

VCE Australian and Global Politics

Units 1 & 2

Kimberly Cornell



Social Education Victoria

VCE Australian and Global Politics Units 1 & 2

by Kimberly Cornell

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Social Education Victoria has compiled and published a range of textbooks designed for new VCE Study Designs beginning in 2012. Of the four new publications, two are for Politics – namely *VCE Australian and Global Politics Units 1 & 2*, by Kimberly Cornell, and *VCE Global Politics Units 3 & 4*, by Anna-Louise Simpson. The other two textbooks are for Sociology – namely *VCE Sociology Units 1 & 2*, by Pheona Donohoe, and *VCE Sociology Units 3 & 4*, by Fiona Gontier.

It should be noted that SEV regards these textbooks as an ongoing project and is working on additional materials (to be available to SEV members via the website) that will enhance or add to the textbooks' case studies and examples. Please refer to www.sev.asn.au for further details.

The compilation of the textbooks has been a complex task and one that has been completed according to a very tight timeframe. In the role of SEV Executive Editor of these textbook projects, I have worked closely with a large group of people. I would like to congratulate the authors, the researchers, the design team, the editors, proofreaders and the printers for the commitment, diligence, patience and skill they have exhibited over the journey.

On behalf of Social Education Victoria and our various stakeholders, and sincerely hoping that I don't neglect to mention anyone, I would like to specifically recognise the following people and thank them for their important contributions to this book, *VCE Australian and Global Politics Units 1 & 2*: Kimberly Cornell (author), Neil Todd (permissions and proofreading) David McBurney (cover design and production advice), Ron Anderson and Pat Hincks (expert advice), Gabrielle England (proofreading) and Tess Baster and Anna Makridis of Currency Communications (printing and production advice). Finally, I wish to thank Lesley Williams at Major Street Publishing and Kerry Stacey from Production Works, for their monumental effort in the editing, design and layout of the book.

In closing, I wish to highlight the online support SEV will also provide as a part of your textbook purchase. At the SEV website (www.sev.asn.au) there will be some links to the relevant URLs that are referred to throughout each textbook. Instead of having to type in each link from the textbook, simply identify which ones you might like to explore further and then click through to them via the SEV website!

We at Social Education Victoria trust that this publication will help to play a part in your enjoyment and understanding of this subject and wish you all the best for your studies.

James Fiford
Executive Officer
Social Education Victoria

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4. In current Australian politics are there any politicians who you would define as socialist, liberal, liberal democratic or social democratic?
5. Go back to the list of leaders on page 93. In a group, discuss what the political orientation might be of the leaders you recognise.

THE MODERN POLITICAL SPECTRUM

This brief survey of the two main ideologies of the 19th and 20th century Liberalism and Socialism demonstrates that ideologies are not fixed. They are highly fluid and go through revisions over time as circumstances change. Radical ideologies are usually referred to as being ‘left-wing’. This comes from the French revolutionary era when members of the government who supported radical change sat on the left side of the assembly, while those who supported the **status quo** sat on the right. Since communism was regarded as the most radical ideology of its time, supporters of communism and its variants were called ‘left wingers’ or ‘leftists’. Conservatives who supported the existing capitalist system were therefore ‘right-wingers’. If all of these ideologies were lined up against one another they would reveal a ‘spectrum’ of political thought that spreads from more radical notions of political change to more conservative ones. Figure 1.09 below shows what this political spectrum would look like:

Status quo. The existing circumstances and social or political relations within a society.

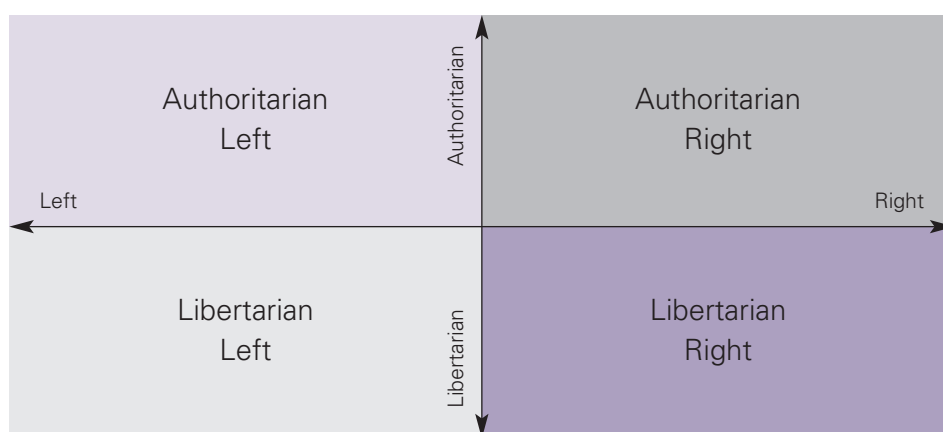


FIGURE 1.05: A model for the political spectrum

This is only one possible model (there are many variants people have proposed to try and illustrate the political spectrum). A useful website to develop your understanding of political spectrums is <http://www.politicalcompass.org/index>.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1.17

With the help of your teacher, and after reading the section of the textbook and consulting the website, try and place the following labels on the above spectrum:

- Communism
- Fascism
- Socialism
- Conservatism
- Labor
- Liberal
- Greens
- Family First

In Australian politics the concept of left-wing has traditionally been associated with the Labor party and right-wing with the Liberal party. In the past 20 years this typology has become blurred, along with notions of what is radical and conservative in politics. The rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980s encouraged a winding back of government intervention in the economy. It was a political trend that impacted on both the Labor and Liberal parties in Australia, as well as other parties around the world. Privatisation and deregulation suddenly became ‘radical’ ideas which ran against the status quo of government intervention since the World War Two era. Yet these policies were implemented by parties that purported to be conservative in ideology. Were they still conservative for drawing upon ideas of classical liberalism, or were they radical for significantly altering commonly held beliefs about the role of government?

Similarly, when the Labor party was in power from 1983 to 1996 it continued the economic policies of the neo-liberals (often referred to as **economic rationalism**) by privatising the Commonwealth Bank, floating the exchange rate, introducing fees for tertiary education, reducing tariffs and selling public assets such as Qantas and Telstra. Was the Labor party now moving further to the right by taking on board policies which reduced the role of government? Could it be regarded as left-wing when its social and economic policies were more reflective of liberalism than socialism?

Developments in the ‘post-Cold War’ era have further confused traditional ideological divisions. The disintegration of the Soviet Union from 1989 and the acceptance of market reforms in both Russia and communist China under Deng Xiao Ping, revised communist ideology in this region. The existence of an ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ bloc no longer existed in Europe, yet remnants of socialism remained in Asia. To what extent could China and Vietnam still be called socialist or communist countries, though, since they accept ownership of private property and allow market forces to play a significant role in the distribution of wealth?

The emergence of religious fundamentalism is another ideological dilemma. The differences between Sunni, Shiite and Wahhabi Muslims, the varied use of Sharia Law, and the creation of democratic regimes in countries that have traditionally been dictatorships, have all led to political tension in the Middle

Economic rationalism.

Policies that support a streamlining of the economy by reducing the amount of government intervention in market forces, both domestically and globally.

Cold War. A period from around 1946 to 1989 when nations were divided along ideological lines in their support of a communist or capitalist system. Capitalist countries supported the USA in a ‘western bloc’ and communist countries supported the USSR in an ‘eastern bloc’.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 2.14

As a class, and using the following resource, research the aims of a terrorist organisation and develop a critique of their tactics and results. Create the chart as shown on your computer so that it can be collated with the rest of the class.

FOR a list of terrorist organisations (as determined by the US State Department), see <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>:

Name/date/location of terrorist organisation	Reasons for forming	Tactics and strategies used by the organisation to gain political advantage	Degree of success. Is this group still operating (why or why not?)

For class discussion and analysis:

- What similarities and differences do you notice about the reasons for why terrorist groups form?
- On a world map plot with a pin or label the location of your terrorist group.
- Are there particular regions of the world where terrorist organisations are more common? What explanations might there be for the way terrorist organisations are distributed?
- To what extent do you think terrorist groups have been successful? Are some more effective than others? What reasons could there be for your conclusion?
- How many of these groups are still operating and for how long? What does this indicate about the relationship between states and terrorist groups?

Case Study: The war in Afghanistan

BACKGROUND

Afghanistan is a microcosm of the global issues faced by developing countries in the world today, and exploring the war here assists in understanding the complex nature of modern wars and warfare. Afghanistan combines the issues of ethnic tension, social inequality, poor governance and the geopolitical interests of great powers all into one country.

The history of Afghanistan has been one of prolonged instability as different groups have sought to control the government and enforce their rule over others. No less than 25 different dynasties have governed Afghanistan from

the 6th century BC to the overthrow of the monarchy by Mohammed Daoud Khan in 1973.¹⁰³ Within Afghanistan there is a diverse and diffused range of ethnic groups which are the product of two thousand years of invasion and conquest. In the south of Afghanistan most of the people are Pathan (or Pashtun), to the north Tajiks, Turkmen, Kirghiz and Uzbeks reside and in the central highlands are the Hazaras. Small areas of Afghanistan are inhabited by groups of Aimaq and Nuristani peoples.

Afghanistan is of geopolitical importance, bordered by Pakistan, Iran, the republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (previously part of the USSR) and China. It has high potential for the production of natural gas and is a main source of the world's opium supply. According to a UN report, on average, 90% of the world's opium comes from Afghanistan.¹⁰⁴



IMAGE 2.18: Map of Afghanistan

The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan is partly due to its geographical location. In 1979, the Soviet army crossed the border of Afghanistan to prop up the communist regime in the face of an outbreak of civil war. Despite the efforts of Mohammed Daoud Khan to reinvent the monarchy as a republic, his government was overthrown in 1978 by a communist-led coup. War broke out almost immediately over the policies of the new government and containing it proved beyond them. The introduction of the Soviet troops did not pacify the country and in many ways made matters worse as the Muslim Mujahideen (holy warriors) fought the foreign troops causing 6 million