**NAME: BRIGGS BENEDICT BENIBO**

**DEPT:IRD**

**MATRIC NO: 18/SMS09/022**

**COURSE CODE:POL 202  
COURSETITLE:POLITICAL IDEAS**

**DATE: 1ST MAY 2020**

**QUESTION**

**What is conservatism?**

**ANSWER**

INTRODUCTION

**Conservatism** is a [political](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_philosophy" \o "Political philosophy) and [social philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_philosophy" \o "Social philosophy) promoting traditional social institutions in the context of [culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture" \o "Culture) and [civilization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilization" \o "Civilization). The central tenets of conservatism include [tradition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tradition" \o "Tradition), [organic society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organic_society" \o "Organic society), [hierarchy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hierarchy" \o "Hierarchy), [authority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authority" \o "Authority), and [property rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property_rights" \o "Property rights). Conservatives seek to preserve a range of institutions such as [religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion" \o "Religion), [parliamentary government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_government" \o "Parliamentary government), and property rights, with the aim of emphasizing [social stability](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_dynamics" \o "Social dynamics) and continuity.The more traditional elements [reactionaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reactionaries" \o "Reactionaries) oppose [modernism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernism" \o "Modernism) and seek a return to "the way things were".

[Conservatism](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/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 99members. [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](https://www.britannica.com/topic/radical-ideologist) forms of political thought but also from [liberalism](https://www.britannica.com/topic/liberalism), which is a modernizing, antitraditionalist movement dedicated to correcting the evils and abuses resulting from the misuse of social and political power. In [The Devil’s Dictionary](https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Devils-Dictionary) (1906), the American writer [Ambrose Bierce](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ambrose-Bierce) cynically (but not inappropriately) defined the [conservative](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservative) as “a statesman who is enamored 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.

It was not until the late 18th century, in reaction to the upheavals of the [French Revolution](https://www.britannica.com/event/French-Revolution) (1789), that conservatism began to develop as a distinct political attitude and movement. The term conservative was introduced after 1815 by supporters of the newly restored [Bourbon](https://www.britannica.com/topic/house-of-Bourbon) [monarchy](https://www.britannica.com/topic/monarchy) in [France](https://www.britannica.com/place/France/History" \l "ref237252), including the author and diplomat [Franƈois-Auguste-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francois-Auguste-Rene-vicomte-de-Chateaubriand). In 1830 the British politician and writer [John Wilson Croker](https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Wilson-Croker) used the term to describe the British Tory Party (see [Whig and Tory](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Whig-Party-England)), and [John C. Calhoun](https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-C-Calhoun), an [ardent](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ardent) defender of [states’ rights](https://www.britannica.com/topic/states-rights) in the [United States](https://www.britannica.com/place/United-States), adopted it soon afterward. The originator of modern, [articulated](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/articulated) conservatism (though he never used the term himself) is generally acknowledged to be the British parliamentarian and political writer [Edmund Burke](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edmund-Burke-British-philosopher-and-statesman), whose [Reflections on the Revolution in France](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Reflections-on-the-Revolution-in-France) (1790) was a forceful expression of conservatives’ rejection of the French Revolution and a major inspiration for counterrevolutionary theorists in the 19th century. For Burke and other pro-parliamentarian conservatives, the violent, untraditional, and uprooting methods of the revolution outweighed and corrupted its liberating ideals. The general revulsion against the violent course of the revolution provided conservatives with an opportunity to restore pre-Revolutionary traditions, and several brands of conservative philosophy soon developed.

The first established use of the term in a political context originated in 1818 with [François-René de Chateaubriand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois-Ren%C3%A9_de_Chateaubriand" \o "François-René de Chateaubriand) during the period of [Bourbon Restoration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourbon_Restoration" \o "Bourbon Restoration) that sought to roll back the policies of the [French Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution" \o "). Historically associated with [right-wing politics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right-wing_politics" \o "Right-wing politics), the term has since been used to describe [a wide range of views](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism" \l "Forms). 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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Burke" \o "Edmund Burke), an 18th-century politician who opposed the French Revolution, but supported the [American Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution" \o "American Revolution), is credited as one of the main theorists of [conservatism in Great Britain in the 1790s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism_in_the_United_Kingdom" \o "Conservatism in the United Kingdom).

**Forms of conservatism**1.Liberal conservatism  
2.Fiscal conservatism  
3. National conservatism  
4.Cultural conservatism  
5.Traditional conservatism  
6. Social conservatism   
7. Religious conservatism  
8.Authoritarian conservatism

**1.Liberal conservatism** is a [political ideology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_ideologies" \o "List of political ideologies) combining [conservative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism" \o "Conservatism) policies with [liberal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism" \o "Liberalism) stances, especially on economic, social and ethical issues,or a brand of political conservatism strongly influenced by liberalism.  
Liberal conservatism incorporates the [classical liberal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_liberalism" \o "Classical liberalism) view of minimal government intervention in the economy, according to which individuals should be free to participate in the [market](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_(economics)" \o "Market (economics)) and generate wealth without government interference.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.They also support [civil liberties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_liberties" \o "Civil liberties), along with some [social conservative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_conservatism" \o ") positions. In [Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe" \o "Europe), liberal conservatism is the dominant form of contemporary conservatism and [centre-right politics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centre-right_politics" \o "Centre-right politics).

**2.Fiscal conservatism** is a [political](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_philosophy" \o "Political philosophy) and [economic philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_philosophy" \o "Economic philosophy) regarding [fiscal policy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiscal_policy" \o "Fiscal policy) and [fiscal responsibility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiscal_responsibility" \o "Fiscal responsibility) advocating low taxes, reduced government spending and minimal government debt.[Free trade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_trade" \o "Free trade), [deregulation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deregulation" \o "Deregulation) of the economy, [lower taxes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tax_cut" \o "Tax cut) and [privatization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privatization" \o "Privatization) are the defining qualities of fiscal conservatism. Fiscal conservatism follows the same philosophical outlook of [classical liberalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_liberalism" \o "Classical liberalism) and [economic liberalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_liberalism" \o "Economic liberalism).The term has its origins in the era of the [New Deal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Deal" \o "New Deal) during the 1930s as a result of the policies initiated by [modern liberals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_liberalism_in_the_United_States" \o "Modern liberalism in the United States), when many classical liberals started calling themselves conservatives as they did not wish to be identified with what was passing for [liberalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism" \o "Liberalism).

**3.[National conservatism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_conservatism" \o "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,while not being outspokenly [nationalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism" \o "Nationalism) or supporting a [far-right](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Far-right_politics" \o "Far-right politics) approach.In Europe, national conservatives are usually [eurosceptics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euroscepticism" \o "Euroscepticism).  
  
**4.Traditionalist conservatism** is a political philosophy emphasizing the need for the principles of [natural law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_law" \o "Natural law) and transcendent moralorder, [tradition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tradition" \o "Tradition), [hierarchy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hierarchy" \o "Hierarchy) and [organic unity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organic_unity" \o "Organic unity), [agrarianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrarianism" \o "Agrarianism), [classicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classicism" \o "Classicism) and [high culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_culture" \o "High culture) as well as the intersecting spheres of loyalty.Some traditionalists have embraced the labels "[reactionary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reactionary" \o "Reactionary)" and "[counterrevolutionary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterrevolution" \o "Counterrevolution)", defying the stigma that has attached to these terms since the [Enlightenment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment" \o "Age of Enlightenment). Having a hierarchical view of society, many traditionalist conservatives, including a few Americans, defend the [monarchical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy" \o "Monarchy) political structure as the most natural and beneficial social arrangement.  
 **5.[Cultural conservatives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_conservative" \o "Cultural conservative)**support the preservation of the heritage of one nation, or of a shared culture that is not defined by national boundaries.The shared culture may be as divergent as [Western culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_culture" \o "Western culture) or [Chinese culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_culture" \o "Chinese culture). In the United States, the term "cultural conservative" may imply a conservative position in the [culture war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_war" \o "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.  
urgent sense of nationalism.

**6.[Social conservatism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_conservatism" \o "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; 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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_engineering_(political_science)" \o "Social engineering (political science)). Social change is generally regarded as suspect.  
A second meaning of the term social conservatism developed in the [Nordic countries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nordic_countries" \o "Nordic countries) and [continental Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_Europe" \o "Continental Europe), where it refers to liberal conservatives supporting modern [European welfare states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_welfare_state" \o "European welfare state).

**7.Religious conservatism** principally apply the teachings of particular religions to politics, sometimes by merely proclaiming the value of those teachings, at other times by having those teachings influence laws.

In most democracies, political conservatism seeks to uphold traditional family structures and social values. Religious conservatives typically oppose abortion, [LGBT](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT" \o "LGBT) behavior (or, in certain cases, identity), drug use and sexual activity outside of marriage. In some cases, conservative values are grounded in religious beliefs, and conservatives seek to increase the role of religion in public life.

1. **Authoritarian conservatism** or **reactionary conservatism** refers to [autocratic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autocratic" \o "Autocratic) regimes that center their ideology around [conservative nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_nationalism" \o "Conservative nationalism), rather than [ethnic nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_nationalism" \o "Ethnic nationalism), though certain racial components such as [antisemitism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antisemitism" \o "Antisemitism) may exist. Authoritarian conservative movements show strong devotion towards religion, tradition and culture while also expressing fervent nationalism akin to other far-right nationalist movements. Examples of authoritarian conservative leaders include [António de Oliveira Salazar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ant%C3%B3nio_de_Oliveira_Salazar" \o "António de Oliveira Salazar) and [Engelbert Dollfuss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engelbert_Dollfuss" \o "Engelbert Dollfuss).

**Reference.**

["Conservatism (political philosophy)"](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/133435/conservatism). *Britannica.com*. Retrieved 1 November 2009.  
 Jost, J.J, Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A.A., & Sulloway, F.J. (2003). [Political conservatism as motivated social cognition](https://www.academia.edu/download/34149497/Jost_et_al._2003_Political_conservatism_as_motivated_social_cognition.pdf)[*[permanent dead link](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Link_rot" \o "Wikipedia:Link rot)*]. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129:(3), pp. 339–375.

 Muller, Jerry Z., ed. (1997). *[Conservatism: an anthology of social and political thought from David Hume to the present](https://archive.org/details/conservatismanth00mull)*. Princeton University Press.