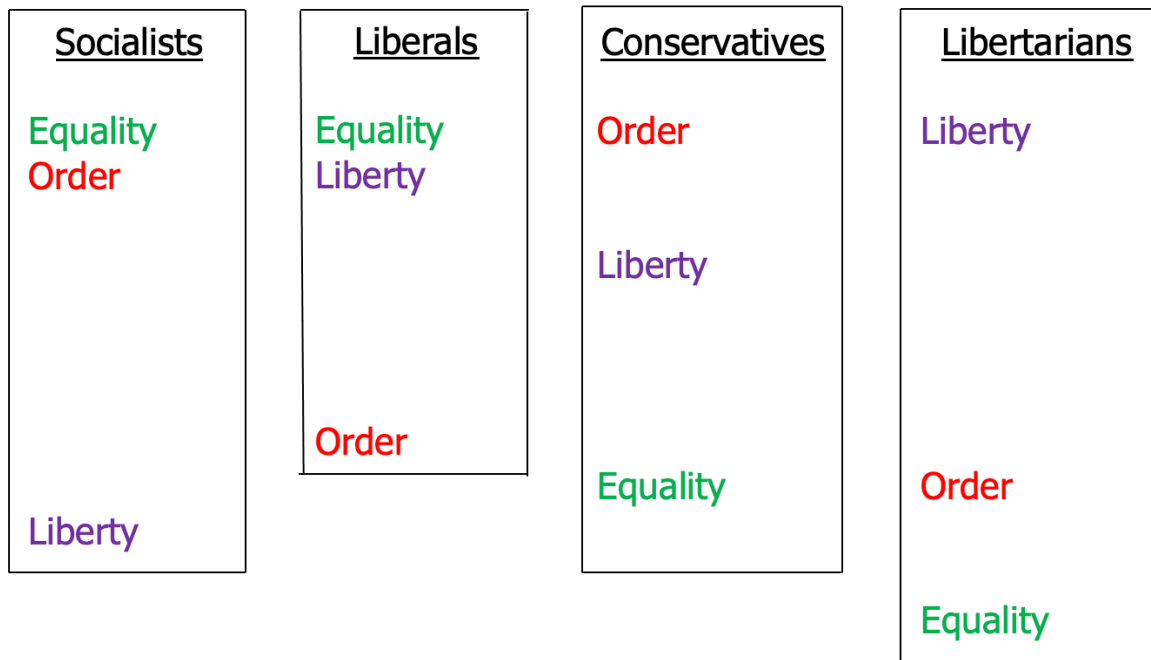


The Relative Priorities the Various Political Ideologies Place on the Three Basic Values and Problems This Is Causing America

Each of the major political ideologies currently places a different priority on the three major values. The following chart is a simplification but demonstrates the point, with the value being given the highest priority for each ideological group being placed at the top of that column. A taller column indicates that the difference in weights of each value are relatively greater:



These different priorities, and the stridency with which each group is seeking to establish them, explain only part of our changing and highly charged political scene. But their differing views on equality, for example, are instructive. Socialists place highest priority on equality of outcome, and recognize that a high level of order will be necessary to achieve that. Many liberals are currently driven in large part by the significant social, economic, and political inequalities that still exist in the U.S., and seek much greater equality of opportunity for individuals and groups. Many current conservatives are willing to take strong measures to turn back the clock on equality and, to a lesser extent, liberty. And Libertarians, who believe strongly in the right of people to achieve their goals without constraint, do not believe equality is of much importance.

We are facing today challenges to all three major realms of equality:

Social. The Black Lives Matter movement, the amount and hatefulness of anti-Semitic speech, the languishing women’s movement, the Students for Fair Admissions cases against affirmative action programs at Harvard and Duke recently decided by the Supreme Court, geographic

sorting, and other tensions are all impacting social equality. Frustration is mounting at not only the lack of progress, but apparent backsliding in many areas.

Financial. Most Americans don't mind some people being richer than they are; in fact, we tend to look up to these people. After all, the American dream is to make it big. But we do mind when the financial and political power of the rich is used to limit our ability, and the ability of our children, to get ahead.

Currently financial inequality in the U.S. is at the highest levels since the Gilded Age. The growth in income and wealth in recent decades has tilted strongly in favor of upper-income households. At the same time, the middle class, which once comprised the clear majority of Americans, is shrinking. Thus, a greater share of the nation's aggregate income is now going to upper-income households and the share going to middle- and lower-income households is falling. People in the lower rungs of the economic ladder are experiencing diminished economic opportunity and mobility, a phenomenon referred to as *The Great Gatsby Curve*. Economic mobility in the U.S. today is less than that of every European country, thereby increasing geographic segregation by income, and slowing economic growth itself.

Political. Most Americans also don't mind the rich having more political power; we think they are entitled to greater power because they are so successful. What we do mind is when the rich act like they are better than us as people, when they act like an upper class, with different rules and laws. This is, unfortunately, a situation we are finding ourselves increasingly in. Elon Musk, Jamie Dimond, Peter Thiel, and many other rich entrepreneurs and financiers now believe they should not have to play by the same rules as do the rest of us. Because they believe their economic success is due to them being smarter than we are, they believe their views on politics should also be given priority.

Citizens United and other factors mean that rising financial inequality is dramatically increasing the political influence of the rich, as they have gained greater access to political decision makers and are having a disproportionate impact on the political decisions being made. Many are calling democracy in the U.S. "coincidental democracy," because decisions favored by the middle class and poor are being made only when, coincidentally, the rich favor them too. Inequality in political resources, in strategic positions, and in overt and implicit bargaining power are sufficiently great to lend considerable plausibility to theories of domination by the newly emerging rich. This trend is particularly draconian, because it is mutually reinforcing: the political decisions being made at the behest of the rich are helping them garner an even greater percentage of U.S. wealth. And, because America has such limited economic mobility, the new rich are creating what is virtually an inherited aristocracy, one that exhibits inequalities in all three areas: financial, political, and social.