

The Political Landscape

I. Theories of Democratic Government

- A. Types of Democracies
 - 1. Direct
 - 2. Representative
 - a) Republic
 - b) Preference of Framers
 - c) Charles Beard
 - 3. Constitutional
- B. Democratic Values
 - 1. Personal Liberty
 - a) John Stuart Mill
 - b) September 11
 - 2. Respect for the Individual
 - 3. Equality
 - a) Law
 - b) Opportunity
 - 4. Popular Consent
 - a) Majority Rule
 - b) Minority Rights
 - 5. Values in Conflict
- C. Conditions Conducive to Democracy
- D. **John Locke**
 - 1. State of Nature
 - 2. Human Nature
 - a) Thomas Hobbes
 - 3. **Declaration of Independence**
- E. Pluralist v. Elitist Views
- F. Confederation, Federal, and Unitary
- G. Parliamentary
 - 1. No Separation of Legislative and Executive
 - 2. Proportional
 - a) Minor Parties

II. Beliefs that Citizens Hold About Their Government and its Leaders

- A. Political Culture
 - 1. Shared Values-Grounded in Classical liberalism
 - a) Liberty
 - b) Equality
 - (1) Opportunity
 - (2) Under the Law
 - (3) Not Economic
 - c) Individualism
 - (1) Respect for the dignity of each person
 - d) Democratic Consensus
 - (1) Majority Rule
 - (2) Two Party System and Regular Elections

- (3) Popular Sovereignty
 - (4) The Constitution and the Bill of Rights
 - (a) Support rights in the abstract
 - (b) Disagreement over meaning and original intent
 - e) Justice and the Rule of Law
 - f) Nationalism, Optimism and Idealism
- 2. The American Dream
 - a) Complex set of ideas about economy and the individual
 - b) Belief in capitalism and right to private property essential
 - c) Conflict in values between a competitive economy and egalitarian society
- 3. Political and Economic Change
 - a) Industrial Revolution
 - (1) Monopolies and vast inequalities in distribution of wealth
 - (2) Antitrust legislation
 - (3) Belief in ability of government to regulate excesses of capitalism
 - (a) Teddy Roosevelt and the Progressives
 - (b) Rejection of laissez faire
 - b) The Great Depression, the New Deal and World War II
 - (1) Americans turned to government to improve conditions in failing economy
 - (2) Use of government to ensure economic opportunity and social justice
 - (a) FDR's Second Bill of Rights
 - (b) Civil and voting rights legislation of the 1960s
 - (c) LBJ's War on Poverty
 - (d) Much political disagreement occurs over the proper role for government in the economy, but most accept a semi-regulated or mixed free enterprise system
 - (3) U.S. becomes a world super power
 - (a) End of isolationism
 - (b) Increased power of national government
 - (i) Particularly the president
 - (c) Role of U.S. in the world a source of political conflict
 - (i) Vietnam
 - (ii) Iraq
 - c) Vietnam and Watergate
 - (1) Loss of trust in government
 - (a) Honesty
 - (b) Ability to get things done
 - (2) Reagan Revolution of the 1980s
 - (a) Conservative backlash against government
 - (b) Not a return to laissez faire

B. Political Ideology-**World's Smallest political Quiz**

1. Liberalism

a) History

- (1) Contrast with classical liberalism
 - (a) **John Locke**
- (2) Democratic-Republicans
 - (a) Thomas Jefferson
 - (b) Limited government
 - (c) Strong belief in individual rights
- (3) Progressive Movement
 - (a) T. Roosevelt, Wilson
 - (b) Use of government to bring about justice and equality of opportunity and promote the general welfare of society
 - (c) Strong foreign policy and presence in the world
 - (i) Anti-isolationist
- (4) FDR and the New Deal
 - (a) Use of government to ensure economic opportunity and social justice
 - (b) Democratic Coalition
- (5) Civil Rights Movement and Support of Other Controversial Social Policies
 - (a) Loss of Solid South
 - (b) Losses in presidential elections
- (6) Bill Clinton
 - (a) Southerner
 - (b) Newt Gingrich and the Contract with America(see **Decline and Fall**)
 - (i) 1994 Elections
 - (ii) Republicans win Congress
 - (c) Triangulation
 - (i) Work with Moderates in both parties in Congress in order pass significant legislation and balance the budget

b) Criticisms

- (1) Too much reliance on government
- (2) Higher taxes
- (3) Bureaucracy
- (4) Big government can become a dictatorial government

2. Conservatism

a) History

- (1) Edmund Burke
- (2) Traditional Conservatives
 - (a) Pro business
 - (i) Low taxes
 - (ii) Reliance on markets not government

- (iii) Few, if any, government regulations on economy
 - (b) Decentralist
 - (i) More powers for the states
 - (ii) Distrust of national government
 - (a) Should be small except in area of defense
 - (c) Government needs to ensure order
 - (i) Less optimistic about human nature
 - (3) Social Conservatives or the New Right
 - (a) History
 - (i) Emerged in late 1970's
 - (ii) Driven in part by opposition to *Roe v Wade* abortion decision of 1973
 - (iii) Moral Majority
 - (a) Jerry Falwell
 - (b) 1980s
 - (iv) Christian Coalition
 - (a) Pat Robertson
 - (b) 1990s
 - (v) Focus on Family
 - (a) James Dobson
 - (b) 2000s
 - (b) Belief in use of government to promote religious beliefs
 - (c) Recent conflict with traditional conservatives
 - (i) **John Danforth**
 - (4) Neocons
 - (a) Economics: Cutting tax rates in order to stimulate steady, wide-spread economic growth and acceptance of the necessity of risks in that growth, such as budget deficits
 - (b) Domestic Affairs: Preferring strong government but not intrusive government, slight acceptance of the welfare state, adherence to social conservatism, and disapproval of counterculture
 - (c) Foreign Policy: Patriotism is a necessity, world government is a terrible idea, the ability to distinguish friend from foe, protecting national interest both at home and abroad, and the necessity of a strong military
- b) Criticisms
 - (1) Selective opposition to government
 - (2) Deficits have grown during periods of conservative control
 - (a) Reagan
 - (b) George W. Bush

- (c) Insensitive to needs of the poor
 - (d) Too much faith in the economy
 - (e) Failure to aggressively support various groups' struggles for freedom and equality
- 3. Socialism
 - a) American socialists favor a greatly expanded role for the government, greater equality in property rights and would cut defense spending.
- 4. Environmentalism
 - a) Green Movement in Europe
 - b) Good agriculture, energy efficiency, and protecting the integrity of nature
- 5. Libertarianism
 - a) Cherishes individual liberty and insists on a sharply limited government
 - b) Opposition to government and almost all of its programs
- C. Ideology and the American People
 - 1. Tend to be more moderate than extreme
 - 2. Most are a combination of parts of the ideologies listed above

Study Questions for The Political Landscape

1. Show how European political thought provided the theoretical foundations of American government with particular attention to the **social contract theory** and why the framers chose an **indirect democracy or republic** over a **direct democracy**. Also describe the following other types of government: **monarchy, totalitarian dictatorship, and oligarchy**.
2. Describe the American political culture, and identify the basic tenets of American democracy such as **liberty, equality, popular consent, majority rule, popular sovereignty, natural law, individualism, religious faith, and religious freedom**.
3. Explain the functions of American government as listed in the Preamble to the Constitution.
4. Analyze the changing demographic characteristics of the American public and their effects on American politics.
5. Assess the role of **political ideology** in shaping American politics. Describe the following ideologies: **conservative, social conservative, classical liberal, liberal, moderate, and libertarian**. Explain the problems with ideological labels.
6. Analyze the effects of changes in Americans' attitudes toward and expectations of government, **politics, and the American Dream**.