

## DISCUSS AND EVALUATE THE IDEAS OF CONSERVATISM

Conservatism is a preference for the historically inherited rather than the abstract and ideal. This preference has traditionally rested on an organic conception of society—that is, on the belief that society is not merely a loose collection of individuals but a living organism comprising closely connected, interdependent members. Conservatives thus favour institutions and practices that have evolved gradually and are manifestations of 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. In *The Devil's Dictionary* (1906), the American writer Ambrose Bierce cynically (but not inappropriately) defined the 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.

The first established use of the term in a political context originated in 1818 with François-René de Chateaubriand<sup>[5]</sup> 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 ideas of conservatism by different philosophers and scholars. They are, 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.

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 defence of civil rights, environmentalism and support for a limited welfare state. In continental Europe, this is sometimes also translated into English as social conservatism.

Conservative liberalism is a variant of liberalism that combines liberal values and policies with conservative stances.[10][11][12] 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.

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. 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. 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. 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. Many Americans who are classical liberals also tend to identify as libertarian, holding more socially liberal views and advocating a non-interventionist foreign policy while supporting lower taxes and less government spending. Because of its close proximity to the United States, the term has entered the lexicon in Canada. In many other countries, liberalism or economic liberalism is used to describe what Americans call fiscal 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, 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. 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.

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 or supporting a far-right approach. In Europe, national conservatives are usually eurosceptics. 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: "Most parties of the Right [today] are run by economic conservatives who, in varying degrees, have marginalized social, cultural, and national conservatives". National conservatism is also related to traditionalist conservatism.

Cultural conservatives 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 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.

Defending inequality, in contrast to the tradition-based definition of conservatism, some political theorists such as Corey Robin define conservatism primarily in terms of a general defense of social and economic inequality. From this perspective, conservatism is less an attempt to uphold traditional institutions and more "a meditation on—and theoretical rendition of—the felt experience of having power, seeing it threatened, and trying to win it back". Conversely, some conservatives may argue that they are seeking less to protect their own power than they are seeking to protect "inalienable rights" and promote norms and rules that they believe should stand timeless and eternal, applying to each citizen.

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 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.

Paternalistic conservatism is a strand in conservatism which reflects the belief that societies exist and develop organically and that members within them have obligations towards each other. There is particular emphasis on the paternalistic obligation of those who are privileged and wealthy to the poorer parts of society. Since it is consistent with principles such as organicism, hierarchy and duty, it can be seen as an outgrowth of traditional conservatism. Paternal conservatives support neither the individual nor the state in principle, but are instead prepared to support either or recommend a balance between the two depending on what is most practical. It stresses the importance of a social safety net to deal with poverty, support of limited redistribution of wealth along with government regulation of markets in the interests of both consumers and producers.

Authoritarian conservatism or reactionary conservatism refers to autocratic regimes that center their ideology around conservative nationalism, rather than ethnic nationalism, though certain racial components such as 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 and Engelbert Dollfuss. Authoritarian conservative movements were prominent in the same era as fascism, with which it sometimes clashed. Although both ideologies shared core values such as nationalism and had common enemies such as communism and materialism, there was nonetheless a contrast between the traditionalist nature of authoritarian conservatism and the revolutionary, palingenetic and populist nature of fascism—thus it was common for authoritarian conservative regimes to suppress rising fascist and National Socialist movements. The hostility between the two ideologies is highlighted by the struggle for power for the National Socialists in Austria, which was marked by the assassination of Engelbert Dollfuss.