Political Ideology

Definition:

(1) A set of beliefs and ideas that one can apply onto policies and events; one’s political “moral code” and world view.
(2) A way to gauge one’s view of CHANGE in both a society and political system; i.e., what TYPE of change? Progressive? Retractive? The PACE of change – rapid and drastic? Slow, modest or gradual?
(3) A way to gauge one’s view of the ROLE OF GOVT in a society in both ECONOMIC and SOCIAL/MORAL affairs.

(B) The Left-Right Political Spectrum – The most common and widely used method to assess and assign different political ideologies; The spectrum contains the major, basic ideological groups that shall be discussed

Reactionary: - Support Rapid and Drastic RETROGRESSIVE change;

1 Hold a massive and deep mistrust and dislike of govt. due to the belief that the govt. has violated the natural sovereignty of INDIVIDUALS
2 Excessive regulations and laws with regard to limiting property rights, excessive taxation and excessive gun control have led to immoral and illegal govt. power and expansion.
3 Individuals are NATURALLY sovereign with rights granted to them by God; the increased SIZE AND POWER of govt. and the extent of its laws have taken this sovereignty away from the individual.
4 Reactionaries seek to ROLL BACK and REVERSE the power, size and laws of govt. in a way that’s revolutionary and drastic
5 Usually by illegal and violent means

Conservatives: - Support either little/no change (STATUS QUO) or gradual and modest retrogressive change.

6 Though they support similar types of values as reactionaries, Conservatives are LESS drastic about change and seek more modest means and solutions
7 Economic VALUES: INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, PROPERTY RIGHTS, SELF RESPONSIBILITY and a strong WORK ETHIC (Like Reactionaries, only LESS drastic and with more MODEST
policy solutions, more peaceful and legal means)

8 Conservative Values lead to the Following Policies: Seek to either ROLL BACK govt. regulation on business and industry, or at least LIMIT these restrictions and rules on business and commerce and NOT CREATE NEW regulations.

9 Seek to limit and/or roll back taxation on business and corporations, property, individual incomes (aka, Tax Cuts)

10 Rationale is this: By cutting back on taxes and red-tape regulations, business and industry have more incentive and motivation to produce more goods (because it knows that it will not be burdened by greater labor costs as a result of regulation or increased taxation).

11 Hence, business supplies more goods and services > employment increases > wages increase > consumption increases (consumers spend more) > The economy grows and govt. tax revenues, thus, increase.

12 All in all, Less Govt. = Economic Prosperity for all – Rich, Poor and Middle Class

13 Seek to limit or cut Govt./public spending as a way to promote FISCAL DISCIPLINE and RESPONSIBILITY, as well as reduce wasteful spending and budget deficits; this is a way to encourage more INVESTMENT in the economy.

14 On Social Policy: Conservatives seek MORE involvement by Govt.

15 This is to promote CLASSICAL CONSERVATIVE VALUES: RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY, TRADITION, support for DECENCY and MORALITY.

16 This leads to Conservative policy views on abortion, school prayer, internet censorship/obscenity issues, etc.

17 Conservatives also stress the Values of ORDER AND SECURITY; Freedom and liberty with regard to speech, religion, war protesting criminal due-process, etc. are important – HOWEVER, these freedoms must be tempered and sometimes limited due to the need for Order and Security;

18 Seek some restrictions for criminal due-process as a way to emphasize Victims’ Rights, support capital punishment, support USA PATRIOT ACT; All these policy views help promote CLASSICAL conservative values.

19 In general, the RIGHT-WING groups have similar values and belief systems – INDIVIDUALISM and TRADITIONAL VALUES; Again, there is a difference in tactics; Reactionaries = More Drastic Measures, Conservatives = More Modest Means

Liberals: - Support more gradual and modest PROGRESSIVE Change

20 Liberal Values: Greater Open-Mindedness, Acceptance and
Tolerance for Diversity and Differences

21 EQUALITY and empowerment of the LESS FORTUNATE AND POWERFUL

22 OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE; Belief that humans will do right if given the chance; humans are able to serve the common good

23 Liberal Values have led to two different versions of liberals with regard to Policy

24 (1) Classical Liberals (17th, 18th and early-mid 19th centuries): Supported Economic Policies similar to Modern Conservatives! Why? During 17th-19th centuries, Liberals wanted to LIBERATE the less powerful, common masses from oppressive monarchies (PROGRESSIVE CHANGE away from tyrant rule). This means that economically, Classical Liberals wanted to empower the common masses with more wealth and property.

25 Thus, Classical liberals supported private ownership of property and merchantry (business) for commoners, less govt./public ownership and regulations - that way the powerful oligarchs and aristocrats supported by the oppressive monarchies would not be as powerful.

26 Hence, private enterprise and capitalism led to more EQUALITY and EMPOWERMENT of the masses


28 19th and 20th century growth and industrialization produced more distinct and divided socio-economic classes and, hence, a tendency for labor to be exploited and taken advantage of by private industry.

29 That is why Modern Liberals have called for more govt. intervention in the economy. To PROTECT and EQUALIZE the less fortunate and powerful (i.e., labor workers, consumers, the elderly, children, ethnic minorities, etc.) from the potential abuses of big business and industry.

30 Modern Liberal era (In U.S.) began with early 20th century Progressive Era movement, followed by 1930’s Depression-era “New Deal” policies and 1960’s “Great Society” Programs

31 Other Modern Liberal policy examples: Greater labor regulations, more price controls over power/utilities industry, environmental protection, increased amounts of govt./public spending for education, health, social service programs, etc.

32 Liberals DO SUPPORT capitalism and basic free enterprise – so long as capitalism is REGULATED in a way that keeps big business from taking advantage of labor, consumer and other less-powerful groups.

33 When fairness and equality in capitalism are achieved, economic
prosperity and growth will follow.

Radicals: Support Drastic and rapid PROGRESSIVE change

34 Like Reactionaries, Radicals are often willing to resort to illegal and violent means to achieve goals. Also, like Reactionaries, Radicals have an intense dislike and mistrust of govt. – for DIFFERENT REASONS

35 Radicals believe that govt. has collaborated and conspired with wealthy economic/corporate elites to suppress the collective, less powerful masses. The collective working classes (hence, MOST of THE PEOPLE) have been kept down by govt., which is in alliance with major economic industries – oil petroleum, industry, defense contractors, energy companies (Enron, Halliburton, etc.)

36 Seek to drastically re-distribute wealth and property and, hence, create more class equality.

37 Seek to do this by abolition (or at least extreme regulation) of corporations, revamping govt. totally to the point where it publicly controls or regulates industry and enterprise so that true class EQUALITY for labor classes and other less powerful groups is achieved. This is seen as drastic PROGRESSIVE change.


39 Again, the LEFT-WING groups have similar VALUES; Equality, Faith in Human Goodness, Tolerance, etc.

40 However, there are differences in tactics and policy;

41 Liberals= more modest means (legal and non-violent tactics), support for regulatory capitalism to achieve equality

42 Radicals= more drastic means, abolition of capitalism, socialist/democratic socialist, state-owned economic order to achieve equality.

Moderates (aka, “Centrists”)

43 The group most content by the Status-Quo

44 While Moderates do call for some change – a policy change here, a new proposal there – they, on the whole, are content with the way the size and scope of govt. as it is.

45 Moderates are a BLEND and COMBINATION of BOTH liberal and conservative ideas.

46 Place more importance on pragmatism, rather than pure ideology.