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QUESTION

In not more than five (5) pages discuss and evaluate the idea of conservatism.

Conservatism can simply be defined as a political and social philosophy promoting traditional social institutions in the context of culture and civilization. The central tenets of conservatism include tradition, organic society, hierarchy, and property rights. Conservatives seek to preserve a range of institutions such as religion, parliamentary government, and property rights, with the aim of emphasizing social stability and continuity. The more traditional elements reactionaries oppose modernism and seek a return to "the way things were". The first established use of the term in a political context originated in 1818 with François-René de Chateaubriand during the period of Bourbon Restoration that sought to roll back the policies of the French Revolution. Historically associated with right-wing politics, the term has since been used to describe a wide range of views. There is no single set of policies regarded as conservative because the meaning of conservatism depends on what is considered traditional in a given place and time. Thus conservatives from different parts of the world each upholding their respective traditions may disagree on a wide range of issues. Edmund Burke, an 18th-century politician who opposed the French Revolution, but supported the American Revolution, is credited as one of the main theorists of conservatism in Great Britain in the 1790s. According to Quintin Hogg, the chairman of the British Conservative Party in 1959: "Conservatism is not so much a philosophy as an attitude, a constant force, performing a timeless function in the development of a free society, and corresponding to a deep and permanent requirement of human nature itself".

FORMS OF CONSERVATISM

1. Liberal conservatism

Liberal conservatism incorporates the classical liberal view of minimal government intervention in the economy. Individuals should be free to participate in the market and generate wealth without government interference. However, individuals cannot be thoroughly depended on to act responsibly in other spheres of life, therefore liberal conservatives believe that a strong state is necessary to ensure law and order and social institutions are needed to nurture a sense of duty and responsibility to the nation. Liberal conservatism is a variant of conservatism that is strongly influenced by liberal stances. As these latter two terms have had different meanings over time and across countries, liberal conservatism also has a wide variety of meanings. Historically, the term often referred to the combination of economic liberalism, which champions laissez-faire markets, with the classical conservatism concern for established tradition, respect for authority and religious values. It contrasted itself with classical liberalism, which supported freedom for the individual in both the economic and social spheres. Over time, the general conservative ideology in many countries adopted economic liberal arguments and the term liberal conservatism was replaced with conservatism. This is also the case in countries where liberal economic ideas have been the tradition such as the United States and are thus considered conservative. In other countries where liberal conservative movements have entered the political mainstream, such as Italy and Spain, the terms liberal and conservative may be synonymous. The liberal conservative tradition in the United States combines the economic individualism of the classical liberals with a Burkeman form of conservatism (which has also become part of the American conservative tradition, such as in the writings of Russell Kirk). A secondary meaning for the term liberal conservatism that has developed in Europe is a combination of more modern conservative (less traditionalist) views with those of social liberalism. This has developed as an opposition to the more collectivist views of socialism. Often this involves stressing what are now conservative views of free market economics and belief in individual responsibility, with social liberal views on defense of civil rights, environmentalism and support for a limited welfare state. In continental Europe, this is sometimes also translated into English as social conservatism.

1. Conservative liberalism

Conservative liberalism is a variant of liberalism that combines liberal values and policies with conservative stances. The roots of conservative liberalism are found at the beginning of the history of liberalism. Until the two World Wars, in most European countries the political class was formed by conservative liberals, from Germany to Italy. Events after World War I brought the more radical version of classical liberalism to a more conservative (i.e. more moderate) type of liberalism.

1. Libertarian conservatism

Libertarian conservatism describes certain political ideologies most prominently within the United States which combine libertarian economic issues with aspects of conservatism. Its four main branches are constitutionalism, paleo libertarianism, small government conservatism and Christian libertarianism. They generally differ from paleo conservatives, in that they favor more personal and economic freedom. Agorists such as Samuel Edward Konkin III labeled libertarian conservatism right-libertarianism.In contrast to paleoconservatives, libertarian conservatives support strict laissez-faire policies such as free trade, opposition to any national bank and opposition to business regulations. They are vehemently opposed to environmental regulations, corporate welfare, subsidies and other areas of economic intervention.Many conservatives, especially in the United States, believe that the government should not play a major role in regulating business and managing the economy. They typically oppose efforts to charge high tax rates and to redistribute income to assist the poor. Such efforts, they argue, do not properly reward people who have earned their money through hard work.