

Ideology

By “ideology” I mean a worldview shared by broad swaths of people from all classes. [18th-century] Ideologies were shaped, not determined by social and economic realities. These ideologies were prisms through which people understood new information about government activities, economic performance, and foreign affairs. Ideological convictions led different groups of people to interpret the same piece of information in radically different ways. In the same way, twenty-first-century Americans might, depending on their ideological convictions, understand the soaring cost of medical care either as the result of insufficient government involvement in the health care sector, or as the consequence of too much government regulation.

Steve Pincus, *The Heart of the Declaration*