

Contemporary Perspectives on the Social World

	Organic Conservative	Individualist Conservative	Reform Liberal	Socialist Radical
View of Human Nature	Humans are inherently aggressive, competitive, selfish, and hierarchical. Individuals are motivated by potentially uncontrollable biological urges.	Humans are inherently selfish and highly individualistic. They are basically inert or lazy. Individuals are motivated by a rational calculation of self-interest (utilitarianism).	Similar to the Individualist Conservative: humans are generally selfish and individualistic, <i>but</i> individuals can be motivated by altruism under certain circumstances.	Human nature is <i>flexible</i> . Humans are fundamentally social, but collectively constitute their human nature differently in different forms of society. Individuals are motivated by desire to fulfill human potentials.
Nature of the Social Order	Humans need society to protect themselves from each other and from themselves. Inequality and hierarchy are natural and necessary. Society is a reality <i>sui generis</i> ; it is like a functionally differentiated living organism.	Society exists to protect individual freedom; free market capitalism and private property are the basis of this freedom. Government is the main coercive force. Left to itself, society is a self-regulating mechanism (the “invisible hand”). Society is no more than the sum total of the individuals who make it up and exists only by agreement of those individuals (the “social contract”).	Society is the forum in which formal equality among individuals is realized (meritocracy). Because free market capitalism has tendencies toward instability and injustice, the government must intervene to fine-tune the system and keep it running smoothly and fairly.	Society is necessary for human development; it is a system of social relations among individuals who both reproduce and alter these relations. Capitalism is a historically specific mode of production, the basis of which is exploitation and alienation. It is inherently unstable due to class conflict and internal contradictions.
Central Values	Authority, order, and tradition. Freedom <i>within</i> bounds prescribed by nature.	Individual liberty and private property (<i>laissez faire</i>). Freedom <i>from</i> restraint on the individual.	Individual civil rights and equal opportunity. Freedom <i>of</i> opportunity.	Equality and solidarity. Freedom <i>to</i> actively develop capacities by transcending barriers and creating new options.
Orientation to Social Change	The social system is normally in equilibrium (homeostatic). Change is disruptive and should be minimized. Social change, when it occurs, is episodic.	Change occurs in a naturally slow and incremental way as a result of the buildup of individual actions. Social change is cyclical, like the market.	Humans, through the vehicle of the state, must intervene to make pragmatic modifications in the social system. Social change is evolutionary (progress).	Change is produced by inherent conflict and internal contradictions combined with conscious collective action. Change is transformative (a dialectical process).

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Ideal System	Paternalistic Capitalism. Goal: Stability through elite-controlled growth.	Free Market Capitalism. Goal: Increase the production of individual wealth. The least government is the best government.	Meritocratic, Welfare-state Capitalism. Goal: Expand & adjust the economic & political pie to provide equal opportunity, formal justice, and stability.	Democratic Socialism. Goal: Decentralized, fully democratic decisionmaking in the economic & political realms; distribution of wealth on the basis of need.
Cause of Social Problems	Sudden change which produces a breakdown in social control mechanisms	Government coercion and disruption of the free market	An unregulated economy and lack of equal opportunity in the meritocracy.	Exploitation, alienation, inequality, class conflict, and inherent contradictions.
Solution to Social Problems	Recover past traditions which reflect the immutable laws of nature.	Return to the basic principles of free-market capitalism and rational selfishness.	The government must regulate the economy and the meritocracy to ensure stability and fairness.	Create a mass movement based on socialist principles which will transform both the people and the society.
Philosophers, Economists, and other Proponents	Thomas Aquinas(1225-1274) Edmund Burke (1729-1797) William F. Buckley George Will Rev. Jerry Falwell Phyllis Schlafly Rush Limbaugh Oliver North	John Locke (1632-1704) Adam Smith (1732-1790) Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) Ayn Rand (1905-1982) Milton Friedman Steve Forbes Ross Perot	John Stuart Mill (1806-1893) John Dewey (1859-1952) John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) John Kenneth Galbraith Paul Samuelson Lester Thurow	Karl Marx (1818-1883) V.I. Lenin (1870-1924) Michael Harrington(1928-1989) Paul Sweezy Bernie Sanders Cornel West Noam Chomsky
Groups and Think Tanks	Focus on the Family Eagle Forum The Conservative Caucus The Hudson Institute The Heritage Foundation	The Libertarian Party American Conservative Union The Cato Institute American Enterprise Institute	NAACP American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) People for the American Way Brookings Institution	Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) Midwest Academy Co-Op America Institute for Policy Studies
Periodicals	<i>National Review</i> <i>Conservative Digest</i> <i>American Spectator</i> <i>American Opinion</i> <i>Plain Truth</i>	<i>U.S. News & World Report</i> <i>Wall Street Journal</i> <i>Forbes</i> <i>The Public Interest</i> <i>Human Events</i> <i>Commentary</i>	<i>Time</i> <i>Newsweek</i> <i>Harpers</i> <i>Atlantic Monthly</i> <i>Foreign Affairs</i> <i>The New Republic</i>	<i>Z magazine</i> <i>The Progressive</i> <i>The Nation</i> <i>Monthly Review</i> <i>Dollars and Sense</i> <i>Utne Reader</i>