

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY



What is the best form of government?

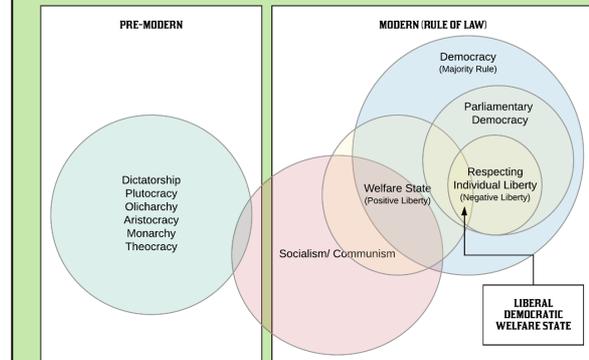
"Two things form the bedrock of any open society - freedom of expression and rule of law. If you don't have those things, you don't have a free country." Salman Rushdie

PREREQUISITES FOR AN OPEN SOCIETY

Definition: An open society is a society which promotes and protects individual liberty and is characterized by a flexible structure, freedom of expression and wide dissemination of information.

- ❑ Individual liberty
- ❑ Human rights
- ❑ Constitutional democracy
- ❑ Rule of Law
- ❑ Freedom of expression
- ❑ Science based education and citizenship education
- ❑ Tolerance for different lifestyles (as long as there is no harm to others)
- ❑ Strong Secularism

MODEL OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY



RELIGION - STATE RELATIONS

(Model by Paul Cliteur)

- 1. Theocracy**
Union between religion and politics. Totalitarian repression of dissenters. No individual liberty, nor democracy nor human rights
- 2. Atheist State**
No individual liberty. Repression of religion.
- 3. State Religion**
The state favors one religion but tolerates other religions
- 4. Multiculturalism**
The state facilitates religious and cultural diversity in education and other institutions
- 5. Laïcité or Strong Secularism**
Strict separation between religion and state. The state is neutral in religious affairs, because the state is blind for religion. Religion is like and individual hobby. No religious schools. No religion as religion is taught in schools

SOME PROBLEMS WITH DEMOCRACY

- ❑ What happens when minorities get overruled by majorities?
- ❑ What happens when those who are impacted by decisions have no voice?
- ❑ What happens when the majority has no long term vision?
- ❑ What happens when a democracy has a strong national focus and global problems require an international focus? (e.g. anthropogenic climate change)
- ❑ What happens when the opinion of the majority is not morally good? (e.g. concerns for animals, nature, future generations or, in the past, slavery)

A MATRIX OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Political systems can be morally evaluated by looking if there are victims. For example, from the perspective of homosexuals, The Netherlands is morally superior to Nazi Germany, Saudi Arabia and China.

	THE NETHERLANDS	NAZI GERMANY	SAUDI ARABIA	CHINA	ECOTOPIA Ernest Callenbach (1975)	CHOOSE YOUR NATION OR IDEOLOGY
FOR WHOM? Who benefits from the political structure?	Dutch citizens	The 'Aryan' Germans	Saudi Muslim male citizens	Chinese citizens	The entire ecosystem	
BY WHOM? Who holds the power?	Dutch citizens who have the right and are able to vote	Adolf Hitler and his associates	The king and his selected government in allegiance with spiritual leaders	Communist party members in allegiance with big corporations	The citizens of Ecotopia	
WHAT FOR? What is the goal of politics?	Creating opportunities for Dutch citizens to flourish	Expanding the 'Lebensraum' of the 'Aryan' Germans	Maintaining welfare and power for the ruling elite, living according to a set interpretation of Islam	Generating rapid economic growth and becoming a world power	A sustainable ecosystem and the wellbeing of the citizens of Ecotopia	
WITH WHAT? What are the political tools available?	Constitution bound democratic policies	Violence and suppression based totalitarian rule	Theocratic hereditary rule	Centralized totalitarian policies	Sustainability bound democratic policies	
VICTIMS? Who is (physically) harmed or hampered in their individual liberty?	Future generations, exploited people abroad, animals	Homosexuals, Jews, gypsies, socialists, disabled people, freethinkers, animals	Women, freethinkers, homosexuals, Jews, children, criminals, animals	Minorities, freethinkers, dissidents, homosexuals, the working class, Tibetans, future generations, animals	None	