

## ***Perspectives on Ideology***

***Key Issue: To what extent should we embrace an ideology?***

***Related Issue #3: To what extent are the principles of liberalism viable?***

### **Chapter 12: The Viability of Contemporary Liberalism**

**Chapter Issue:** *To what extent do contemporary issues challenge the principles of liberalism?*

#### **Chapter Overview:**

Chapter 12 presents you with challenges to liberal democracy: *postmodernism*, *extremism*, *consumerism*, *environmental issues*, *pandemics*, and *worldview water shortages*. In the course of your study, you will determine the extent to which the principles of liberalism are viable in today's world.

Two questions for inquiry will guide your investigations. They include:

- How do some contemporary issues raise questions about the viability of liberalism?
- What solutions to contemporary issues are supported by the principles of liberalism?

**TASK:** IN GROUPS, PRESENT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THE FORM OF A PREZI OR PPT. INCLUDE CONTEMPORARY VIDEO OF YOUR TOPIC.

<b>Key Terms</b>	consumerism, environmental change, extremism, pandemics, postmodernism
<b>Key Concepts</b>	Exploring how well the principles of liberalism provide a framework for addressing challenging contemporary issues
<b>Key People</b>	Jean Baudrillard, Peter Berkowitz, Milton Friedman, Francis Fukuyama, Naomi Klein, Canadian Network for Public Health Intelligence (CNPHI), William Commanda, Stephane Dion, Fort Chipewyan First Nation, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Paul Martin, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Toronto health officials (re: SARS), World Health Organization (WHO)

## **GROUP 1: POSTMODERNISM**

1. Modern or contemporary liberalism can sometimes be challenged by *alternative thought*. List six of these challenges.



2. From your glossary, define the term *postmodernism*.

3. Briefly describe **four recurrent themes in postmodernist thinking**.



4. Read the **Voices Feature: Examining Postmodernism** on page 412 and answer the questions that follow.

a) What, according to **Fukuyama**, is postmodernism's weakness? How might this weakness affect a multicultural country such as Canada?

b) In what ways can believers in the principles of modern liberalism respond to the criticisms of postmodernism?

## **GROUP 2: EXTREMISM**

5. From your glossary, define the term **extremism**.

6. Is it possible for views classified as “extreme” to become accepted in a liberal democracy? Explain fully by giving an example.

7. Why do extremists avoid referring to themselves as extremist?
8. a) Describe **one major challenge** that *extremism* presents to **the beliefs of modern liberalism**.
- b) Describe the differing perspectives held by people **when civil liberties are curtailed in response to extremist threats**.
9. Describe the relationship between *extremism* and *intolerance*.
- 10. *Extremism* is also used by some people to characterize economic activities that strictly adhere to a set of principles despite their *perceived adverse effects on population*.**

Canadian author *Naomi Klein* sees the ideas of economist *Milton Friedman* as being central to “*economic extremism*”.

Describe three arguments made by *Klein* to support her claim.

*More to the story: The relationship between extremism and fundamentalism.*

**Extremism is characterized by intolerance.** Religious ideology is often declared extremist when it requires a **strict adherence to certain principles and is intolerant of other beliefs systems**. Usually referred to, often incorrectly, **as fundamentalism**, these views can be considered extreme even when the majority of people in a society follow similar, but less rigid, views. **Fundamentalism calls for a return to the defining principles of a religion. If this varies greatly from the majority it can be considered extremism.**

### **GROUP 3: Contemporary Issues and Liberalism**

1. Analyze the data found in *Figure 12-5* (page 417) and *Figure 12-6* (page 418) and answer the questions that follow.
  - a) What do the dollar amounts in *Figure 12-5* and *Figure 12-6* tell you about consumption priorities? Is there anything wrong with spending money on cosmetics or pet food?

- b) Do you think the principles of liberalism helped create the disparity that is apparent in the tables? Do you think liberal governments should do something to address this disparity?
2. Describe how the *Alberta government* has attempted to **address some negative consequences of consumerism**.
3. *In the brief history of liberal democracies, **economic freedom** has helped create some very powerful individuals and companies. The pursuit of economic freedom in liberal democracies has brought **increased personal choice** for consumers in some countries **but not in all**. And within most countries **these benefits are not equally distributed**. Therefore, **unanticipated consequences** of economic freedom and development have developed within countries on a worldwide scale.*

List and describe ***three unanticipated consequences of economic freedom and development*** found in your textbook.



4. What particular aspects of liberalism helped create these unanticipated outcomes?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How do you think liberal governments should address the issue of protecting the environment? Which *principles of liberalism* does your answer challenge? Why is this challenge acceptable to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Study carefully the information found in *Figure 12-9* on page 421 and answer the questions that follow.
  - a) To what extent are efforts at *environmental stewardship* consistent with *liberal principles*?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) How can **green choices** be balanced with **economic sustainability and convenience** in order to better safeguard global and environmental success?

7. Read carefully the **Voices Feature: *Environmentalism through the Years*** on page 422 and answer the questions that follow.
- a) Does each speaker present **a distinct view of environmental issues**? Are there similar themes?
  - b) Which **principles of liberalism** are challenged by the speakers' views?
  - c) There are many other points of view, opinions, and ideas related to this issue. How might we address the variety of responses to this challenge?

#### **GROUP 4: ENVIRONMENTAL**

8. From your glossary, define the terms ***Kyoto Protocol*** and ***Kyoto Targets***.



9. Provide two pieces of evidence that **supports that climate change is a reality**.



10. In 2004, the **government of Canada**, led by *Prime Minister Paul Martin*, announced a broad plan for dealing with greenhouse gasses. List the essential elements of Mr. Martin's plan.



11. Did *Canada* meet its *Kyoto Targets*? Provide evidence to support your position. What conferences have occurred since Kyoto, and have we seen progress in meeting those targets?

12. *Friends of the Earth* is an international environmental group that was founded in 1978. It focuses on many issues, one of which is the campaign to stop **global warming**. How does *Friends of the Earth* plan to address this global issue?



13. Read the **Voices Feature: *Perspectives on Green Policies in Canada*** on page 426 and 427 and answer the question that follows.

Based on these sources and your own past research and experience, how do you believe Canada can best work towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change?

*More to the story: Cap-and-Trade Systems and Carbon Tax Systems*

Cap and Trade systems place an actual limit on all emitters of greenhouse gases. Those who meet and better those limits can trade their excess savings to other companies who are still working at cleaning up their emission levels. This sounds good since it provides incentives to all but the plans contain many loopholes that might lead to less progress than expected.

A Carbon Tax system taxes everyone so the incentive to reduce emissions is direct and immediate. This system leaves very few loopholes and would result in faster reductions in greenhouse gases.

## **GROUP 5: ECONOMIC GROWTH IN CHINA & INDIA**

14. *China* and *India* are rapidly modernizing and have recently experienced tremendous economic growth. They have both experienced remarkable reductions in poverty and increases in the number of people in the middle class.

They have not, however, chosen the same route to development. Complete the retrieval chart below that summarizes each country's method of development.

Routes to Development	
China	India

15. What are *Special Economic Zones (SEZs)* as created by India? What benefits has India enjoyed because of these *SEZs*?

**16.** *The push to grow the economy in both **China** and **India** has created **increased competition for resources and international markets for goods and services**. In many cases, this push for economic growth **has been at the expense of the environment**.*

What are some other **unanticipated consequences of economic expansion in China and India**?



## **GROUP 6: PANDEMICS**

17. From your glossary, define the term ***pandemic***.

18. What dilemma do liberal democracies face when attempting to address pandemics?

19. a) From your glossary, define the ***World Health Organization (WHO)***.

b) What role does the ***WHO*** play in combating a pandemic?

20. Should all countries **be equal partners in decisions related to the control of pandemics**, or **should one or more countries take the lead**? Do you think there is a point at which **individual freedom should be restricted by governments in dealing with pandemics**?

21. Read the **Investigation Feature: SARS in Toronto** on pages 432 and 433 and answer the questions that follow.

- a) Canada has taken a series of steps to address the potential outbreak of a pandemic. **SARS**, like other pandemics, presents a serious (but not necessarily immediate) risk to individuals and countries. What steps has Canada taken to address the outbreak of a pandemic? In what ways do these steps reflect liberal principles? To what extent do these steps support the common good as the more important value than individual rights and freedoms?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b) Is there a possible danger to individual privacy with the increased surveillance of citizens under systems such as **CNPHI**? Is the potential for abuse of this information by governments a challenge to liberal principles? Is this an acceptable risk, given the potential danger?

- c) Two important principles of liberalism are *social autonomy* and *protection of individual rights and freedoms*. How might our *federal, provincial, and municipal governments* be challenged to demonstrate these principles when addressing pandemics in Canada?
- d) What role should liberal democracies play in addressing pandemics that arise in other countries? Should liberal democracies ever engage in practices that restrict the principles of liberalism to protect their own societies' interests and their citizens?

### **GROUP 7: WATER**

22. Read the section Water Shortages (pages 434-438) and answer the questions that follow.

- a) What are the *unanticipated consequences* of the *oil sands development* in Northern Alberta?



- b) Based on these unanticipated consequences, **should we continue to develop the tar sands**. In responding to this question, **make sure you consider all perspectives**.
- c) What do you think the Canadian government should do when it comes to moving water between countries? Who are the parties that would be most affected by a project such as the Garrison Diversion? In what ways are liberal principles being challenged by this issue?
23. Is the issue of water availability for nations going to be the next resource nations are willing to go to war over....make predictions based on fact.