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**DISCUSS AND EVALUATE THE IDEA OF CONSERVATISM**

First of all what is conservatism?

Conservatism is any political philosophy that favors tradition (in the sense of various religious, cultural, or nationally-defined beliefs and customs) in the face of external forces for change, and is critical of proposals for radical social change. Some Conservatives seek to preserve the status quo or to reform society slowly, while others seek to return to the values of an earlier time.

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It is opposition to rapid changes, and supports keeping traditions in society. Gradualism is one form. The first known use of the term in a political context was by François-René de Chateaubriand in 1818. The term is associated with right-wing politics. It has been used to describe a wide range of views.

Classical Conservatism does not reject change per se, but insists that changes be organic, rather than revolutionary, arguing that any attempt to modify the complex web of human interactions that form human society purely for the sake of some doctrine or theory runs the risk of running afoul of the law of unintended consequences and/or of moral hazards. As a general ideology, Conservatism is opposed to the ideals of Liberalism and Socialism.

Conservatism generally refers to right-wing politics which advocate the preservation of personal wealth and private ownership (Capitalism) and emphasize self-reliance and Individualism. Conservatives in general are more punitive toward criminals, tend to hold more orthodox religious views, and are often ethnocentric and hostile toward homosexuals and other minority groups.

Different cultures have different established values and, in consequence, Conservatives in different cultures have differing goals. Many forms of Conservatism incorporate elements of other ideologies and philosophies, and in turn, Conservatism has influence upon them. For example, Nationalism shares many Conservative values (although usually to a more exaggerated degree), and most Conservatives strongly support the sovereign nation and patriotically identify with their own nation (although most Conservatives distrust the xenophobic or racist sentiments that are prominent in some far-right wing groups).

The term "conservatism" is derived from the Latin "conservare" (meaning to "protect" or "preserve") and from the French derivative "conservateur". Its usage in a political sense began to appear only after the French Revolution of 1789, and then only hesitantly, only taking its characteristic political connotation in the 1820s.

**History of Conservatism**

It was not until the late 18th century, in reaction to the upheavals of the 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 monarchy in France, including the author and diplomat **Franƈois-Auguste-René,** vicomte de Chateaubriand. In 1830 the British politician and writer John Wilson Croker used the term to describe the British Tory Party (see Whig and Tory), and John C. Calhoun, an ardent defender of states’ rights in the United States, adopted it soon afterward. The originator of modern, articulated conservatism (though he never used the term himself) is generally acknowledged to be the British parliamentarian and political writer Edmund Burke, whose 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.

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, 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 saw **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.

**Edmund Burke** (1729–1797)

Shortly after Burke's death in 1797, conservatism revived as a mainstream political force as the Whigs suffered a series of internal divisions. This new generation of conservatives derived their politics not from Burke, but from his predecessor, the Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), who was a Jacobite and traditional Tory, lacking Burke's sympathies for Whiggish policies such as Catholic emancipation and American independence (famously attacked by Samuel Johnson in "Taxation No Tyranny"). In the first half of the 19th century, many newspapers, magazines, and journals promoted loyalist or right-wing attitudes in religion, politics and international affairs. Burke was seldom mentioned, but William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806) became a conspicuous hero. The most prominent journals included The Quarterly Review, founded in 1809 as a counterweight to the Whigs' Edinburgh Review and the even more conservative Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. Sack finds that the Quarterly Review promoted a balanced Canningite toryism as it was neutral on Catholic emancipation and only mildly critical of Nonconformist Dissent; it opposed slavery and supported the current poor laws; and it was "aggressively imperialist". The high-church clergy of the Church of England read the Orthodox Churchman's Magazine which was equally hostile to Jewish, Catholic, Jacobin, Methodist and Unitarian spokesmen. Anchoring the ultra Tories, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine stood firmly against Catholic emancipation and favored slavery, cheap money, mercantilism, the Navigation Acts and the Holy Alliance.

Conservatism evolved after 1820, embracing free trade in 1846 and a commitment to democracy, especially under Disraeli. The effect was to significantly strengthen conservatism as a grassroots political force. Conservatism no longer was the philosophical defense of the landed aristocracy, but had been refreshed into redefining its commitment to the ideals of order, both secular and religious, expanding imperialism, strengthened monarchy and a more generous vision of the welfare state as opposed to the punitive vision of the Whigs and liberals. As early as 1835, Disraeli attacked the Whigs and utilitarians as slavishly devoted to an industrial oligarchy, while he described his fellow Tories as the only "really democratic party of England" and devoted to the interests of the whole people. Nevertheless, inside the party there was a tension between the growing numbers of wealthy businessmen on the one side and the aristocracy and rural gentry on the other. The aristocracy gained strength as businessmen discovered they could use their wealth to buy a peerage and a country estate.

Although conservatives opposed attempts to allow greater representation of the middle class in parliament, they conceded that electoral reform could not be reversed and promised to support further reforms so long as they did not erode the institutions of church and state. These new principles were presented in the Tamworth Manifesto of 1834, which historians regard as the basic statement of the beliefs of the new Conservative Party.

**Robert Peel** (1788–1850)

Some conservatives lamented the passing of a pastoral world where the ethos of noblesse oblige had promoted respect from the lower classes. They saw the Anglican Church and the aristocracy as balances against commercial wealth. They worked toward legislation for improved working conditions and urban housing.This viewpoint would later be called Tory democracy. However, since Burke, there has always been tension between traditional aristocratic conservatism and the wealthy business class.

In 1834, Tory Prime Minister Robert Peel issued the Tamworth Manifesto in which he pledged to endorse moderate political reform. This marked the beginning of the transformation of British conservatism from High Tory reaction towards a more modern form based on "conservation". The party became known as the Conservative Party as a result, a name it has retained to this day. However, Peel would also be the root of a split in the party between the traditional Tories (led by the Earl of Derby and Benjamin Disraeli) and the "Peelites" (led first by Peel himself, then by the Earl of Aberdeen). The split occurred in 1846 over the issue of free trade, which Peel supported, versus protectionism, supported by Derby. The majority of the party sided with Derby whilst about a third split away, eventually merging with the Whigs and the radicals to form the Liberal Party. Despite the split, the mainstream Conservative Party accepted the doctrine of free trade in 1852.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Liberal Party faced political schisms, especially over Irish Home Rule. Leader William Gladstone (himself a former Peelite) sought to give Ireland a degree of autonomy, a move that elements in both the left and right-wings of his party opposed. These split off to become the Liberal Unionists (led by Joseph Chamberlain), forming a coalition with the Conservatives before merging with them in 1912. The Liberal Unionist influence dragged the Conservative Party towards the left as Conservative governments passing a number of progressive reforms at the turn of the 20th century. By the late 19th century, the traditional business supporters of the Liberal Party had joined the Conservatives, making them the party of business and commerce.

After a period of Liberal dominance before the First World War, the Conservatives gradually became more influential in government, regaining full control of the cabinet in 1922. In the inter-war period, conservatism was the major ideology in Britain as the Liberal Party vied with the Labour Party for control of the left. After the Second World War, the first Labour government (1945–1951) under Clement Attlee embarked on a program of nationalization of industry and the promotion of social welfare. The Conservatives generally accepted those policies until the 1980s.

**Margaret Thatcher** (1925–2013), under whose leadership the Conservative Party has shifted their economic policies to the right as well as Thatcherism

In the 1980s, the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, guided by neoliberal economics, reversed many of Labour's programmes. The Conservative Party also adopt soft eurosceptic politics, and oppose Federal Europe. Other conservative political parties, such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP, founded in 1993), Northern Ireland's Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP, founded in 1971), began to appear, although they have yet to make any significant impact at Westminster (as of 2014, the DUP comprises the largest political party in the ruling coalition in the Northern Ireland Assembly), and from 2017 to 2019 the DUP provided support for the Conservative minority government.

**Types of conservatism**

1. Cultural Conservatism is a philosophy that supports preservation of the heritage of a nation or culture (or sometimes of language traditions), usually by the adaptation of norms handed down from the past.
2. Social Conservatism is a subset of Cultural Conservatism where the norms may also be moral (e.g. opposition to homosexuality, covering of women's faces, etc). In Europe, however, it usually refers to "Liberal" Conservatives, who support modern European welfare states.
3. Religious Conservatism seeks to preserve the teachings of particular religious ideologies, either by example or by law. Religious Conservatives may promote broad campaigns for a return to traditional values, or they may go the radical route, looking to preserve a belief in its original or pristine form.
4. Fiscal Conservatism is the economic philosophy of prudence in government spending and debt, arguing that a government does not have the right to run up large debts and then throw the burden on the taxpayer.
5. Paleo-Conservatism is a moderate to extreme form of Conservatism, popular in the Bible Belt states of the USA, which emphasizes religious heritage, national and Western identity, tradition, civil society, anti-interventionist policies and classical federalism. It specifically opposes illegal immigration, communism, authoritarianism, social democracy and entitlement programs.
6. Neo-Conservatism is the "new" Conservative movement which emerged in the United States in opposition to the perceived Liberalism of the 1960s. It emphasizes an interventionist foreign policy, free trade and free market economics and a general disapproval of counterculture.
7. Bio-Conservatism is a stance of hesitancy about technological development, and a skepticism about medical and other biotechnological transformations of the living world (e.g. cloning, genetic engineering), especially if it is perceived to threaten a given social order.

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, anti-traditionalist 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 favors the restoration of a previous, and usually outmoded, political or social order.