among members). The older and more homogeneous a nation is, the more likely it will be to display commonalities in all or most of the elements listed above. Poland, for example, is an extremely homogeneous nation, whereas the United States--more recently formed and comprising immigrants from all over the world--is necessarily more diverse. Both, however, are "nations", because the vast majority of their populations have been fully assimilated into their respective societies.

The term state denotes the existence of a viable, sovereign government exercising authority and power in the name of society. In the language of politics, a state is usually synonymous with country (and) in everyday language, is used synonymously with nation). France, for instance, may be called either a state or a country. Yet in the United States--and some other federal systems of government--a "state" is one of fifty administrative subdivisions such as New York, Florida, Texas, or California. Thus, at the very least, the idea of the modern nation-state avoids a certain amount of semantic and conceptual confusion.

The nation-state is the most distinctive and largest self-sufficient political configuration in the modern world. It is also the most consequential. Its actions and reactions affect not only the welfare and the destiny of its own people but, increasingly, the fate of peoples in other lands.

(Thomas Magstadt, Peter Schotten, *Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions and Issues*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1988, p. 4-6)

WHAT IS A NATION-STATE?

Some of the most widespread confusions in our political vocabularies concern the meaning of the terms nation, state, and country. People may sometimes use these terms interchangeably in casual conversation but, for professional purposes, they should be distinguished. They have somewhat different meanings and require definition for use in political science and international law.

The term state refers to a legal/political and administrative entity composed of a governing central authority that makes and enforces laws and is recognized as the primary subject of the international legal system. The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933) laid down four criteria that states must possess to qualify as persons under international law. The convention declared that a state must have:

1. A permanent population;
2. A defined territory;
3. A government; and
4. A capacity to enter into relations with other states.

In the contemporary international system there are over 200 such legal/political entities functioning as states and claiming international legal status. This status entitles them to sign treaties, form alliances, join international organizations, and exchange ambassadors.

States may be the hosts of many nations. One state may govern a multinational society. In contrast to a state, a nation is a sociocultural entity, made up of a group of people who identify with each other ethnically, culturally, and linguistically. A nation may not have a government or a geographically delimited territory of its own. But many nations may exist within the political and administrative jurisdiction of a state. Canada is a multinational entity, with 58 first nations



and millions of Quebecois who identify with each other as nationals.

Many scholars refer to the relationship between the state and the nationalities it serves as a nation-state. The modern nation-state weaves nationalities together according to a deliberate political design: it determines official languages, creates a uniform system of law, manages a single currency, controls the education system, builds a national bureaucracy to defend and socialize different people and classes, and fosters loyalty to an abstract entity, such as "Canada," "Brazil" or the "United States." Scholars may use the term "state" in reference to the actions of a government or its bureaucracy, and likewise, international organizations usually call their members "states." However, many scholars use the term "nation-state" when they refer to a society in its entirety, as a political, social, and governmental entity.

Today, the nation-state is the most effective instrument of social and political integration, as well as the primary vehicle for national modernization. But sometimes nation-states unravel into a multiplicity of smaller governing entities, the most dramatic being the Soviet Union, which in 1991 collapsed into 15 independent nation-states. Only 211 such nation-states make up the present international system, yet together they host over 1400 nationalities existing in the world.

The term 'country' refers to the all-inclusive characteristics of a geographical entity—its physical, material, and socio-economic components. Use of the term country is widespread in political-science literature, but can sometimes result in confusion if it is not properly clarified. To refer to the country of Ireland requires specific reference either to the six counties of Northern Ireland under Great Britain, or to the 26 counties in the south that form the Republic of Ireland. The same problem exists with other divided countries such as North Korea and South Korea.

(People, Politics and Government, p.115)

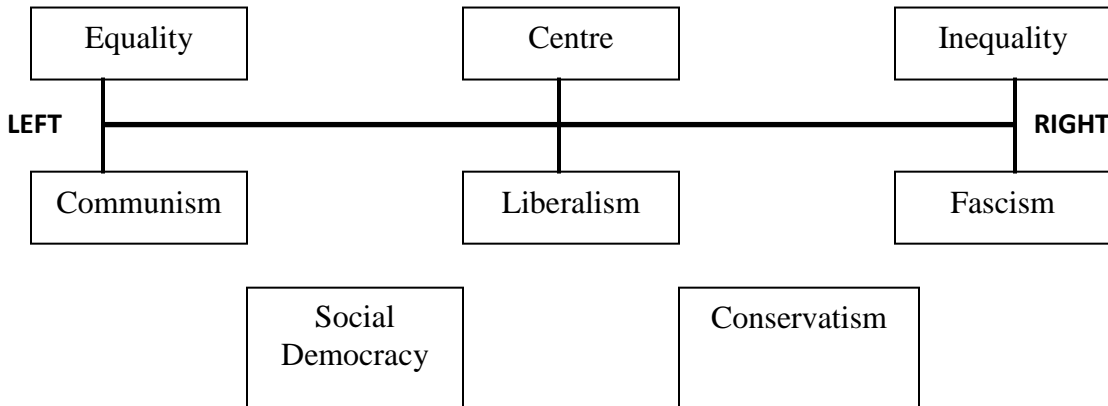
THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Governments are often classified according to whether their underlying ideologies are **left or right** on the political spectrum. These words were first used as political labels shortly after the French Revolution in 1789. In the French National Assembly, those members who wanted democratic government sat on the left-hand side of the chamber, while those members who favoured a strong monarchy sat on the right-hand side. The extreme right believed that God had given all political power to the monarch through heredity, whereas the extreme left argued that all power came from the people. The "moderates" in the centre sought a compromise.

Economic-Political Spectrum

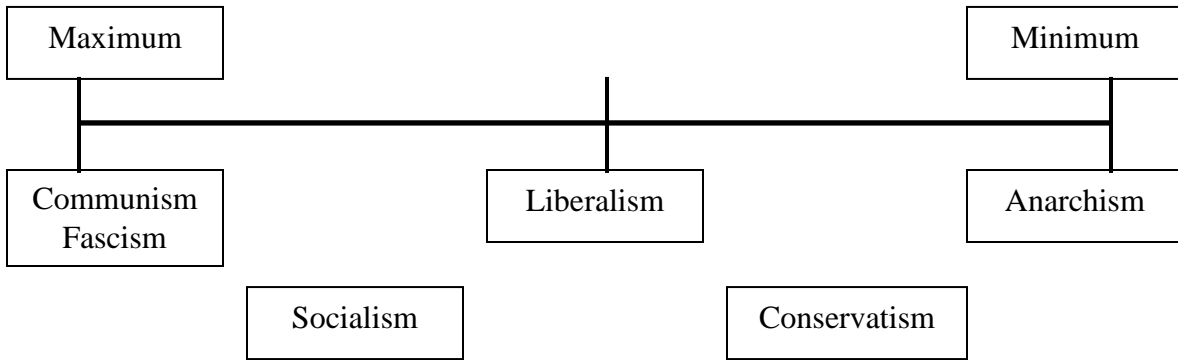
In the nineteenth century, as socialism and liberalism became more prominent, this left-right classification came to include economic ideologies as well as political values. On the far left, the Marxist motto was "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Closer to the middle, socialists sought equality of opportunity, especially for the lower classes. Liberals also desired equality of opportunity, but emphasized middle-class rights. On the right of centre, conservatives staunchly defended private property and supported private charity. On the extreme right, fascists in the twentieth century believed that abilities were inherited, and equality was thus impossible—as well as undesirable.

An Economic-Political Spectrum



Ideologies may also be classified according to how much control the government has over the economy and society in general. In theory, communists and fascists favour total government control, whereas anarchists believe that society can best exist without government. Liberals desire government regulation in order to promote greater economic and social equality. Socialists tend to believe in government control of vital industries and agencies, whereas conservatives want to limit government control to only essential activities.

Government Control Over Society and the Economy



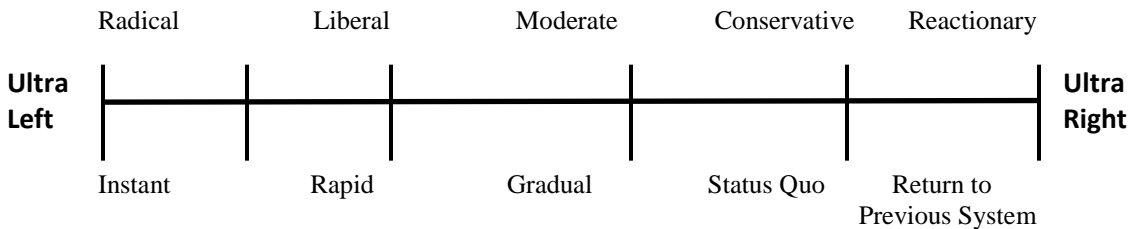
Although anarchists are generally seen as "left wing," on this economic spectrum they are on the "right." Similarly, fascists are usually characterized as "right wing," but it depends on what the spectrum is measuring.

The conventional left-right spectrum does not apply to all issues, and it varies according to what is being measured. Left and right are only convenient labels. They should not be substitutes for a detailed understanding of each group's point of view. In many cases, the extremes of the spectrum end up working together - although for different reasons and objectives. Left-wing and right-wing groups might become temporary allies, for example, to protest government censorship laws. The left wing might argue in favour of freedom of speech; the right wing might argue its case from the perspective that the government has no right to interfere with private business.

Change and the Political Spectrum

These terms—radical, moderate, liberal, conservative, and reactionary - are among the most commonly used words in politics.* Unfortunately, they are also among the most misunderstood and misused terms in political science. In everyday language, these terms usually have a value attached to them (which serves to further complicate debate), but in political analysis they are value-free.

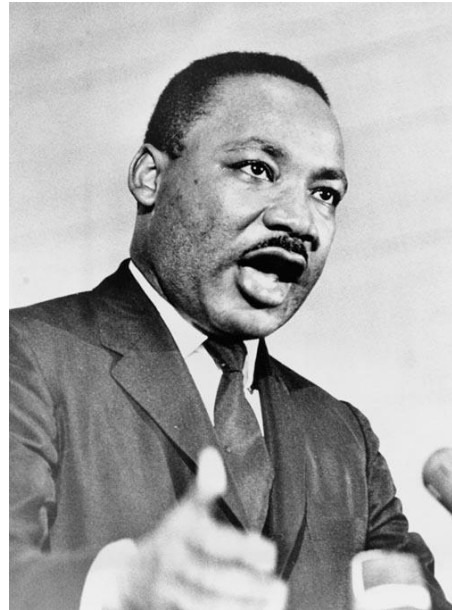
The Political Spectrum--Desire for Change



This classification examines people's attitudes toward change in the political system. Almost every group desires some degree of change. Those people who wish to adopt new political institutions or values can be placed on the left of the status quo (the existing state of

affairs), and those who want to return to past ways are to the right of the status quo. The extent of the desired change is also important in this spectrum. The further people find themselves from the status quo, the more dissatisfied they are with the existing situation and the more drastic their proposed changes. Such people are more likely to demand immediate, revolutionary "improvements."

The word "radical" comes from the Latin word *radix*, or root, indicating a desire for profound change. Radicals of both the left and the right are extremely unhappy with the status quo and favour instant, fundamental change in society. Radicals on the extreme left end of the political spectrum believe that society is so corrupt that it can be cured only through violence. Compromise is impossible. Radicals a little further to the right are also frustrated with the system, but prefer relatively peaceful methods of enacting change where possible. Political scientist Leon Baradat suggests that such famous political activists as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. can be found at the far right of the radical group. They proposed immediate and profound changes in India and the United States, but opposed violence.



Liberals are less dissatisfied with the existing political system, generally abide by the law, and seek change only by legal methods. They do, however, advocate rapid and far-reaching changes if the status quo is of the extremist type. The word "liberal" comes from the Latin word *liber*, meaning free. Liberals are optimistic about people's ability to solve their own problems. They believe in the power of reason. Since nothing is sacred, theoretically everything can be changed for the better. As a result, the ideals and objectives of liberalism have changed over the last three centuries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such original liberals as John Locke, Adam Smith, and Thomas Jefferson argued for personal freedom and fewer government restrictions, and in favour of private property. Today, such ideas are associated with conservatism. Liberals viewed people as being essentially good and were optimistic about humanity's ability to improve the world. Contemporary liberals still maintain these ideals, but prefer to use the government to improve society, even if this means placing restrictions on people, such as on how much private property one person can own.

Moderates are generally satisfied with the status quo. They believe that some changes are needed, but these are only minor adjustments that should be gradually adopted. Conservatives also support the status quo, although for different reasons. Conservatives are cautious about change - they favour upholding tradition. As a result, they believe that change ought to be both gradual and minimal. Conservatives tend to be less optimistic than liberals about people's ability to solve their own problems. Thus conservatives tend to prefer authoritarian rule to democracy. In the eighteenth century, Edmund Burke provided a philosophical base for conservatism. In a well-governed society, Burke stated, everyone knew his or her place. The wealthy, intelligent, and "well-born" should govern in the best interests of everyone, while the people of lower rank should recognize their betters and submit to their rules.

Modern conservatives believe that government should intervene as little as possible in human affairs. Compulsory seat-belt legislation is the type of regulation conservatives oppose as being an invasion of individual freedom. Conservatives believe strongly in the rights of private property, prefer political order, and tend to be elitist and authoritarian.

Only reactionaries wish to return to an earlier time. They are just as frustrated by the status quo as are the radicals, but instead of proposing a brand new world, they seek to replace the present system with old institutions and values. As with radicals, reactionaries range from those who believe in the necessity of violence to the more peaceable proponents of traditional government.

Few people retain the same viewpoint on the political spectrum on every issue. Most people are happy with at least some aspects of society and do not want to change them (conservative), but can think of several areas that need adjustment (liberal). In general, however, it is possible to locate individuals in one of these five positions on the spectrum. The left believes more in rational thought and human equality, whereas the right believes in natural inequalities among people and the need for order. On the far left, Karl Marx's communist theories pictured a future society in which ordinary people held all the political power and shared equally in material goods. On the far right, Fascist leader Benito Mussolini appealed to people's emotions and declared, "Feel, don't think!" The masses were expected to obey their leader without question.

(Ideologies, 18-22)

***There is a difference between small "l" liberal (or small "c" conservative) and a large "L" Liberal (or a large "C" Conservative). The small "l" or "c" refers to an ideology, and the large "L" or "C" refers to a political party.**

Decide where to stand. Placing yourself on the political spectrum has become an increasingly complicated task

Younger voters tend to throw out traditional notions of what's left and right

I'M A WACKO LEFTY!

Are you holier than thou, but not sure who thou is? Do you believe others should pay higher taxes on their incomes, but don't have one yourself? Do you think conspiracy theories matter, study sociology at university and find it relevant in any way, and can you understand and agree with the sentence: "I never let the facts get in the way of the truth." Do you frequently want to give the Earth a big hug and wonder why we all just can't get along? Then you're a lefty!



I'M A MINDLESS MIDDLE!

Do you faithfully think the Maple Leafs will win the Stanley Cup each year and keep supporting them, just like you think the Liberals won't break their election promises and keep supporting them? Do you have no real thoughts or ideas, other than "I am Canadian" but like to be part of a team? And even though you have no original thoughts, do you still think everyone else is not just wrong, but dangerously so? Welcome to the middle!

I'M A RAGING RIGHT-WINGER!

Do you try to keep your opinions to yourself, because you know people will stop talking to you if

the conversation turns to politics? Do you believe in paying less taxes, because your daddy has money and tells you to think that way? Are you tired of living in a country where people with opinions are shouted down by people who have none? Are you right all the time, but can't understand why everyone doesn't agree with you? It's because you're a right-winger!

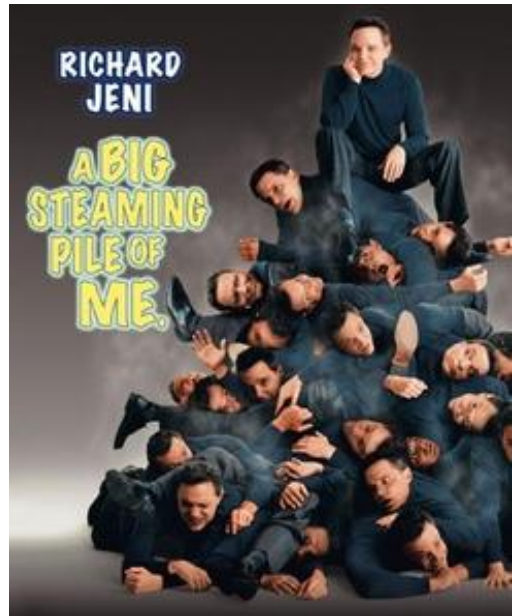
ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN HUGHES/TORONTO STAR

TEXT BY JON FILSON

Toronto Star, June 1, 2004

For fun, check out the Richard Jeni comedy bit on the political spectrum.

It is available online or from your teacher.



Activity

1. Go to <http://www.politicalcompass.org/test> and take the political spectrum test. Answer each question as honestly as possible, and try not to manipulate the results by guessing how a particular answer might skew your results. Print the spectrum at the end of the test. Based on these results answer the following questions:
 - a. In general, do you think this is an accurate portrayal of your political leanings? If so, why? If not, why not?
 - b. Considering your position on the left-right axis, do you believe this result is reflective of your voting history (or what you expect your voting future to be)?
 - c. Considering your position on the authoritative-libertarian axis, to what do you attribute this result?

2. Terms like “liberal” and “conservative,” “right wing” and “left wing,” “communist” and “fascist” are thrown around all the time, often as insults. Why do you believe some choose to use these labels as weapons? Do you think their use in this way is effective?

3. Think about Maslow’s hierarchy and how it relates to a society, its government and politics in general. If we accept the theory that people strive to move up Maslow’s pyramid toward Self Actualization, think about how politics and political decisions may impact on the goal. Answer the following questions:
 - a. For each step on the hierarchy, identify one situation in the world today where the citizens of a society might be at that stage. For each, explain why you believe they land on this step.
 - b. Identify a situation in recent history where the citizens of a society have regressed back down the steps. What events conspired to cause this move?
 - c. To what extent are governments responsible for helping their citizens achieve Maslow’s goals?
 - d. How might a government help its citizen’s move up from the Physical to the Self Actualization level?