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QUESTION: In not more than five pages discuss and evaluate the idea of conservatism

Conservatism can be defined in many ways it can be defined as a political doctrine that emphasizes the value of traditional institutions and practices .

It is a political and social philosophy promoting traditional social institutions in the context of culture and civilisation. Whereas the central tenets of conservatism include tradition, organic society, hierarchy, authority, and property rights .

It is difficult to give an accurate definition and must be careful to associate it too much with the conservative of today .

As conservatism is seen as a reactive ideology that dates back to the latter half of the 18th century in the period known as the Age of Reason or the enlightenment or the enlightenment there was a huge change in the way that people thought not just about politics but also religion science etc.

Edward Burke the father of English conservatism argued that the ruling classes should have a large role to play in politics for a number of reasons.

Conservatism  is a preference for the historically inherited rather than the abstract and ideal. This preference has traditionally rested on an organic [conception](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conception) of society that is, on the belief that society is not merely a loose collection of individuals but a living organism [comprising](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comprising) closely connected, interdependent members. [Conservatives](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Conservatives) thus favour institutions and practices that have evolved gradually and are [manifestations](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manifestations) of [continuity](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continuity) and stability. Government’s responsibility is to be the servant, not the master, of existing ways of life, and politicians must therefore resist the temptation to transform society and politics. This suspicion of government activism distinguishes conservatism not only from radical  forms of political thought but also from liberalism, which is a modernizing, antitraditionalist movement dedicated to correcting the evils and abuses resulting from the misuse of social and political power

The core values of conservatism include

* Individualism: where people take personal responsibility for their actions
* Organic society: where people have positions in society and that everyone integrates and has obligations to the community
* Order & Hierarchy: Essential to the continuation of society for there to be structure and leadership
* Inequality :There is an acceptance that while this has negative connotations it is a necessity for society to progress

Conservatism and its modernising, anti-traditionalist rivals, liberalism and socialism, are the most influential political philosophies and ideologies of the post-Enlightenment era. Conservatives criticise their rivals for making a utopian exaggeration of the power of theoretical reason, and of human perfectibility. Conservative prescriptions are based on what they regard as experience rather than reason; for them, the ideal and the practical are inseparable. Most commentators regard conservatism as a modern political philosophy, even though it exhibits the standpoint of paternalism or authority, rather than freedom

Popularly, “conservative” is a generic term for “right-wing viewpoint occupying the political spectrum between liberalism and fascism”. Philosophical commentators offer a more distinctive characterisation. Many treat it as a standpoint that is sceptical of abstract reasoning in politics, and that appeals instead to living tradition, allowing for the possibility of limited political reform

The conservative believe and tactics includes:

* Transcendent order: conservative generally believe that there exist a transcendent moral order, to which we ought to try to conform the ways of society. A divine tactics, however dimly described, is at work in human society. Such convictions may take the form of belief in natural law or may assume some other expression but with few exceptions conservative recognize the need for enduring moral authority
* **Prescription: conservative believe in what may be called the principle of Prescription " the wisdom of our ancestors” it is one of the more important phrases in the writings of Burke, presumably Burke derived it from Richard Hooker .Conservative frequently emphasize the importance of prescription that is of things established by immemorial usage, so that the mind of man runneth not to the contrary**
* **Prudence: conservatives are guided by their principle of prudence. Burke agrees that in the statesman prudence is chief among virtues. Any public measure ought to be judged by its probable long run consequences, not merely by temporary advantage or popularity. Whereas the liberals, radicals, the conservatives holds are imprudent for they dash at their objectives without giving much heed to the risk.**
* **The conservative adheres to custom, convention, and continuit****y**
* **Conservatives are chastened by their principle of imperfectability, Human nature suffers irremediably from certain faults, the conservatives know. Man being imperfect, no perfect social order ever can be created. Because of human restlessness mankind would grow rebellious under any utopian domination and would break out once more in violent discontent**
* **The thinking conservative understands that permanence and change must be recognized and reconciled in a vigorous society**
* **Variety: Conservatives pay attention to the principle of variety. They feel affection for the proliferating intricacy of long established social institutions and modes of life, as distinguished from the narrowing uniformity and deadening egalitarianism of radical systems. For the preservation of a healthy diversity in any civilisation, there must survive orders and classes, difference in material condition, and many sorts of inequality**

The [conservative](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservative) can be defined  as “a statesman who is enamoured of existing evils, as distinguished from the Liberal, who wishes to replace them with others.

Conservatism must also be distinguished from the reactionary outlook, which favours the restoration of a previous, and usually outmoded, political or social order.

A common way of distinguishing [conservatism](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservatism) from both liberalism  and radicalism is to say that [conservatives](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservatives) reject the optimistic view that human beings can be morally improved through political and social change . Conservatives who are Christian’s  sometimes express this point by saying that human beings are guilty of original sin. Skeptical conservatives merely observe that human history, under almost all imaginable political and social circumstances, has been filled with a great deal of evil. Far from believing that human nature is essentially good or that human beings are fundamentally rational, conservatives tend to assume that human beings are driven by their passions and desires and are therefore naturally prone to selfishness, [anarchy](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anarchy), irrationality, and violence. Accordingly, conservatives look to traditional political and cultural institutions to curb humans’ base and destructive instincts. In Burke’s words, people need “a sufficient restraint upon their passions,” which it is the office of government “to bridle and subdue.” Families, churches, and schools must teach the value of self-[discipline](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discipline), and those who fail to learn this lesson must have discipline imposed upon them by government and law. Without the restraining power of such institutions, conservatives believe, there can be no ethical behaviour and no responsible use of liberty.

Conservative influences operate indirectly for example other than via the programs of political parties largely by virtue of the fact that there is much in the general human temperament that is naturally or instinctively conservative, such as the fear of sudden change and the tendency to act habitually. These traits may find [collective](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/collective) expression in, for example, a resistance to imposed political change and in the entire range of [convictions](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/convictions) and preferences that contribute to the stability of a particular [culture](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture).

Conservatives argue that they are advancing certain unpalatable truths about people and that they require strong government and security, without being weighed down by principle such as liberty, equality and justice

Compared to liberalism and socialism, conservatism has suffered philosophical neglect .Many deny that it is an ideology, or even a political philosophy, regarding it instead as a disposition that resists theoretical expression a “non-ideology” that attempts to avoid the errors of ideologies

Although [conservatives](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservatives) sometimes claim philosophers as ancient as Aristotle and Cicero as their forebears, the first explicitly [conservative](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservative) political theorist is generally considered to be Edmund Burke  . In 1790, when the French revolution still seemed to promise a bloodless utopia  . In their rationalist contempt for the past , he charged, the revolutionaries were destroying time-tested institutions without any [assurance](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/assurance) that they could replace them with anything better. Political power is not a license to rebuild society according to some abstract, untested scheme; it is a trust to be held by those who are mindful of both the value of what they have inherited and of their duties to their inheritors. For Burke, the idea of inheritance extended far beyond property  to include language, manners and morals, and appropriate responses to the human condition. To be human is to inherit a [culture](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture), and politics cannot be understood outside that culture. Conservatism has often been associated with traditional and established forms of religion