

Modern Ideologies

Individualism

- the core principle, human beings are first and foremost individuals
- human beings possess separate and unique identities
- equal moral worth
- morally neutral, allowing individuals to make their own moral decision
- individuals can develop and flourish pursuing the "good" to the best of their abilities

Consent

- government must be based on the "consent of the governed"
- authority and social relationships should always be based on willing agreement
- representation and democracy: liberal democracy
- authority arises "from below" and is always grounded in legitimacy

Freedom

- the core value, individual freedom/liberty
- priority over equality, justice, authority
- "freedom under the law",
- a person's liberty may be a threat to the liberty of others
- individual maximum possible liberty consistent with a like liberty for all

Equality

- fundamental equality, individuals are born equal in terms of moral worth
- equal rights, in the form of legal equality and political equality
- one person, one vote, one vote, one value
- equality of opportunity
- principle of meritocracy, merit reflecting talent plus hard work

Toleration

- to allow others to think, speak, and act in ways of which they disapprove
- a guarantee of individual liberty and a means of social enrichment
- pluralism in the form of moral, cultural, political diversity, is positively healthy
- a balance of natural harmony between views and interests

Reason

- the world has a rational structure
- exercise of human reason and critical enquiry
- faith in the ability of individuals to make wise judgments
- believe in progress and the capacity of human beings to resolve differences through debate and argument

Constitutionalism

- government: a vital guarantee of order and stability in society
- limited government, danger that government may become a tyranny against the individual
- fragmentation of government power: checks and balances
- codified constitution embodying a bill of rights

Tradition

- the desire to conserve
- virtues of traditions that have endured through time
- tradition reflects the accumulated wisdom of the past
- the virtue of promoting a sense of social and historical belonging

Authority

- always exercised “from above”, providing leadership
- for those who lack knowledge to act wisely in their own interest
- freedom must coexist with responsibility
- freedom consists of willing acceptance of obligations and duties

Pragmatism

- limitations of human rationality
- experience, history, pragmatism – abstract principles distrusted
- action shaped by practical circumstances and goals – by “what works”
- attitude of mind, approach to life – not unprincipled opportunism

Hierarchy

- gradations of social position and status natural and inevitable
- hierarchy and inequality do not originate conflict
- person’s life determined largely by luck and birth
- the privileged have the responsibility to care for the less fortunate

Property

- vital – gives people security and a measure of independence from government
- exteriorization of people’s personality – they see themselves in what they own

Organicism

- society as an organic whole, living entity
- society a natural necessity – family, community, nation
- traditional values and common culture vital to maintain social cohesion

Human imperfections

- pessimistic view of human nature
- individuals: morally corrupt, selfish – greed and thirst for power
- roots of crime and disorder reside within the individual not society

Community

- human beings as social creatures linked by common humanity
- importance of community
- nurture over nature, individual identity shaped by social interaction
- individual behavior explained in terms of social factors

Social class

- social class as the most significant social cleavage
- working class oppressed and exploited
- working class as an agent of social change (even social revolution)

Social Equality

- central value, primacy over other values
- essential to guarantee social stability and cohesion
- equality of outcome over equality of opportunity
- Social-Democrats: narrowing material inequality, equalizing opportunities
- Marxists: absolute social equality, collectivization of production wealth

Fraternity

- human beings bound together by a sense of fraternity
- prefers cooperation to competition
- favors collectivism over individualism

Need

- material benefits distributed on the basis of need, not merit or work
- *"from each according to his ability, to each according to his need"*

Common Ownership

- the end of socialism itself
- a means generating broader equality
- private property promotes selfishness, acquisition, and social division
- Soviet-style collectivization, Soviet new man

Modern Ideologies