

CHAPTER 1

Freedom, Order, or Equality?

PARALLEL LECTURE 1.1

This lecture is the first in the series of **parallel lectures** in the *Instructor's Resource Manual*. It closely parallels the discussion in the text, allowing instructors to decide which topics in the chapter they wish to reinforce and which topics they wish to develop further with their own ideas and information. Later in this chapter we offer the option of a **focus lecture**. The focus lectures either expand on a portion of the text or introduce new (but related) topics for more detailed treatment.

- I. Modern governments are confronted by fundamental dilemmas—difficult choices between unsatisfactory alternatives.
 - A. Is it better to live under a government that allows individuals complete freedom or under one that enforces strict law and order?
 - B. These alternatives pose dilemmas of choice, because they are tied to opposing philosophies that place different values on freedom, order, and equality.
 - C. *The Challenge of Democracy* argues that good government often involves tough choices. It invites students to analyze government policies to determine which values (norms) are at stake by the policy choices made by government.
- II. Globalization presents new challenges as governments struggle to make difficult decisions.
 - A. **Government** is defined as the legitimate use of force—including imprisonment and execution—to control human behavior within territorial boundaries. It has generally been thought of mainly in territorial terms.
 - B. Indeed, the idea of **national sovereignty**—a political entity's externally recognized right to exercise final authority over its affairs—has given each nation the right to make the choices it wishes to make without interference from other nations.
 - C. But the dilemmas of government are made more difficult by the phenomenon of globalization—the increasing interdependence of citizens and nations across the world. Globalization has many effects on the U.S. government, just as U.S. politics also effects governments around the world.
 - D. Human rights issues have become increasingly important. The U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has declared that protection of human rights must take precedence over concerns of state sovereignty. This does not necessarily benefit the U.S.: the U.S. opposes the creation of an International Criminal Court to define and try crimes against humanity, and is also concerned about pressure from other nations that would encourage the termination of capital punishment.
 - E. Though the U.S. is hardly the most “globalized” nation (see *Politics in a Changing World*), we are thoroughly embedded in a worldwide economic, social, and political network; we must take this into account as we explore various facets of American government.
- III. Why have government? The purposes of government can be viewed from several perspectives.

- A. Every government requires citizens to surrender some freedom to obtain the benefits it provides. Although some governments minimize their infringements on personal freedom, no government has as a goal the maximization of personal freedom.
 - B. There are three principal purposes of government.
 - 1. **Maintaining order:** Preserving life and protecting private property
 - 2. **Providing public goods:** Instituting projects that benefit all individuals but are not likely to be produced by the voluntary acts of individuals
 - 3. **Promoting equality:** Redistributing income to promote economic equality or regulate behavior to promote social equality
 - C. Citizens differ on how vigorously they want government to maintain order, provide public goods, and promote equality. The two most controversial purposes, maintaining order and promoting equality, usually involve tradeoffs in basic values. .
 - D. Five political concepts are crucial to understanding what government tries to do and how it decides to do so. A **concept** is as a generalized idea that groups various events, objects, or qualities under a common classification or label.
 - 1. Three concepts identify the **values** pursued by government.
 - a) Order
 - b) Freedom
 - c) Equality
 - 2. How government chooses the right mix of order, freedom, and equality focuses on the process of choice rather than on its outcome. Two concepts describe models of democratic government.
 - a) Majoritarian democracy
 - b) Pluralist democracy
- IV. The terms *freedom*, *order*, and *equality* have different connotations in American politics. Freedom and equality are positive terms, promoted in different ways by politicians. Order, in contrast, has a negative connotation as it implies government intrusion into private lives. It is openly called for only in times of civil strife.
- A. **Freedom** has been used in two major senses:
 - 1. **Freedom of** implies the absence of constraints on behavior—this usage is synonymous with *liberty*. For example, we speak of freedom of religion.
 - 2. **Freedom from** implies immunity from discrimination—in this sense, freedom comes close to guaranteeing equality. For example, we speak of freedom from want.
 - 3. We use the term **freedom** in the first sense throughout the book.
 - B. **Order** can be viewed in either a narrow or a broad sense.
 - 1. The narrow view of order is less controversial and involves the protection of life and property. Most citizens concede the necessity of maintaining order in this sense.
 - 2. The broad view of order encompasses **social order**. Social order refers to established patterns of authority in society and to traditional modes of behavior. The extent to which the government should use its **police power** to enforce social order is controversial. For example, the extent to which the government should use its power to stop pornography on the Internet is controversial. The term *order* as used in the book encompasses preserving life, protecting property, and protecting traditional patterns of social relationships.
 - C. **Equality**, has been used in several senses:
 - 1. **Political equality:** one person, one vote; equal access to political office.
 - 2. **Social equality:** equality in wealth, education, and status.
 - a) **Equality of opportunity:** equal access to public goods and social and economic advancement.

- b) **Equality of outcome:** social and economic equality as the result of government policies to redistribute wealth and status. It requires a much greater degree of government activity as compared with equality of outcome.
- D. Much of the controversy in contemporary politics centers on two major dilemmas of government:
 - 1. The **original** dilemma: How much freedom should be sacrificed for order?
 - 2. The **modern** dilemma: How much freedom should be sacrificed for equality?
 - 3. The conflict between freedom and order is apparent; the conflict between freedom and equality represents more subtle value tensions.
- V. People hold different opinions about the scope of government: how far government should go to maintain order, provide public goods, and promote equality.
 - A. Sometimes, those opinions are organized into a **political ideology**, a consistent set of values and beliefs about the proper purpose and scope of government. Political ideologies can be placed along a continuum, from the desire for government to do everything, to the belief that government shouldn't exist. This continuum has six basic positions:
 - 1. **Totalitarianism** allows unlimited government control over all segments of society.
 - 2. **Communism** prescribes government ownership of the means of production and government control of the economy.
 - 3. **Socialism** supports a broad role for government in the nation's economic life, including government ownership of basic industries. The difference between socialism and communism is in the latter controlling not just economic life, but political and social life as well through a dominant party organization
 - 4. **Capitalism** emphasizes free (laissez-faire) enterprise and private ownership, rejecting a broad economic role for government.
 - 5. **Libertarianism** seeks to limit government, except to protect life and property.
 - 6. **Anarchism**, the opposite of totalitarianism, is opposed to government in any form.
 - B. U.S. government and politics assume a middle, but clearly capitalist, position on the continuum.
 - 1. Practical politics in the United States avoids the extremes and is confined to two broad positions:
 - a) The **liberal** position supports a larger role for government in the distribution of public goods and the regulation of private enterprise.
 - b) The **conservative** position favors either the status quo or a reduction in the size and role of government.
 - 2. **Liberal** and **conservative** are useful labels for analyzing people's positions on the government's role in providing public goods, but these labels do not apply to all aspects of governmental action.
 - a) Liberals tend to support government regulation of economic matters, but they oppose regulation of individual rights.
 - b) Conservatives tend to oppose government job programs and economic regulation, but they favor controls over abortion and sexually explicit publications.
 - c) A better understanding of liberal and conservative positions considers the purpose and the scope of government action as well as the major value dilemmas in modern government.
- VI. We can construct a two-dimensional framework of ideological orientations.

- A. A simple liberal-conservative scale classifies people only along a single dimension, which is—more or less—that of government activity.
- B. Referring to the purposes of government, as involved in the original and the modern dilemmas of politics, enables us to classify political ideologies/ ideological types on two dimensions:
 - 1. Freedom versus order
 - 2. Freedom versus equality
- C. This typology produces four categories:
 - 1. **Libertarians**, who favor **freedom** over both order and equality
 - 2. **Conservatives**, who favor **freedom** over equality, but **order** over freedom
 - 3. **Liberals**, who favor **freedom** over order, but **equality** over freedom
 - 4. **Communitarians**, who favor both **order** and **equality** over freedom