

Rule of Law

Self interest

Economic Freedom

Understandings of Individualism (Liberalism)

Private property

Competition

Individual rights and freedoms

What is individualism?
Outcome 1.5

**How is collectivism a
foundation of ideology?**
Outcome 1.7

Early Understandings and Development

- After the Medieval Period, was a period known as the **Renaissance** (circa 1450-1600); during this time, individuality became more important.
- Influences from Ancient Greek culture helped to shape worldviews as people resisted the notion that they were “stuck” in a hierarchy ruled by God.
- A notion of human potential focused on ideals such as strength, beauty, and reason of individual humans
- **The Protestant Reformation** (circa 1500-1650) also contributed to growing individualistic ideals by challenging the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.



PRINCIPLES

OF



INDIVIDUALISM

(Classical Liberalism)

Rule Of Law

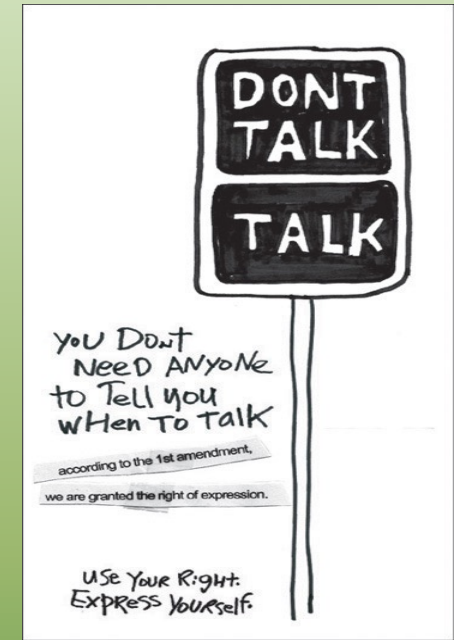
- No person is above the law; all people are equal under the law
- Must be clearly defined rules that make up the law, not arbitrary decisions made by “higher powers”
- States that if two people commit the same crime, they should receive the same punishment.
- This is why in a democracy, the judicial branch is separate from the other branches; the executive cannot manipulate the law to its own advantage.



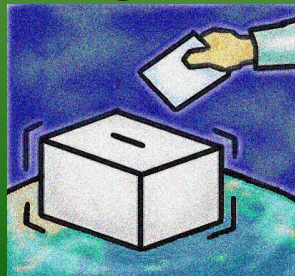
Judges free from political control

Individual rights and Freedoms

- Include rights such as freedom of religion, freedom of association, the right to life, liberty and the security of the person.



- In liberal democracies, an important right is the franchise, or right to vote. (see exceptions throughout history, pg 72)





- In Canada, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is in place to ensure that rights and freedoms are protected; however, these rights can be limited by “such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”
- This means that there are laws that prohibit the promotion of hatred and/or discrimination – thus limiting freedom of expression
- Examples: Keegstra, hate propaganda

Rule of Law continued...



- Essentially, individual rights express to what degree individualism can be maintained
- To what extent an individual can live, and direct their life according to their own desires
- Strong individual rights protect a person's ability to conduct themselves in any way they see fit
- **HOWEVER**, the rights of others cannot be trampled in this process.

...more on this later!



Private Property

The first private property laws said to have been established in 24BC in Mesopotamia when the ruler, Urukagina, stated that no one could seize another's property.



- The principle that no one can be denied the right to accumulate or trade valued items that are not in the property of others.
- Private property includes the right of use, which allows any owner to utilize their property in any preferred manner as long as it does not violate the rights of those around them.
- It also includes the right of disposal, which allows the owner to discard their property or transfer the ownership to another.
- Finally, private property includes the right to income, which is the right to use your property as a source of profit. This could include selling, leasing or renting.



Modern understandings of private property developed during the Enlightenment; at first understood only to apply to land, but later expanded to include other forms of physical possession and intellectual property (artistic works, inventions, etc)

- Perceptions of land ownership have caused clashes between some groups. For example, some Aboriginal groups believe that land cannot be owned, but is rather shared and a gift from nature.



Debates also arise regarding intellectual property as actual “ownership” is often hard to determine, and even when specified, often not respected.

See examples on pgs 75-77. How does file sharing relate to the principle of individualism?

Economic Freedom

- The freedom to buy what you want and to sell your labour, idea, or product to whomever you wish

Ten factors to consider:

Business freedom	Investment freedom
Trade freedom	Financial freedom
Fiscal (tax) freedom	Property rights
Degree of government regulation	Freedom from corruption
Monetary freedom	Labour freedom

- In 2008, Canada was 10th on the list due to the fact that the Canadian government intervenes in the economy to create stability.
- The economy in Canada is known as **welfare capitalism** due to modifications made after the Great Depression of the 1930s

Self-interest and Competition

“That which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Every one thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest; and only when he is himself concerned as an individual.” -- Aristotle

- Decisions should be made free from govt. control.
- In “laissez faire economics”, the government should adopt a “hands off” policy when it comes to economic decisions.
- Competition and profit motive find the most efficient and innovative methods of production.
- Individuals can best achieve their goals if they are allowed to have private ownership.



Adam Smith: Self-interest and competition



*Father of the Market system
and author of
“The Wealth of Nations”*

- Believed the economy would regulate itself if left alone. (Laissez Faire)
- Believed those that fail to complete fail to survive. (profit motive)
- The “invisible hand”: in working in their own self-interest, individuals will inadvertently benefit all of society; the market will solve all basic economic questions.
- If people work to benefit themselves, competition among produces ensures that the best product will be made at the lowest possible price due to the forces of supply and demand
- If consumers are sovereign, supply and demand will dictate the natural flow of the market.