

Political ideology research paper examples

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



Political Ideologies

Throughout the history of mankind, there have been numerous attempts to organize society using existing political ideologies. Governments across the globe have used a combination of these ideologies to create customized systems of government. Political scholars have acknowledged five political ideologies as the most distinct. These are anarchism, absolutism, liberalism, conservatism and socialism. Political ideologies are based on the belief that each society needs rules and regulations in order to thrive. These beliefs are political in nature and work by distributing power within society. It is an attempt by humanity to understand the world and evaluate its processes and attempt to control them. (Eccleshall, 2003)

There are those who believe that the best form of government is the one in which there is absolutely no government. This is known as anarchism.

Nihilism is closely related to anarchy. Both ideologies emerged as the extremely violent offshoot of the socialist revolution which was popular in the early part of the 20th century (Eccleshall, 2003). The rogue and violent tendencies expressed by anarchists and nihilists are the biggest draw backs of these ideologies. Both ideologies were popular in Russia.

Absolutism is an umbrella term used to identify all forms of government led by a single ruler with absolute power over the subjects. Absolute rulers were identified by different titles depending on their source of power and the territory. A ruler could be an emperor, chief, king, prince, pharaoh or shah. In some communities, these leaders were also revered as gods and were believed to have supernatural power (Rejai, 1995). Their authority was

therefore considered divine.

Plato a Greek philosopher who lived long before Thomas Hobbes another philosopher from England both believe that absolutism is the best form of government. Like Plato and Hobbes, I believe that leaders should be benevolent with all citizens' at heart and that good leadership leads to better lives. My opposition to both thinkers is on their position that absolute power is necessary for effective leadership. An unregulated leader can quickly become corrupted by power and turn into a tyrant. There should be systemic distribution of power among key government institutions to create checks and balances. Rejai (1995) concurred that leadership regardless of its quality should not be imposed on people. Legitimate power should come from the subjects and not from other sources such as bloodlines or divine sources. Liberalism emerged as a reaction to changing social and economic times. During the period between 1500 and 1700, Europe discovered America, the protestant movement took place and the journey towards free markets began. Liberalism introduced new concepts hitherto viewed as unacceptable. It emphasized individualism over society. Individual freedoms were more important than collective freedoms. Liberalism also introduced equality among all citizens regardless of class or race. It allowed people to reject unprogressive traditions in favor of new more developmental ideas (Rejai, 1995).

Liberalism is counted as a political ideology because of the freedoms it creates for the people. In theory, liberalism limits government involvement especially in the economy by creating free markets which allow individuals to become as successful as they can. It is therefore possible to argue that

liberalism is more of an economic than a political theory. Conservatism emerged as a reaction to liberalism. The French revolution which swept across Europe awoke the political class to the far reaching effects of liberal thought. Conservatives believed that the old system of government was the best because it brought stability through tradition and known systems of governance. They also argued that the concept of liberalism was too abstract and susceptible to human fallibility which would render liberalism untenable.

Liberalism supported the growth of capitalists who financed the industrial revolution. The Industrial Revolution spread between Europe and America during the later parts of the 18th century to end of the 19th century.

Emerging social and economic issues such as exploitation of the poor working class by the rich industrialists expanded the gap between the rich and the poor. A new system of government was needed to redistribute well equally among all citizens.

Socialism became the solution to the problem of inequitable distribution of wealth and resources. Individualism was discouraged while communal thinking was promoted. There would be no individual ownership of property; instead the public would own all property collectively. All citizens were on the same economic level since the government was responsible for distributing national wealth equally and equitably (Hoffman, 2006).

Communism is an extreme example of socialism in practice. Countries such as China, Cuba, North Korea and Russia have practiced or are still practicing it. The government in these countries controlled the means of productions together with the total output of production. Leadership is imposed on the people and there are no democratic processes to elect leadership. According

to Hoffman (2006), a more acceptable variation of communism is democratic socialism in which the citizens are allowed to elect the leadership through democratic processes.

Democratic socialism is a combination of socialist ideologies in a democratic environment. This political ideology has been successfully implemented in the western parts of Europe and in Scandinavia. The government in these countries bears the cost of social welfare by fully supporting or supplementing the needs of the underprivileged in society. This is an acceptable way of ensuring equality in society by allowing capitalism to support with social welfare.

Political ideologies are socially developed concepts developed to create order and control over the people and resources. The earliest ideologies were based on the belief in absolute power. As economies grew, individuals resisted unnecessary control and desired more freedom (Strachwitz, & Zimmer, 2010). This led to socialism which caused conservatism to emerge. Present forms of government are informed by the mistakes in previous systems and use combinations of ideologies to create systems such as democratic socialist governments.

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