Contemporary Challenges to Liberalism

Whether you support or challenge a particular value of modern liberalism, such as the right to public health care, depends on your vision of what life should be like. What would you write about if you imagined the world 50 or 100 years from now? Science fiction stories in television shows, movies, novels, and computer games explore the possibilities of what life could be like or what the story's creator thinks life should be. An imaginary perfect world is called a utopia. A negative, pessimistic vision of a future world—if, for example, a particular value or principle is taken to an extreme—is called a dystopia. Think of science fiction stories you know. (Recall our discussion of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the introduction of this book.) Imagine the kind of world that you would want to live in. What is it about this imagined world that you find appealing?

In his book *The Little Prince* (1943), French author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry creates a variety of fictional planets and asteroids to critique characteristics of adult behaviour from a child's point of view. On one asteroid, for example, a businessman spends all his time counting the stars, and claims ownership of them so that he can use them to buy more stars.

Other books describe worlds that resemble our own more closely, except for a few fundamental differences. In *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), author Ray Bradbury describes a country in which the populace voluntarily gives up literature to suppress any subversive ideas that might endanger its "happiness". An authoritarian government then outlaws the possession of books and sets about burning all existing literature.

Similarly, in Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), people convert to "Sameness," giving up individual memories and strong emotions to create a more safe and peaceful society. Eventually, the protagonists in both Bradbury's and Lowry's books choose to forsake the security of their respective societies and struggle to reinstate individuality and freedom of expression.

In these examples, the authors challenge different perspectives of how to organize society and examine the consequences of taking the principles of an ideology to the extreme. What might happen if we based our society solely on economic principles like the businessman who counts stars? What might happen if we gave up all control to the

government like the country where books are outlawed? What might happen if we allowed the government to do anything in its power to ensure our security, to the point of sacrificing our individuality?

In a similar way to how Bradbury and Lowry evaluated imaginary societies, Canadians critique aspects of Canadian society and, in doing so, question the role of government: How much do we want or need the government to be involved in our lives, and how much freedom are we willing to give up in exchange for security? Critiques and challenges to how we govern our society can help us see how it might be improved and, in some cases, might lead to changes in the way we live together.
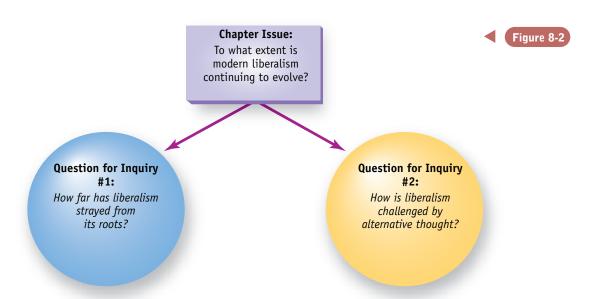
Chapter Issue

As a society evolves, alternative ideas arise that may be embraced or rejected. In some cases, people do not just embrace new ideas, they look to traditional ideas as a way to enrich or counter current ideologies. Why did classical liberalism evolve into modern liberalism? How have new ideas contributed to or challenged modern liberalism? How might modern liberalism evolve further?

In this chapter, you will investigate contemporary currents of alternative thought and explore the challenges they present for liberalism. These examples will help you explore the Chapter Issue: *To what extent is modern liberalism continuing to evolve?* As you consider this question, think about how it fits into the Related Issue for Part 2: *To what extent is resistance to liberalism justified?*

Figure 8-1 ▲

In *Fahrenheit 451*, brigades of "firemen" are employed to find and burn all forms of literature. To what extent should the state intervene to control freedom of thought and expression?

◀ **Figure 8-2**

Chapter Issue:
To what extent is modern liberalism continuing to evolve?

Question for Inquiry #1:
How far has liberalism strayed from its roots?

Question for Inquiry #2:
How is liberalism challenged by alternative thought?

Classical Liberalism and Modern Liberalism

Question for Inquiry

• How far has liberalism strayed from its roots?

As you discovered in previous chapters, classical liberal principles originated in the Enlightenment, particularly in the writings of John Locke. Locke believed that all people have certain natural or inalienable rights and that society should be a community of political equals, all of whom respect the rights of one another equally. This became the rationale for modern democracy.

According to classical liberals, the main function of government is to protect individuals' natural rights: the rights to life, liberty, and property. Any laws created by the government can be legitimized only by the consent of the majority of the members of society. This creates a great amount of freedom for most people and ensures less control over individuals by the government.

Over the course of the 18th and early 19th centuries, technological advances led to the Industrial Revolution in England. To take advantage of the economic opportunities this presented, members of the British Parliament put the ideas of **classical liberalism** into practice, limiting government control over the economy as much as possible. The industrial productivity and incredible wealth that resulted would eventually lead to large disparities between the rich—the entrepreneurs and landowners—and those living in poverty—the people who worked for the entrepreneurs and landowners. These economic disparities helped inspire ideologies that would challenge the ideas of classical liberalism, eventually leading to the evolution of liberalism. Over time, classical liberal concepts such as the right to be free from government interference were expanded into modern liberal ideas such as the right to an education, health care, and other things that necessitate more government intervention.

Figure 8-3 ▼

The evolution of some key aspects of liberalism

Classical Liberalism →	Effects →	Modern Liberalism
• involves no government interference (hands off) • proposes that the sole function of government is to protect individuals' natural rights to life, liberty, and property • emphasizes economic liberalism and promotes the freedom of the entrepreneur	• contributed to the Great Depression • contributed to the wealth gap between the more developed world and the rest of the world, thus leading to such things as political instability and hyper-consumerism • contributed to the development of counter-ideologies, such as communism and fascism, and the expansion and revision of liberal ideas	• involves significant government intervention (hands on) • proposes that all individuals be valued equally • proposes the development of programs to help disadvantaged individuals and eliminate the causes of poverty, crime, and abuse • promotes initiatives to share the benefits of development and to develop wisely

Voices

From Classical to Modern Liberalism

There is nothing in the basic principles of liberalism to make it a stationary creed; there are no hard-and-fast rules fixed once and for all. The fundamental principle that in the ordering of our affairs we should make as much use as possible of the spontaneous forces of society, and resort as little as possible to coercion, is capable of an infinite variety of applications. There is, in particular, all the difference between deliberately creating a system within which competition will work as beneficially as possible, and passively accepting institutions as they are. Probably nothing has done so much harm to the liberal cause as the wooden insistence of some liberals on certain rough rules of thumb, above all the principle of laissez faire.

—**Friedrich Hayek,** *The Road to Serfdom*
(London: Routledge Press, 1944), p. 21.

In his book *The Road to Serfdom*, economist and philosopher Friedrich Hayek argued against collectivist thinking. His main concern was that excessive government intervention could lead to tyranny. However, he also believed that intervention could be used to bring about greater economic freedom. In this excerpt, Hayek proposes that liberalism is best when it is flexible enough to accommodate society as it changes. He wrote this book as classical liberalism was evolving into **modern liberalism**.

1 Is Hayek's point of view closer to classical liberalism or modern liberalism? Referring to the excerpt, how would you justify your answer?

Classical Liberalism and Negative Freedoms

The principles of classical liberalism revolve around the belief that individuals should be free to make choices. This freedom is commonly called negative freedom, or "freedom from." The following excerpt written by health professional Patricia Benner about the significance of 9/11 demonstrates what is meant by negative freedoms:

The tragic events of September 11 highlight the ethical import of what are sometimes called "negative freedoms": freedom from tyranny, freedom from fear, freedom from hunger, and freedom from discrimination based upon race, color, or creed. A pluralistic and open society requires agreements about the worth and dignity of citizens in order for those citizens to be free from coercions and constraints that would prevent their ability to live in sufficient safety and freedom to carve out their own lives and the lives of their families and communities.

Patricia Benner, "One Year After September 11:
Revisiting Our Ethical Visions of Freedom and Justice",
***American Journal of Critical Care*, (2002) 11: 572-573.**
http://ajcc.aacnjournals.org/cgi/content/full/11/6/572

However, for classical liberals, negative freedoms generally meant little more than freedom from government intervention. Citizens in many liberal democracies, such as Canada, possess these negative freedoms. In Canada, fundamental freedoms include

- freedom of conscience and religion
- freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other communication media
- freedom of peaceful assembly
- freedom of association

◀ Modern Liberalism   **Classical Liberalism ▶**

Positive Freedoms
example: Freedom of expression

Negative Freedoms
example: Freedom from persecution for following a chosen faith or spirituality

Classical liberalism proposes that each man has equal political power. Liberals believed that greater political stability would result from greater direct involvement in the political process. Political stability, in turn, would lead to a society that allows individuals to use their freedoms as best they can to achieve social and economic prosperity. In your opinion, are the negative freedoms outlined above sufficient to ensure the well-being of all members of society?

Classical Liberalism and Economics

As you discovered in previous chapters, the 19th century was a period of significant economic growth due, in part, to the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This economic development coincided with the formation of classical liberal economic theory. Sometimes called **laissez-faire** economics, this ideology supported free markets and an individual's right to own private property. Classical liberals believe that economic markets with little or no government intervention will result in the greatest benefit to all members of society. To prevent intervention, liberals believed that government should be limited to what it can do best, such as developing laws that protect freedoms and private property. Many classical economic liberals did not completely trust popular democracy, however. They feared that the majority of people might not support ideas such as the right to possess private property.

Classical Liberalism and Equality

For classical liberals, a certain amount of inequality is a natural result of protecting property rights and guaranteeing freedoms. This is acceptable to a classical liberal, because the equality valued by classical

PAUSE AND REFLECT

- **Why would some people be opposed to the concept of private property?**
- **Can you think of ideologies you have already explored from the same period that oppose private property? For what reasons did the supporters of these ideologies take this position?**

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Does the modern liberal interpretation of equality refer to equality of opportunity or equality of outcome?

liberals is an equality of opportunity, rather than an equality of outcome, and each individual should enjoy the freedom to take advantage of those opportunities. The classical liberal state remains impartial, allowing citizens to determine their own ideas of good without interference or coercion. All forms of diversity are accepted, including the diverse outcomes based on the choices people make, as long as those choices do not violate the rights of others.

Challenges and Change—Liberalism Evolves

An important belief of classical liberalism is that people will make the choices that are best for them if they are given freedom. Free of government intervention, the classical liberal promise was that the market would spread wealth among those who made wise choices. But what happens if this promise of prosperity is not fulfilled?

During the Industrial Revolution great wealth was being created as laissez-faire economists promoted a transition from the system of mercantilism, the system in which the state had accumulated the wealth. As a result of this transition, the wealth generated from the Industrial Revolution was mostly concentrated in the hands of a small number of society's elite, instead of the hands of the state. Most people remained poorly fed, poorly housed, and poorly educated, and had a short life expectancy. Although laissez-faire economists believed that these problems would correct themselves without government intervention, progressive reformers felt that the suffering should be addressed sooner rather than later. They began advocating change through government intervention.

Enfranchisement Brings Transformation

Beginning in the late 19th century, most Western democracies extended the right to vote to an ever wider group of citizens. As more citizens from the working classes obtained the right to vote, politicians who wanted to be elected had to promise to introduce policies that would meet their needs, such as establishing labour laws, initiating workplace safety standards, and allowing labour unions.

Events of the 20th century contributed to a further evolution of liberal ideology. If the evolving sense of liberalism sought to promote equality, consider how the following events of the 20th century might encourage progressives to urge for greater government intervention:

Figure 8-5 ▼

The late 19th century saw the advent of labour laws protecting the rights of workers. In what way does this represent a shift in thinking from classical liberalism? How would the **enfranchisement** of lower-income workers influence the range of political ideologies embraced by elected governments?

- the First and Second World Wars
- the Great Depression
- the exclusion of minorities from voting and positions of power
- the change from a rural, agrarian society to an urban, manufacturing society

Modern Liberalism and Positive Freedoms

In Figure 8-4, the continuum illustrating the relationship between classical and modern liberalism and freedoms, one extreme is called *positive freedoms*. Unlike negative freedoms, which are "freedoms from…", positive freedoms can be thought of as "freedoms to…" Progressives (those who supported a shift to modern liberal ideas) believed that certain conditions prevented all members of society from achieving equality. For these people, government intervention was essential to ensure equality of outcome for all people, rather than simply equality of opportunity. One example of this is that taxes were established to provide social programs, such as welfare, for those who were in need of them. Progressives argued that any limits placed on the freedoms of an individual, such as imposing taxes, were justified if they benefited all of society.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains many examples of positive freedoms. Consider what limitations to liberty the following rights may impose on some people:

> *Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.*
>
> **—Article 25.1 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**
> **© United Nations, 1948. Reproduced with permission.**
> http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

Modern liberals argue that the ability to exercise one's right to freedom depends on the existence of certain conditions. You cannot be free, they claim, if your basic needs are not met, if you are oppressed by unfair labour practices, or if you are subject to discrimination. To ensure freedom, modern liberalism urges government economic and social intervention. At the same time, believing that increased government intervention could result in tyranny, modern liberalism calls for broader social protection and guarantees of civil liberties and equal rights, combined with a more open and transparent government. Civil liberties are the means by which modern liberals seek to maintain dignity and fair treatment for all. Modern liberals seek to ensure greater equality of opportunity through positive rights, such as the right to education, health care, or legal aid.

Figure 8-6

Human Rights Day, December 10, 2007, marked the start of a year-long commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This photo shows a march in Manila, Philippines on that day. The marchers were protesting alleged human rights violations by the government of Philippine president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Explore the Issues

Concept Review

1. a) Identify three major differences between classical and modern liberalism.
   b) Identify three examples of positive rights and three examples of negative rights.

Concept Application

2. *Compare and Contrast*. The Chapter Issue asks you to consider the extent to which liberalism is continuing to evolve. To help you understand this evolution, work with a partner to compare and contrast how a classical liberal and a modern liberal might respond to the following scenarios:
   a) A family loses its home in a hurricane.
   b) A young person from a low-income household cannot afford to go to university.
   c) A corporation's "glass ceiling" prevents women and visible minorities from reaching the highest levels of management.

3. Do your comparisons of a classical liberal's response and modern liberal's response in Question 2 indicate how far liberalism has moved from its roots? Explain your answer.

4. *Explore Influences*. To what degree is diversity prevalent in liberal democracies today? Does the modern notion of equality refer to equality of opportunity, equality of outcome, or a combination of the two?

5. *Analyze*. The late 19th century saw the advent of labour laws protecting the rights of workers. In what way does this represent a shift in thinking from classical liberalism? How would the enfranchisement of lower-income workers affect the range of political ideologies embraced by elected governments?

Liberalism Evolves

In the previous section you looked at the origins of liberal principles in classical liberalism, and how these ideas evolved into the ideas of modern liberalism. You have seen how rights and freedoms encompassed by classical liberalism—negative freedoms, or the right to be free from intervention—have been enlarged to include positive rights and freedoms—or the freedom to have the ability and opportunity to seek education, health care, and decent housing, among other things. Some of the ideas now embraced by modern liberalism originated in competing ideologies such as socialism and feminism.

While investigating how modern liberalism is challenged by alternative thought, you will explore the impact that environmentalism, neo-conservatism, religious perspectives, and Aboriginal perspectives have on modern liberalism. These currents of thought have both contributed to the evolution of modern liberalism and challenged the dominant influence of liberal thought on Western society.

In Chapter 2 you looked at how ideologies differed. The main differences were

- interpretations of history
- beliefs about human nature
- beliefs about the structure of society
- visions for the future

Keep these themes in mind as you investigate the following alternative currents of thought and consider how they may have challenged or contributed to the evolution of modern liberal thought.

Environmentalism

Environmentalism has roots at least as far back as the 1800s, but as a political and cultural ideology it gained widespread support primarily in the 1960s. Biologist Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962) explained how pesticides enter the food chain and can negatively affect animals and human beings. Carson's book is seen as the initial impetus toward a greater understanding of the impact human activities have on the ecosystem.

Figure 8-7

The man on the right carrying the detonator is Nobel Peace Prize winner Al Gore. Gore is an advocate of environmental responsibility and a critic of policies that encourage irresponsible economic growth. The detonator represents the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to prevent global warming. What does this cartoon say about the relationship between Gore's environmentalism and economic liberalism? What perspectives regarding environmental protection and economic liberalism does this cartoon present?

During the 1970s, organizations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth arose and began pressuring governments to enact laws to protect the environment. Greenpeace has a long list of legal victories: from the 1970s, when France and the United States banned certain types of nuclear weapon tests, through the 1980s and 1990s when the United Nations banned driftnet fishing and countries banned the practice of dumping toxic waste in the oceans. More recently, several major computer manufacturers have agreed to stop using certain toxic chemicals in their products.

The influence of environmentalism has led some political bodies to enshrine the right to a healthy environment alongside the principles of modern liberalism. For example, Article 12 of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health." For individuals to enjoy this right, the Covenant deems necessary, among other steps, improving "all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene." Section 46.1 of the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms recognizes that everyone "has a right to live in a healthful environment in which biodiversity is preserved, to the extent and according to the standards provided by law."

Today, environmentalists often speak about the negative impact of many human economic activities. However, free-market economists and skeptics of global warming claim that environmental reform of the economy will do more harm than good. Discussing a recent book that is skeptical of the environmental agenda, Terence Corcoran, editor of Canada's *Financial Post*, describes these concerns:

…'The state of humanity has never been better,' says Mr. Goklany [Indur M. Goklany, author of The Improving State of the World: Why We're Living Longer, Healthier, More Comfortable Lives on a Cleaner Planet] *in his book, published by the Cato Institute, backing his claims with detailed findings that show rapid advancement in hundreds of indicators for people all over the world. The conditions that created the great improvements—in health, environment, living standards, mortality, disease control, smog reduction, and human happiness—are the very same conditions the* Financial Post *has typically advocated over a century: growth, technological change, free trade in products and ideas, market forces and personal freedom.*

…The carbon and chemical economies that green salvationists want to curtail, even eliminate, are in fact the very basis for the world's current and improving conditions. The message in Mr. Goklany's book is that government policy must, above all, preserve the general conditions that have brought us to this state of achievement, not destroy them.

—Terence Corcoran, "Good sense to prevail over enviro-alarmism," *Financial Post* **March 1, 2007.**
Material reprinted with the express permission of: "The National Post Company", a Canwest Partnership. http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/financialpost/story.html?id=36e9cc22-feea-49ee-a36f-0e4d2b890147

Figure 8-8 ▲

In 1985, Greenpeace's flagship, the *Rainbow Warrior*, was sunk by the French Secret Service en route to France's Moruroa nuclear test site, bringing global attention to the political implications of environmentalism. What impact did the actions of Greenpeace and similar organizations have on the nuclear weapons policies of liberal democracies?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Imagine that an individual living near a manufacturing plant felt that the waste produced by the plant was adversely affecting his or her environment. How might an individual's right to a clean environment conflict with the economic rights of the plant's owner, or the rights of the plant's employees?

On the other side of the debate are organizations such as the Worldwatch Institute. In its annual report for 2004 entitled "Richer, Fatter, and Not Much Happier," the Worldwatch Institute defies the idea that economic and technological advancement necessarily mean a better quality of life:

> *Higher levels of obesity and personal debt, chronic time shortages, and a degraded environment are all signs that excessive consumption is diminishing the quality of life for many people. The challenge now is to mobilize governments, businesses, and citizens to shift their focus away from the unrestrained accumulation of goods and toward finding ways to ensure a better life for all.*

> **—Source: Worldwatch Institute, "Richer, Fatter, and Not Much Happier," January 8, 2004.**
> http://www.worldwatch.org/node/1785

The Worldwatch Institute advocates measures such as increasing taxes on manufacturers, minimizing the impact of production on natural resources through government regulation, requiring manufacturers to take back their products from consumers when they are no longer useful, and encouraging individuals to consume less.

Canada and Carbon Tax

Due to such factors as recent scientific findings regarding global warming, extreme weather events, increasing global temperatures, and the influence of mainstream media such as Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*, the environment has become an important part of most political parties' platforms in countries around the world. In Canada, environmental issues such as carbon emissions reduction have become key political points, not only for the environmentalist Green Party of Canada, but for parties such as the NDP, Liberals, and Conservatives as well. How these parties address Canadians' growing concerns about the environment, while considering the possible impacts of environmental policies on the Canadian economy and its citizens' pocketbooks, has become a key issue for many Canadians.

Prior to the federal election of 2008, the Conservative Party proposed emissions reduction targets for industry and caps on the emissions of specific pollutants. The NDP's environmental platform was based on a "cap and trade" system, where overall pollution would be limited (or "capped") by the government, and companies that reduced their emissions below the set target would receive credits that they could sell to companies that did not meet their targets. The Liberals proposed a cap and trade system combined with a carbon tax on each tonne of carbon emissions (the tax would be offset by income tax reductions). The Green Party of Canada also proposed a

combination of a carbon tax and a cap and trade system. In September 2008, the Sierra Club of Canada, a volunteer environmental organization, graded Canada's political parties on their respective environmental platforms as follows: Green Party, A-; Liberal Party, B+; NDP, B; and Conservative Party, F+. (Source: Sierra Club Canada *Voter's Guide to the Climate Crisis Election*, http://www.sierraclub.ca/national/vote-canada/2008/voters-guide-climate-crisis-election.pdf.)

On July 1, 2008, British Columbia began to phase in a provincial carbon tax, the first of its kind in North America. The tax is designed to discourage the use of fossil fuels and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions. According to an opinion poll in May 2008, 72 per cent of Canadians surveyed felt BC's carbon tax was a positive step. (Source: Mike De Souza, "Carbon tax gaining support across Canada: poll." Canada.com, http://www.canada.com/topics/news/story.html?id=c28d5cd4-5404-4ade-a748-0352268d392c, May 25, 2008.) Political debate and legislation related to the carbon tax issue and its prominence in party platforms reveal that politicians are listening to the environmental concerns of Canadians, despite the potential financial implications for consumers and the effects on businesses.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

To what extent should the Canadian government implement policies based on citizens' concerns about the environment?

Voices

Balancing Environmentalism and Economics

In this excerpt, Y. C. Deveshwar, Chairman of the India-based Confederation of Indian Industry-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development, talks about the "welcome development" of India's economic growth balanced with preservation of the environment. The Centre describes itself as "an institution that creates a conducive, enabling climate for Indian businesses to pursue sustainability goals."

India's new trajectory of high economic growth is a welcome development, providing the wherewithal to secure progressively higher standards of living. For such rapid economic growth to be sustainable it is imperative to include those living at the margin as meaningful participants in the economic process and preserve the capacity of the natural ecosystem to support growth aspirations. I believe that Indian Business needs to enlarge its contribution beyond its primary role of enhancing economic capital, towards also enhancing social capital and natural capital.

—Y.C. Deveshwar, Chairman, CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development.
http://www.sustainabledevelopment.in/about_csed/chairman_desk.htm

1. Does Deveshwar's point of view reflect classical liberal or modern liberal ideology? Explain.

2. What might be the consequences of adopting Deveshwar's point of view? What might be the consequences of rejecting his point of view?

3. Should governments limit our individual freedom as consumers in society?

Neo-Conservatism

Like other ideologies, any definition of **neo-conservatism** is subject to the interpretation of its supporters. Irving Kristol, a prominent neo-conservative, has noted, "When two neo-conservatives meet they are more likely to argue with one another than to confer or conspire." (Source: Irving Kristol, quoted in Jonah Goldberg, "The Neoconservative Invention." *National Review Online*, May 20, 2003. http://www.nationalreview.com/goldberg/goldberg052003.asp) In fact, many neo-conservatives are former liberals who believe that their liberal policies failed. Some aspects of neo-conservatism challenge modern liberal principles and favour a return to particular values of classical liberalism. Other neo-conservative ideas challenge both classical and modern liberal principles.

Neo-conservatism emerged in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s as a reaction against modern liberal principles that were "taken too far." For example, during this period **civil rights movements** led to affirmative action, a policy in which minorities and women are given greater educational and employment opportunities to address past or current discrimination. This type of policy went against many Americans' ideals of equality and their strong belief in **individualism**. As well, the period of détente between the Soviet and American governments during the 1960s and 1970s, during which the two countries attempted to resolve their differences through diplomacy, was seen by some as a period of weak foreign policy. Neo-conservatives rallied against diplomacy with the Soviet Union in favour of actively promoting capitalism and democracy abroad and fighting against the spread of communism.

Neo-conservatism grew in popularity during the 1980s and was reflected in the economic, social, and foreign policies of American president Ronald Reagan and British prime minister Margaret Thatcher. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union heated up during this time due to the massive funding of American military efforts against communism around the world. When the Soviet Union began to collapse in the late 1980s, many neo-conservatives felt that they had finally won the Cold War. During the 1990s, support for neo-conservatism dropped off and American presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton drastically reduced military expenditures.

In 1997, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) was established by neo-conservatives to advocate increasing defence spending, promoting democracy and capitalism abroad, strengthening America's ties to democratic allies, and challenging other governments that are "hostile to [American] interests and values." (Source: Project for the New American Century, "Statement of Principles." http://web.archive.org/web/200708 10113753/www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm.)

The principles of the neo-conservative movement are outlined at the Project for the New American Century website. See the Statement of Principles.) Many members of the PNAC became members of President George W. Bush's administration, and after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, a neo-conservative policy of promoting democracy abroad was adopted once again by the White House.

Neo-Conservative Economic Policy

Neo-conservatives generally believe that economic growth can be stimulated by cutting taxes and that government involvement in economic markets should be limited. Supporters of this policy believe that lower taxes in a free-market economy create conditions that provide everyone with the opportunity to prosper. This belief resembles classical liberal economic policy, since it encourages decreased government intervention and focuses on individualism.

Evidence of neo-conservative economic influence can be seen in international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These organizations promote free trade and reducing the tariffs, concessions, and regulations by which government involves itself in commerce. Some modern liberals are concerned about neo-conservative efforts to reduce government involvement in the economy, as they believe that governments have a responsibility to regulate trade and industry for the common good and the good of the environment.

As you read in Chapter 6, Milton Friedman, one of the most influential economists in American history, promoted classical liberal policies such as minimizing government involvement in the economy and reducing government regulation of all kinds. Friedman opposed government programs such as public education, public health, and public housing. His views on taxation, privatization, and deregulation were embraced by many neo-conservatives, in particular by President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher.

Neo-Conservatism and the Role of Government

Neo-conservatives are not comfortable with the large amount of services provided by modern government and prefer alternative ways of delivering these services. This challenges aspects of modern liberalism and, to a small extent, classical liberalism. Generally speaking, modern liberals believe the government should provide most essential services, such as education and health care. While classical liberals aim to minimize government intervention, they do believe government should be responsible for such things as education.

One example of neo-conservative influence is the establishment of private schools, which are free from many of the rules, regulations, and
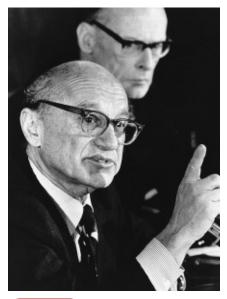
Figure 8-9 ▲

Milton Friedman cited Hong Kong prior to its takeover by communist China as an example of an ideal economy: "At the end of the Second World War, Hong Kong was a dirt-poor island with a per-capita income about one-quarter that of Britain's. By 1997, when sovereignty was transferred to China, its per-capita income was roughly equal to that of the departing colonial power, even though Britain had experienced sizable growth over the same period. That was a striking demonstration of the productivity of freedom, of what people can do when they are left free to pursue their own interests." (Source: Milton Friedman, "Hong Kong Wrong." *The Wall Street Journal* October 6, 2006. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB116009 800068684505.html)

Figure 8-10 ▲

British prime minister Magaret Thatcher and American president Ronald Reagan. Thatcher's conservative administration reduced the role of the British government in providing public housing for low-income families. The Housing Act of 1980 introduced a right-to-buy program, in which people who rented government housing were given the opportunity to buy their homes at a price lower than its market value. The proceeds of the sales could not be used by local governments to build more public housing.

government controls that apply to public schools. In the United States, 23 per cent of schools are private, compared to 4 per cent in Alberta and 10 per cent in Québec. Naomi Klein, in *The Shock Doctrine* (2005), criticizes American economist Milton Friedman and his efforts to privatize public education and accuses Friedman and his followers of taking advantage of natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to fast-track neo-conservative policies. Klein states, "For more than three decades, Friedman and his powerful followers had been perfecting this very strategy: waiting for a major crisis, then selling off pieces of the state to private players while citizens were still reeling from the shock." (Excerpted from *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* by Naomi Klein, p. 7. Copyright © 2007 Naomi Klein. Reprinted by permission of Knopf Canada.)

During her time in office, Thatcher formed many government policies based on neo-conservative views. For example, during the 1980s she supported the privatization of state-owned industries; decreased taxes; reduced government programs related to health, employment, education, and social security; and promoted a free-market economy. Ideologically, Thatcher favoured individualism over **collectivism**.

Neo-Conservatism and Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is an area of common ground for most neo-conservatives and includes such ideas as the following:

- Patriotism is good and should be encouraged.
- World government is not a good idea, as it would lead to tyranny.
- A large country has interests that extend beyond its own borders, and thus it needs a strong military.
- Democratic capitalism is a preferable system to others and should be promoted internationally.

Neo-conservative ideology had a strong influence over the foreign policies of the United States and Britain during the 1980s, which fueled the Cold War. After a lull during the 1990s, neo-conservatism once again became a strong influence on American foreign policy in the early 2000s. It was one aspect of the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

Neo-Conservatism and Morality

Neo-conservatives generally have traditional views about social issues. They are concerned about what they view as the demise of the traditional moral culture and tend to be suspicious of counter-culture movements. Influenced by the Christian Right, many neo-conservatives seek to curtail abortion rights, allow prayer in schools, and urge teaching about creationism in science classes. This is a challenge to both classical and modern liberal principles, as both tend to favour

State of the Union Address, 2002

After the terrorist attacks on 9/11, President George W. Bush addressed the nation and the world in a State of the Union speech that illustrated a renewed neo-conservative influence on American foreign policy. The following are excerpts from this speech.

The men and women of our Armed Forces have delivered a message now clear to every enemy of the United States: Even 7000 miles [11 300 kilometres] away, across oceans and continents, on mountaintops and in caves—you will not escape the justice of this nation…

States like these [Iraq], and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic…

My budget includes the largest increase in defense spending in two decades—because while the price of freedom and security is high, it is never too high. Whatever it costs to defend our country, we will pay.

—George W. Bush, State of the Union Address, January 29, 2002.
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html

1 What ideas from this speech reflect neo-conservative ideas related to foreign policy?

2 How do these ideas relate to classical and modern liberalism?

keeping religion a private, personal matter. More about the political influence of the Christian Right is covered in the next section.

Religious Perspectives

Religious freedom and freedom of expression are principles supported by most liberal democracies. Consequently, not only are people free to embrace religious values that may conflict with the principles of liberalism, but they are free to express their critique of liberal principles. As you investigate the challenges and opportunities that some people's religious convictions present for liberalism, keep in mind that a wide range of **religious perspectives** exist. Just as the beliefs of different religions vary widely, the specific challenges each religion may present to aspects of liberalism also vary.

Figure 8-11 ▲

Jeane Kirkpatrick, neo-conservative foreign policy advisor to President Reagan and the first female US ambassador to the United Nations (1981–1985), was actually a Democrat when she joined the Reagan administration (the Democratic Party is usually the preferred party of modern liberals). She shared with Reagan and other Republicans, however, at least one key belief: that the United States should have an active role in fighting communism and promoting democracy around the world. She switched to the Republican Party in 1985.

- **Can you imagine a situation in which the practices of communitarian groups such as the Doukhobors might conflict with the rights of an individual in one of these communities?**

- **Can you imagine a situation in which these practices might conflict with the values of the larger community?**

Placing the Community Above the Individual

The Doukhobors were a group of immigrants who came to Canada from Russia in the late 19th century to escape persecution. Their beliefs included a form of communitarianism, meaning that they owned and worked land as a community, rather than as individuals owning private property. In addition, the Doukhobors did not recognize the authority of secular (non-religious) government, and so would not swear an oath of allegiance to the Canadian government. Because of these beliefs, the homestead land grants they had initially been given by the government were eventually taken away.

As you read in Part 1, Hutterite communities in Canada also practise community ownership of land and discourage individual ownership of goods. The members of the community, or colony, earn money as a collective, rather than as individuals. The emphasis such religious communities place on the community differs from the classical liberal concept of the individual as the basis of law and society.

Government Limitations on Religious Practices

Frank McKenna, former premier of New Brunswick and former Canadian ambassador to the United States, has stated, "Canada is truly a secular state. Religion and politics do not mix in this country." (Source: Frank McKenna, quoted in Juliet O'Neill, "US a theocratic state, says former Canadian ambassador." *CanWest News Service* June 1, 2007.)

Freedom of religion has long been a central value of liberalism; however, governments will sometimes place limits on religious practices to prevent them from conflicting with the rights of the individual members of a religious community.

For example, protests erupted in Toronto in September 2005 when it was announced that the government of Ontario was considering a proposal to allow Ontario residents to use sharia, or Islamic law, to settle family disputes. Sharia is the Islamic legal framework based on Quran, Sunna (example of the Prophet Muhammad), ijma' (scholarly consensus), and quiyas (reasoning by analogy), starting in the late 8th century. Today, legal codes based on sharia are enforced in some Muslim-majority countries, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, while other countries use sharia primarily to formulate personal status laws for cases involving family matters for Muslims, such as marriage, divorce, or inheritance. Some Muslims living outside of these countries also wish to use sharia law to settle these sorts of family matters. Critics argue that sharia law is incompatible with the Canadian legal system because, they claim, in situations involving family law, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, it does not give equal rights to men and women. At the same time, two important principles of liberal democracy are freedom of religion and equality, and at the time of the protests, Ontario allowed faith-based arbitration for members of other religious communities.

Ontario has allowed Catholic and Jewish faith-based tribunals to settle family law matters on a voluntary basis since 1991, but the practice got little attention until Muslim leaders demanded the same rights.

—Source: "Ontario Premier Rejects Use of Shariah Law."
CBC News, September 11, 2005.
http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2005/09/09/
sharia-protests-20050909.html?ref=rss

The proposal was later rejected by Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty, who also stated that Ontario would move to ban all religious arbitration, including existing Catholic and Jewish tribunals.

There will be no religious arbitration in Ontario. There will be one law for all Ontarians.

—Dalton McGuinty, quoted in "McGuinty rules out use of
sharia law in Ontario." CTV.ca, September 12, 2005.
http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/
1126472943217_26/?hub=TopStories

Although banning Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim faith-based tribunals may prevent some people from adhering to their interpretations of religious traditions in situations such as marriage or divorce, it also ensures that everyone is equal before the law.

Of course, such challenges to modern liberal principles are often limited to specific sects or groups within a particular religion, since religions often include a wide variety of interpretations and practices, as the following quote about Islam by Kristin Norget, an associate professor at McGill University, points out.

The appearance of homogeneity and conformity in Islam is deceptive. Muslims continue to debate the implications of the Koran's teachings for everyday life, and the relation between religious and governmental authority. Taboos and dietary rules are strictly observed in some places and not in others. Women and men have a more equal relationship in some forms of Islam (such as in Sumatra and Indonesia), than is the case in extremist forms of Islam (as in Talibanist Afghanistan)…

Despite Islam's underlying unity, interpretations of the Koran and the particularities of Islamic practices are as wide-ranging across the world as are its followers.

—Kristin Norget, "How Islam Evolved."
CBC News, January 20, 2004. © CBC 2004
http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/islam/evolved.html

How might religious perspectives on health, marriage, divorce, children, or life itself challenge specific liberal principles? How might those conflicts be reconciled? To what extent can modern liberalism accommodate the beliefs of people who live in a liberal society but do not share modern liberal principles?
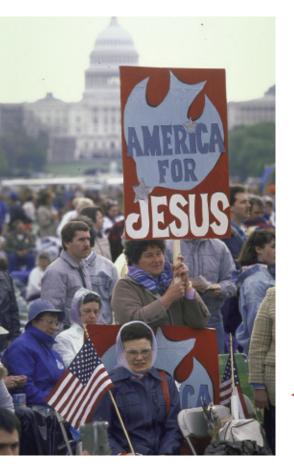
> **PAUSE AND REFLECT**
>
> **To what extent should a government impose liberal principles on religious minority groups?**

Political Influence of the Christian Right

Christian Right is a term used to describe a coalition of conservative groups in the United States (and other liberal democracies) that focuses on applying specific Christian beliefs to public policy. The Christian Right could be seen to represent a challenge to modern liberalism, as illustrated in figure 8-12. Members of the Christian Right tend to feel that modern liberal society is straying from religious values and principles that they believe society should follow.

Figure 8-12 ▶

Many members of the Christian Right movement are politically active and lobby the US Congress to support their values and beliefs. They also support candidates they consider sympathetic to their cause. For example, President George W. Bush received a great deal of voter support from members of the Christian Right during the 2000 and 2004 elections.
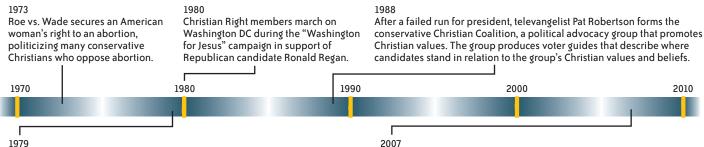
Christian Right members generally:	Modern liberals generally:
• support the rights of the unborn	• support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion as protected by existing abortion laws
• believe families with heterosexual, married parents create the best environment for children	• favour equal rights for people of all sexual orientations, including their right to marry, and believe that all people equally have the right to parenthood
• support legislation against the use of overt sexual or violent content in television, movies, the Internet, and music	• support the freedom to create and distribute any material that does not infringe on the rights of others and the right for adults to choose the content to which they are exposed
• believe that religion has a place in publicly funded institutions, for example, that prayer should be allowed in public schools	• support secular (non-faith-based) policies and practices in publicly funded institutions
• focus on the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own actions and fulfill their responsibilities as community members	• focus on the need for unequal opportunities in society to be balanced through government intervention, such as affirmative action programs

Source: Grant Wacker, "The Christian Right," Duke University Divinity School, National Humanities Center.
http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/chr_rght.htm

◀ **Figure 8-13**

Crowd attending the Washington for Jesus Rally on the Mall in 1988. US president Reagan's administration of that time was strongly supported by some members of the Christian Right.

1973
Roe vs. Wade secures an American woman's right to an abortion, politicizing many conservative Christians who oppose abortion.

1980
Christian Right members march on Washington DC during the "Washington for Jesus" campaign in support of Republican candidate Ronald Regan.

1988
After a failed run for president, televangelist Pat Robertson forms the conservative Christian Coalition, a political advocacy group that promotes Christian values. The group produces voter guides that describe where candidates stand in relation to the group's Christian values and beliefs.

1970   1980   1990   2000   2010

1979
Televangelist Jerry Falwell founds the Moral Majority, a Christian Right organization that becomes one of the largest conservative lobby groups in the United States. The Moral Majority campaigns against limiting military arms, state acceptance of homosexuality, abortion, and media that they believe to be "anti-family."

2007
The Family Research Council, a Christian Right lobbying organization, meets in Washington, DC, during the Values Voters Summit. The goal of the summit is to decide on the best presidential nominee for Christian conservatives; all of the top candidates selected are conservative Republicans.

Figure 8-14 ▲

How might the events on this timeline represent a challenge by some members of the Christian Right to modern liberal ideas in the United States?

Voices

Religious Traditions and Modern Liberalism

What is the role of religious faith in a society based on modern liberal principles? Critics view some religious principles as incompatible with modern liberal society and express concern about their influence on political and social institutions. Others view religious faith as an important source of community and identity in modern societies, which may lack an explicit set of core principles. Consider the variety of perspectives provided by the following voices.

People are involved with church life in order to escape also from "liberal individualism." Over against mere secularity or privatistic do-it-yourself, pick-and-choose religion, millions are serious about being gathered together. Churches can provide community in a way liberal culture never can.

—Martin E. Marty (religious academic), "Filling in the Gaps of Liberal Culture," book review.
http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=907

Liberal democracy reached an understanding with religion a long time ago: your right, as a citizen, to observe your faith without persecution will be explicitly protected by the state.

In return, you will agree to make your peace with the civil law and respect the rights of others to pursue their beliefs. That's the deal.

—Janet Daley, "Pope's historic visit represents major challenge to all sides", *Daily Telegraph*, London, November 28, 2006.
http://www.independent.ie/opinion/analysis/popes-historic-visit-represents-major-challenge-to-all-sides-70723.html

Secularization is already a reality in the Muslim world. No Muslim society today is governed solely with reference to religious law; religious traditions no longer possess absolute or near-absolute predominance (except perhaps in some remote rural areas); and newly emerging leadership classes are almost everywhere displacing or marginalizing the clerisy of theologico-legal experts who used to control meaning and organization in these societies.

—Abdou Filali-Ansary, "Islam and Liberal Democracy: The Challenge of Secularization." *Journal of Democracy* 7, 2 (1996): pp. 76–80.

1 What issues and questions do these quotations raise for you?

2 To what extent can modern liberalism accommodate institutions and religions that run counter to liberal thought?

Religious Freedom and the Law

Something to Think About: Individual freedom of choice and freedom of religion are central beliefs in modern liberalism. What happens when a group of people within a liberal society uses its freedom to structure a community that embraces illegal behaviour? What role should government play when it is proposed that a religious practice infringes on an individual's rights?

An Example: There is a wide range of religious beliefs in Canada. Even within the same religion, sects have vastly different beliefs. In Bountiful, a town in southern British Columbia, this difference has created a dilemma that governments have not resolved after more than 50 years. An unrecognized, breakaway sect of the Mormon Church, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, allows the practice of polygamy, the perceived right of a man to have more than one wife at the same time.

Canada's liberal ideology is confronted with a dilemma. As a liberal society, common beliefs include freedom of religion, freedom of choice, and following the rule of law. Canada has a law against polygamy, but it is rarely enforced. As sects of various religions continue to practise polygamy, Canada must decide if it will grant the freedom to practise polygamy, considering the possible effects of this decision both nationally and internationally.

The following are perspectives on polygamy and the law.

I wish to state categorically that this Church has nothing whatever to do with those practicing polygamy. They are not members of this Church. Most of them have never been members. They are in violation of the civil law. They know they are in violation of the law. They are subject to its penalties. The Church, of course, has no jurisdiction whatever in this matter.

— **Gordon B. Hinckley (president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [the church of Mormon]), 1998, quoted in "Polygamy: Questions and Answers With the *Los Angeles Times*." Newsroom, May 31 2006.**
http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/polygamy-questions-and-answers-with-the-los-angeles-times

A report posted on the Status of Women Canada page on the government of Canada website states:

At the international level, there is a clear movement toward the legal abolition of polygamy to promote the interests of women and children. Canada is widely known for its leadership in promoting the rights of women and the recognition of human rights. Canada should be very reluctant to alter this reputation by decriminalizing polygamy.

—"An International Review of Polygamy: Legal and Policy Implications for Canada." Status of Women Canada, December 19, 2005.
http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662420683/ 200511_0662420683-2_9_e.html#1

An article published in the *Vancouver Sun* in January 2006 says the following:

A new study commissioned by the federal government recommends Canada legalize polygamy and change legislation to help women and children living in plural relationships.

The paper by three law professors at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., argues a Charter challenge to Section 293 of the Criminal Code banning polygamy might be successful, said Beverley Baines, one of the authors of the report.

"The polygamy prohibition might be held as unconstitutional," she said in an interview Thursday night. "The most likely Charter (of Rights and Freedoms) challenge would be brought by people claiming their freedom of their religion might be infringed. Those living in Bountiful (BC) would say polygamy is a religious tenet…"

Chief author Martha Bailey told The Canadian Press that criminalizing polygamy serves no good purpose. "Why criminalize the behaviour?" she said. "We don't criminalize adultery. In light of the fact that we have a fairly permissive society, why are we singling out that particular form of behaviour for criminalization?"

Baines said polygamy is rarely prosecuted. "No one is actually being prosecuted but the provision is still being used in the context of immigration and refugee stuff. People are not being admitted to the country." She said removing it from the Criminal Code will not force marriage laws to recognize it, but would only remove criminal sanctions.

—Melissa Leong, "Legal experts recommend Canada legalize polygamy." *Vancouver Sun,* January 13, 2006.
Material reprinted with the express permission of: "The National Post Company", a Canwest Partnership.
http://www.canada.com/vancouversun/news/ story.html?id=e20244cb-63b2-47f9-893e-390453fa5067&k=24668

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What principles of modern liberalism are challenged in this example?

2. What may be the consequences of granting the legal right to practise polygamy to a group based on its members' rights to religious freedom? Whose rights might be compromised if this freedom is granted?

3. Based on this example and others in this section, in what ways can granting religious freedom challenge modern liberal beliefs and values?

Aboriginal Collective Thought

In Canada, some aspects of Aboriginal ways of thinking present an interesting challenge to liberalism, a challenge that has an impact beyond the realities of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Several key Aboriginal principles challenge modern liberal ideology.

One of these principles is the importance of the collective. Whereas liberalism is founded on the idea that the individual is the basis of law and society, in many Aboriginal societies greater importance is placed on the collective rather than the individual. Thus, while not all Aboriginal communities are necessarily collectivist, the collective may have a greater influence on the choices individuals make with respect to, for example, natural resource development or economic development.

In addition, the many traditions of Aboriginal peoples seem to provide a different interpretation of progress than that of liberalism. Aboriginal peoples emphasize a connection to the past. Tradition and continuity are important, which is evident from the position of importance that elders have in Aboriginal societies; they are valued for their wisdom, knowledge, and experience. In many Aboriginal societies, group needs are more important than individual needs, and egalitarianism is also emphasized. **Egalitarianism** is a political principle that holds that all people should be treated as equals and allowed equal civil, social, political, and economic rights under the law.

Nunavut: An Example of Inuit Involvement in Government

Figure 8-15 ▲

Nunavut's Legislative Assembly

In some cases, the values and beliefs of Canada's Aboriginal peoples have had a profound influence on how Canadians are governed.

For example, in Nunavut, voters elect 19 representatives to their Legislative Assembly and none of the candidates belongs to a political party. Once elected, the representatives meet to choose a premier. The assembly blends parliamentary democracy with "the Aboriginal values of maximum cooperation, effective use of leadership resources and common accountability." (Source: "Consensus Government." Government of

> ### PAUSE AND REFLECT
>
> How would placing group needs before individual needs present a challenge to modern liberal thinking?

Nunavut, http://www.gov.nu.ca/wpc/nunavut.html.) Representatives make decisions using a model of consensus where elders have a crucial advisory role. The government uses traditional Inuit principles to guide its government, laws, and policies. The Nunavut government is guided by Inuit societal values that were outlined in *Pinasuaqtavut: 2004–2009*—a statement of values and priorities that includes four major goals to guide the actions of government: the need for healthy communities; simplicity and unity; self-reliance; and continuing learning. While the need for self-reliance suggests a focus on the individual, from Inuit perspectives it can also be seen as a responsibility to family and community. The Nunavut government also specifies that the number of Inuit employed in the public service be directly proportional to the number of Inuit in Nunavut society; thus, ensuring that the Inuit people are directly involved in the provision of government services. Unlike other provincial and territorial governments in Canada, the Nunavut government works alongside federal government officials in areas such as community planning and development and the environment.

Aboriginal Justice

Another example of a challenge that Aboriginal ideology could present to the principles of liberalism is in the area justice, through the use of sentencing circles in conjunction with western legal structures. Sentencing circles are used to determine the sentence for an offender who has been found guilty of a crime by the justice system. The circle includes the judge from the criminal trial, the offender, the victim, and members of the community, including elders. The group arrives at a sentence by consensus.

Sentencing circles were introduced in part because of a perceived bias in the Canadian justice system against Aboriginal people.

Sentencing circles are being adapted for some non-Aboriginal contexts, such as youth courts; however, most people who pass through the Canadian justice system do not meet the criteria for accessing a sentencing circle or a Peacemaker Circle. While an important value of liberalism is the equality of all individuals before the law, Canada also recognizes the traditional collective values and rights of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and that justice is intended to be restorative and healing rather than punitive and retributive. This is also an important basis for other restorative justice programs in Canada, many of which can be accessed by all peoples who meet the criteria for these programs.

File Facts)))))

Under restorative justice, wrongdoers are required to
- recognize the harm they have caused
- take responsibility for their actions
- actively get involved in improving the situation.
- address the damage done to the victims, themselves, and the community

There are several types of restorative justice programs in Canada, including
- victim-offender mediation
- family group conferencing
- sentencing circles
- consensus-based decision-making on the sentence
- victim-offender reconciliation panels

One example of a sentencing circle is the Tsuu T'ina First Nation's Peacemaker Court. Here, elders determined the kinds of cases that should be handled in the court; any case except homicide or sexual assault can be handled here. The court's judge, crown prosecutor, court clerks, and probation officer are all Aboriginal. A peacemaker representing the community is assigned to each case. Four rounds of discussion examine the nature of the wrong committed and its impact, and try to reach agreement on the case. The agreement reached by this court then goes to the Crown prosecutor, who may accept the agreement or simply use it as one consideration before passing judgment on the accused.

Voices

Returning Government Powers to First Nations Peoples

In July 2008, several chiefs representing Treaty Six territory began the process of creating a health care system for First Nations peoples outside of the federal government's domain. The following excerpt from an article in Saskatoon's *The StarPhoenix* describes some of the understandings behind this move.

THUNDERCHILD FIRST NATION—Calling it a solution to government oppression, several chiefs representing Treaty Six territory took the first steps Thursday afternoon toward creating a health system autonomous from the federal government.

Their vision includes Indian-run hospitals where patients can receive either contemporary or traditional healing methods, the latter relying on holistic and natural medicine from plants and roots, explained Eldon Okanee, a spokesperson for Thunderchild First Nation…

"It's time Indians took control of Indian health much like we did when we took control of Indian education," Okanee said. "Today our education institutions produce hundreds of qualified graduates. We have the same vision for universal health care."

When the Indian Act was created in 1876, First Nations people were prohibited from practising traditional medicine. Their traditional education, culture and languages were also banned as the government tried to assimilate them.

"We're starting to get those things back but we still have to fight," said Okanee, who believes the health-care system could be created by simply redirecting current funding from Ottawa.

—Darren Bernhardt, "Treaty Six chiefs promote Native health-care system." *The StarPhoenix* July 25, 2008.
Material reprinted with the express permission of: "Saskatoon Star Phoenix Group Inc.", a Canwest Partnership.http://www.canada.com/saskatoonstarphoenix/news/local/story.html?id=9b26cd92-f104-4953-a367-00a743e106e1

1 Why might a First Nations–run health system for First Nations people experience success where a federally run program has failed?

2 What principles of modern liberalism may be most supported or most challenged by this First Nations initiative?

Explore the Issues

Concept Review

1 Identify at least six specific examples of challenges to modern liberalism from alternative ideologies (for example, the Hutterite practice of collective land ownership).

Concept Application

2 *Gather and Analyze*. Develop a retrieval chart using the information in this section to examine the alternative ideologies presented in this chapter.

3 *Retrieve and Reflect on the Main Ideas*. Look back through this section and at other examples in the chapter to list what you consider to be the three most significant contributions or challenges that alternative currents of thought have made to the evolution of modern liberalism. You could also research additional examples. Discuss your ideas in a small group. Which idea do you think has had the most impact on Canadians? Explain.

	Interpretation of the Past	Vision of the Future	Beliefs about Human Nature	Beliefs about the Structure of Society	Level of Support	Impact on Liberalism
Environmentalism						
Neo-Conservatism						
Religious Perspectives						
Aboriginal Perspectives						

Communication: Analyzing Points of View and Perspectives to Form an Opinion

Throughout this text you are asked to consider the issue *To what extent should we embrace an ideology?* and develop an informed position based, in part, on your analysis of perspectives from a variety of sources.

Your Task: Read the following quotations and imagine that you are listening to each person express his or her point of view on liberalism. After you "listen" to each person, use an organizer such as the one at the end of the Skill Path to analyze the ideas expressed and rate the value of the quotation based on how much it helps you answer the Key Issue. After you have addressed each quotation, write a one-page statement to answer the Key Issue, using the most valued quotations as support. Use the Questions to Guide You for assistance. Note that the following quotations contain some very defined, and potentially controversial points of view about liberalism.

Sometimes the value of a thing does not lie in that which it helps us to achieve, but in the amount we have to pay for it—what it costs us. For instance, liberal institutions straightway cease from being liberal the moment they are soundly established: once this is attained no more grievous and more thorough enemies of freedom exist than liberal institutions! One knows, of course, what they bring about: they undermine the Will to Power, they are the levelling of mountain and valley exalted to a morality, they make people small, cowardly and pleasure-loving—by means of them the gregarious animal invariably triumphs. Liberalism, or in plain English the transformation of mankind into cattle.

— **Friedrich Nietzsche,** *Twilight of the Idols*, **1895. English translation: Wordsworth Editions, Ware, Hertfordshire: 2007, p. 71.**

The whole modern world has divided itself into Conservatives and Progressives. The business of Progressives is to go on making mistakes. The business of Conservatives is to prevent mistakes from being corrected.

— **G.K. Chesterton,** *Illustrated London News*, **April 19, 1924.**

What do our opponents mean when they apply to us the label "Liberal?" If by "Liberal" they mean, as they want people to believe, someone who is soft in his policies abroad, who is against local government, and who is unconcerned with the taxpayer's dollar, then…we are not that kind of "Liberal." But if by a "Liberal" they mean someone who looks ahead and not behind, someone who welcomes new ideas without rigid reactions, someone who cares about the welfare of the people— their health, their housing, their schools, their jobs, their civil rights, and their civil liberties—someone who believes we can break through the stalemate and suspicions that grip us in our policies abroad, if that is what they mean by a "Liberal," then I'm proud to say I'm a "Liberal."

— **John F. Kennedy, speech to the Liberal Party of New York, September 14, 1960.**

No idea holds greater sway in the minds of educated Americans than the belief that it is possible to democratize governments anytime and anywhere under any circumstances.

— **Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorship and Double Standards."** *The Economist December* **23, 2006, p. 131.**

Liberals feel unworthy of their possessions. Conservatives feel they deserve everything they've stolen.

— **Mort Sahl (American comedian and actor)**

Democrats (I think to myself) are liberals who believe the people are basically good, but that they need government help to organize their lives. They believe in freedom so fervently that they think it should be compulsory. They believe that the poor and ignorant are victims of an unfair system and that their circumstances can be improved if we give them help. Republicans (I think to myself) are conservatives who think it would be best if we faced the fact that people are no damned

good. They think that if we admit that we have selfish, acquisitive natures and then set out to get all we can for ourselves by working hard for it, that things will be better for everyone. They are not insensitive to the poor, but tend to think the poor are impoverished because they won't work. They think there would be fewer of them to feel sorry for if the government did not encourage the proliferation of the least fit among us with welfare programs.

Questions to Guide You

1. To what extent is modern liberalism continuing to evolve? How does each quote represent (or not represent) the evolution of liberalism? Explain.

2. What perspective is evident in each quotation: classical liberalism, modern liberalism, or elements of both?

3. Which person's ideas do you believe are most valid in representing classical or modern liberalism? Rank the ideas from most to least valid and explain your criteria for your rankings.

4. To what extent does each person's statement inform your response to the issue?

Quotation Analysis Organizer	
Speaker: _____	**Date of Quote:** _____
What, if anything, makes what the person is saying powerful, significant, or compelling?	
Do the person's ideas refer to classical or modern liberalism, or other ideologies?	
Is the person supporting or condemning liberal beliefs and values? Which ones? How?	
What ideas do you believe are most valid and can best inform your response? Why?	
What ideas do you believe are the least valid and can least help inform your response? Why?	
How much does this quotation help you answer the Key Issue? Why?	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ (1 = very little, 5 = a great deal)

Reflect and Analyze

In this chapter you explored the following question: ***To what extent is modern liberalism continuing to evolve?*** The overarching theme of this chapter is that liberalism is not a static, unchangeable ideology. Rather, it is an ideology that evolves—it is open to revision, reprioritization, and reassessment. Historically this has been the case, and liberalism will likely continue to evolve, partly in response to challenges posed by alternative currents of thought.

Liberalism in Canada will continue to evolve, not only as Canadians confront their own political challenges, but also as we are influenced by political developments in other countries such as the United States, where there is both a narrower range of popular ideology and also a stronger tradition of advocating for freedom and rights. In addition, as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives in Canada gain recognition, Canadians will need to find a way of integrating more completely the concept of collective rights into the framework of modern liberalism. For these reasons, a wide range of sources of alternative thought should be accessed to ensure an inclusive discussion regarding the beliefs and values of our society.

Respond to Ideas

1. Now that you have explored various challenges to liberalism, in a group of three, develop a policy on a specific issue for a political party that you would support. Your policy should include clear justification for the position you have taken; that is, identify the principles that you are using as the basis for your policy. Post your political platform on a bulletin board anonymously, and have your classmates vote on which party's policies they would support in an election. Consider the types of arguments each group makes to support their policies, and the principles on which their arguments are based.

Recognize Relationships among Concepts, Issues, and Citizenship

2. Social programs in Canada are established to create greater equality of opportunity. Develop a list of social programs supported by the federal or provincial governments. Develop an informed opinion on the value and effectiveness of government intervention in these areas. Consider the value of embracing an ideology to address social concerns and note your opinions. Select a format and present your opinions to the class.