

Practical measures

- High taxes, with the wealthiest paying the most
- High government spending
- Social benefits, such as health, education, pensions etc. funded by taxation and provided to all free at the point of use
- Some parts of the economy run by the government in the interests of the whole of society
- High levels of regulation, to ensure that businesses look after their employees and customers

Now we have an understanding of the values of the two different sides, let's look at how they might clash in some debate motions.

1. This house would abolish university tuition fees.

Social democracy sides with the proposition; **neo-liberalism** sides with the opposition.

A **social democrat** argues:

- University education should be available to everyone who has qualified for it academically; no one should be excluded because they cannot afford it. **(Inclusion is better than competition.)**
- Children of rich parents sometimes have all their fees paid by their parents and never have to worry about repaying them, while other equally able students are saddled with debt for years afterwards. **(Money should not buy privilege.)**
- A well educated workforce is a benefit to the whole of society, so it is in all our interests for the government to invest in education. **(Government intervention works.)**
- Making distinctions between those who can afford university education and those who can't is divisive and undermines social solidarity. **(Inequality is bad for society.)**

A **neo-liberal** argues:

- People only value what they pay for. Subsidising education makes people value it less. **(People should take responsibility for their choices.)**

Education
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Or

People
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Equality or
liberty?

- Having a university education is a benefit; graduates earn far more than non-graduates, so it is only fair that people should pay for a university education. **(People should only have what they have earned by their own efforts.)**
- It is a basic human right to be able to bring up your children in the way you choose. Parents who choose to pay their children's tuition fees are only exercising this right. **(Freedom to spend your money how you like is a higher good than freedom from injustice.)**
- Measures such as this can only be funded by higher taxes. Higher taxes damage the economy and cost jobs, to everyone's detriment. **(Neo-liberalism works better than social democracy.)**

2. This house would introduce a maximum wage

Social democrats side with the proposition; **neo-liberals** side with the opposition.

A **social democrat** argues:

- It is fair that some people should earn more than others, but incomes at the very top level are beyond what anyone deserves or needs. **(Inequality is an inherently bad thing.)**
- Unlimited incomes promote extreme inequality, which breeds division and resentment. **(Inequality is bad for society.)**
- Extreme wealth gives some individuals disproportionate political power (e.g by donating to political parties, threatening to take their businesses out of the country if they do not get their way etc.) and this is undemocratic. **(We have a greater responsibility to society than to ourselves.)**
- In a more equal society, everyone feels more valued and more connected to each other. **(Equality is an inherently good thing.)**

A **neo-liberal** argues:

- The government has no right to tell people what they can earn. **(The less government intervention, the better.)**
- Introducing a maximum wage disincentivises hard work. **(People work best when rewarded for their work.)**