

DANIELLA ORIJEDJE

18/sms09/078

Conservatism is 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, authority, 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".

There are different forms of conservatism;

Liberal Conservatism : Liberal conservatism is a political ideology combining conservative policies with liberal stances, especially on economic, social and ethical issues,[1] or a brand of political conservatism strongly influenced by liberalism. Liberal conservatism incorporates the classical liberal view of minimal government intervention in the economy, according to which individuals should be free to participate in the market and generate wealth without government interference.[2] However, liberal conservatism also holds that 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.[2] They also support civil liberties, along with some social conservative positions. In Europe, liberal conservatism is the dominant form of contemporary conservatism and centre-right politics.

Conservative liberalism is a variant of liberalism, combining liberal values and policies with conservative stances, or simply representing the right wing of the liberal

movement.[1] It is a more positive and less radical variant of classical liberalism.[2] Conservative liberal parties tend to combine liberal policies with more traditional stances on social and ethical issues.[specify][3] Neoconservatism has also been identified as an ideological relative or twin to conservative liberalism,[4] and some similarities exist also between conservative liberalism and national liberalism.

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, paleolibertarianism, small government conservatism and Christian libertarianism. They generally differ from paleoconservatives, in that they favor more personal and economic freedom. Agorists such as Samuel Edward Konkin III labeled libertarian conservatism right-libertarianism.[14][15]

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.

Fiscal conservatism is a political and economic philosophy regarding fiscal policy and fiscal responsibility advocating low taxes, reduced government spending and minimal government debt.[1] Free trade, deregulation of the economy, lower taxes and privatization are the defining qualities of fiscal conservatism. Fiscal conservatism follows the same philosophical outlook of classical liberalism and economic liberalism. [2] The term has its origins in the era of the New Deal during the 1930s as a result of the policies initiated by modern liberals, when many classical liberals started calling themselves conservatives as they did not wish to be identified with what was passing for liberalism.[3]

In the United States, the term liberalism has become associated with the welfare state and expanded regulatory policies created as a result of the New Deal and its offshoots from the 1930s onwards.[4] Fiscal conservatives form one of the three legs of the traditional conservative movement that emerged during the 1950s together with social conservatism and national defense conservatism.[5] Many Americans who are classical liberals also tend to identify as libertarian,[6] holding more socially liberal views and advocating a non-interventionist foreign policy while supporting lower taxes and less government spending.[5]

Because of its close proximity to the United States, the term has entered the lexicon in

Canada.[7] In many other countries, liberalism or economic liberalism is used to describe what Americans call fiscal conservatism.[2][8]

National conservatism is a political term used primarily in Europe to describe a variant of conservatism which concentrates more on national interests than standard conservatism as well as upholding cultural and ethnic identity,[17] while not being outspokenly nationalist or supporting a far-right approach.[18][19] In Europe, national conservatives are usually eurosceptics.[20][21]

National conservatism is heavily oriented towards the traditional family and social stability as well as in favour of limiting immigration. As such, national conservatives can be distinguished from economic conservatives, for whom free market economic policies, deregulation and fiscal conservatism are the main priorities. Some commentators have identified a growing gap between national and economic conservatism: "[M]ost parties of the Right [today] are run by economic conservatives who, in varying degrees, have marginalized social, cultural, and national conservatives". [22] National conservatism is also related to traditionalist conservatism.

Traditionalist conservatism is a political philosophy emphasizing the need for the principles of natural law and transcendent moral order, tradition, hierarchy and organic unity, agrarianism, classicism and high culture as well as the intersecting spheres of loyalty.[23] Some traditionalists have embraced the labels "reactionary" and "counterrevolutionary", defying the stigma that has attached to these terms since the Enlightenment. Having a hierarchical view of society, many traditionalist conservatives, including a few Americans, defend the monarchical political structure as the most natural and beneficial social arrangement.

Cultural conservatives support the preservation of the heritage of one nation, or of a shared culture that is not defined by national boundaries.[24] The shared culture may be as divergent as Western culture or Chinese culture. In the United States, the term "cultural conservative" may imply a conservative position in the culture war. Cultural conservatives hold fast to traditional ways of thinking even in the face of monumental change. They believe strongly in traditional values and traditional politics and often have an urgent sense of nationalism.

Social conservatism is distinct from cultural conservatism, although there are some overlaps. Social conservatives may believe that society is built upon a fragile network of relationships which need to be upheld through duty, traditional values and established institutions;[25] and that the government has a role in encouraging or enforcing traditional values or behaviours. A social conservative wants to preserve traditional morality and social mores, often by opposing what they consider radical policies or social engineering. Social change is generally regarded as suspect.

A second meaning of the term social conservatism developed in the Nordic countries

and continental Europe, where it refers to liberal conservatives supporting modern European welfare states.

Social conservatives (in the first meaning of the phrase) in many countries generally favour the anti-abortion position in the abortion controversy and oppose human embryonic stem cell research (particularly if publicly funded); oppose both eugenics and human enhancement (transhumanism) while supporting bioconservatism;[26] support a traditional definition of marriage as being one man and one woman; view the nuclear family model as society's foundational unit; oppose expansion of civil marriage and child adoption to couples in same-sex relationships; promote public morality and traditional family values; oppose atheism,[27] especially militant atheism, secularism and the separation of church and state; support the prohibition of drugs, prostitution and euthanasia; and support the censorship of pornography and what they consider to be obscenity or indecency. Most conservatives in the United States support the death penalty.

In Great Britain, conservative ideas (though not yet called that) emerged in the Tory movement during the Restoration period (1660–1688). Toryism supported a hierarchical society with a monarch who ruled by divine right. Tories opposed the idea that sovereignty derived from the people and rejected the authority of parliament and freedom of religion. Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha: or the Natural Power of Kings* (published posthumously in 1680, but written before the English Civil War of 1642–1651) became accepted as the statement of their doctrine. However, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 destroyed this principle to some degree by establishing a constitutional government in England, leading to the hegemony of the Tory-opposed Whig ideology. Faced with defeat, the Tories reformed their movement, now holding that sovereignty was vested in the three estates of Crown, Lords and Commons[54] rather than solely in the Crown. Toryism became marginalized during the long period of Whig ascendancy in the 18th century.

Conservatives typically see Richard Hooker (1554–1600) as the founding father of conservatism, along with the Marquess of Halifax (1633–1695), David Hume (1711–1776) and Edmund Burke (1729–1797). Halifax promoted pragmatism in government whilst Hume argued against political rationalism and utopianism.[55][56] Burke served as the private secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham and as official pamphleteer to the Rockingham branch of the Whig party.[57] Together with the Tories, they were the conservatives in the late 18th century United Kingdom.[58] Burke's views were a mixture of liberal and conservative. He supported the American Revolution of 1765–1783, but abhorred the violence of the French Revolution (1789–1799). He accepted the liberal ideals of private property and the economics of Adam Smith (1723–1790), but thought that economics should remain subordinate to the conservative social ethic, that capitalism should be subordinate to the medieval social tradition and that the business class should be subordinate to aristocracy. He insisted on standards of honor derived from the medieval aristocratic tradition and saw the aristocracy as the nation's

natural leaders.[59] That meant limits on the powers of the Crown, since he found the institutions of Parliament to be better informed than commissions appointed by the executive. He favored an established church, but allowed for a degree of religious toleration.[60] Burke justified the social order on the basis of tradition: tradition represented the wisdom of the species and he valued community and social harmony over social reforms.[61] Burke was a leading theorist in his day, finding extreme idealism (either Tory or Whig) an endangerment to broader liberties and (like Hume) rejecting abstract reason as an unsound guide for political theory. Despite their influence on future conservative thought, none of these early contributors were explicitly involved in Tory politics. Hooker lived in the 16th century, long before the advent of toryism, whilst Hume was an apolitical philosopher and Halifax similarly politically independent. Burke described himself as a Whig.