



2 Political Culture

Chapter Outline

- Canadian Values and Canadian Culture
- Values, Ideologies, and Institutions
 - Left-Wing and Right-Wing Values, Ideas, and Ideologies
 - Ideologies in Canadian Democracy
- Explaining Canadian Ideas, Political Culture and Institutions
 - The Fragment Theory Approach: European Parents and Cultural Genes
 - The Formative Events Approach: Counter-Revolution and the Conquest
 - The Class Analysis Approach: Economic Structure and Political Ideas
- The Values, Ideas, and Attitudes of Canadians
 - Canadian Political Community and Its Challenges
 - A History of Accommodation
 - Freedom
 - Equality
 - Canadian “Mosaic” versus American “Melting Pot”: Is This a Myth?
 - Canadians’ Expectations of the State
 - Deference and Changing Canadian Values
 - Canadians and the Notion of Social Capital
 - Canadians and Religious Values
- Summary

Learning Objectives

After reading Chapter 2 in *Canadian Democracy*, you should be able to do the following:

- Explain the meaning of the terms *right*, *left*, and *centre* as they apply to politics.
- List some distinguishing characteristics of liberalism, conservatism, and socialism and explain how the modern versions of these ideologies are different from their classical forms.
- Identify and contrast the three theoretical approaches that have been put forward to explain the origins and development of Canadians' political ideas.
- Discuss some ways that the political ideas of Canadians are similar to or different from those of Americans.
- Compose one or two paragraphs that use as many key concepts (listed below) as possible.

Key Concepts

Alienation Apathy, estrangement from the political system, or the belief that politics is systematically biased against one's interests and values (p. 32)

Centre (political) The mainstream of a society's politics (p. 34)

Classical conservatism Emphasized the importance of tradition and social order and one that accepts human inequality—social, political, and economic—as part of the natural order of things (p. 37)

Classical liberalism Associated with freedom of religious choice and practice, free enterprise and free trade in business and economics, and freedom of expression and association in politics (p. 36)

Classical socialism Based on the principle of equality of condition and radical egalitarianism (p. 37)

Communitarianism The public mobilization of resources to fulfill group objectives (p. 51)

Conservatism An ideology based on the belief that traditions and social order are important and that gradual change is best (p. 36)

Cultural genocide The destruction of those structures and practices that allow a group to continue as a group (p. 54)

Formative events approach Theory that states that certain “formative” events at critical periods in a society's development, influence that society to evolve along particular lines (p. 44)

Fragment theory approach Theory that states that New World societies were “fragments” of the European societies that gave birth to them, representing only a part of the socio-economic and spectrum of Europe (pp. 39–41)

La Survivance A concept that suggests conserving French Canada's religious and linguistic heritage in the face of assimilationist pressures (p. 47)

Ideology A set of interrelated values and beliefs about how society is organized and how it ought to function (p. 32)

Liberalism An ideology based on the belief that the state must protect individual liberty, personal

choice, and the right to private property (p. 3)

Libertarianism The belief that individuals should be allowed the largest possible margin of freedom in all realms of life, including moral choices (p. 34)

Materialism An ideology that places greater stress on economic security and material well-being (p. 59)

Multiculturalism The idea that cultural diversity is not only good for society, it should also be encouraged (p. 54)

Nationalism Defines a community by its language, ethnic origins, traditions, or unique history (p. 49)

Patriotism Fervent and demonstrative love of country and its symbols (p. 49)

Political community A shared sense of belonging to a country whose national integrity is worth preserving (p. 49)

Political culture The characteristic values, beliefs, and behaviours of a society's members in regard to politics (p. 32)

Political efficacy People's sense of whether their participation in politics matters (p. 32)

Political left Refers to collectivist and social justice ideas and ideologies, and political parties that advocate social reform (p. 33)

Political right Refers to ideas and ideologies that advocate social order, protection of private property, economic freedom, and support for capitalism (p. 33)

Post-materialism An ideology that attaches comparatively greater importance to human needs for belonging, self-esteem, and personal fulfillment (p. 59)

Red Toryism Conservatives who believe that government has a responsibility to act as an agent for the collective good, and that this responsibility goes far beyond maintaining law and order (p. 57)

Secularization A decline in the belief that religion and religious authorities should be looked to for guidance about behaviour and an increase in the social, cultural, and political influence of elites whose expertise is not based on religious faith (p. 61)

Social capital The fabric of connections between members of a community (p. 61)

Socialism An ideology based on the collective or state ownership of the means of production and the belief in the state's ability to provide social justice, redistribute wealth, and fix social problems (p. 36)

Tory political beliefs Deference toward established authority and institutions, acceptance of inequality between classes as the natural condition of society, and a greater stress on preserving social order than on protecting individual freedoms (p. 43)

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Have Canadians become less deferential in recent decades? Do you think that a changing political culture is driving this decline?
2. After comparing the political values of Canadians and Americans, what conclusions did you make regarding the differences between the two nations? Have you concluded that they are more different than you thought or less different?

3. Comment on the conclusion drawn by Breton and Reitz (page 55) that “there is almost no empirical basis for Canadians’ cherished self-image of their society as being more tolerant and less assimilationist than that of the United States.” What is your reaction to this? What evidence, anecdotal or otherwise, would you give to refute or confirm Breton and Reitz’s conclusion?
4. After comparing the fragment theory and formative events approaches to political culture, which do you feel is the most applicable to Canadian political culture? Why?
5. After reading the section on Canadian “mosaic” and American “melting pot” (pages 53–56), do you agree with the differentiation? Is Canada truly a mosaic?

Additional Resources

CBC Archives, video clips on language and culture http://archives.cbc.ca/politics/language_culture/

CBC Archives, video clips on civil unrest http://archives.cbc.ca/politics/civil_unrest/

CBC Archives, video clips on society <http://archives.cbc.ca/society/>

I Am Canadian (Molson Canadian commercials). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRI-A3vakVg>

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