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QUESTION

IN NOT MORE THAN 5PAGES DISCUSS AND EVALUATET THE IDEA OF CONSERVATISM.

Conservatism is a political ideology that values the creation and maintenance of stable societies based upon a hierarchy of power lodged in a traditional class of leaders and deep respect for traditional values and institutions. Conservatism isn't suspicious of the power of the state nor does it seek to limit its power. Traditional institutions, such as government and religion, along with traditional values are to be respected. Consequently, conservatism is suspicious of change, and if change is required, it seeks an evolutionary approach rather than a revolutionary approach. Let's look at an example.

HISTORY

The modern conservative school of thought can be traced to the 18th century British philosopher Edmund Burke and his 1790 work Reflections on the Revolution in France. Burke found that humans were not just rational but also full of passion and prejudice and inherently unequal. However, according to Burke, despite the reality of unequal status and wealth, humans are interdependent. Society is 'organic,' or real, rather than just an abstraction created by the musings of philosophers. Burke believed that the state holds the wisdom accumulated by society over time and should be given a great deal of respect.

An important aspect of Burke's conservatism is the suspicion of change. According to Burke, change should only occur if absolutely necessary in order to avoid a greater evil. For example, a country that has remained neutral in times of war would only change that policy of neutrality to avoid the greater evil of being invaded and conquered. Any proposed change should be reviewed carefully in light of the facts on the ground rather than through a prism of abstract theory. In other words, change should be based on pragmatism. Likewise, the process of change should not be guided by abstract theory but be based on tradition and previous practice. According to Burke, radical change is always dangerous and can seriously disrupt society.

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 favours the restoration of a previous, and usually outmode Conservatism is as much a matter of temperament as of doctrine. It may sometimes even accompany left-wing politics or economics—as it did, for example, in the late 1980s, when hard-line communists in the Soviet Union were often referred to as “conservatives.” Typically, however, the conservative temperament displays two characteristics that are scarcely compatible with communism. The first is a distrust of human nature, rootlessness (social disconnectedness), and untested innovations, together with a corresponding trust in unbroken historical continuity and in the traditional frameworks for conducting human affairs. Such frameworks may be political, cultural, or religious, or they may have no abstract or institutional expression at all..

A common way of distinguishing conservatism from both liberalism and radicalism is to say that conservatives reject the optimistic view that human beings can be morally improved through political and social change. Conservatives who are Christians 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, 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, 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.

The core value of conservatism include:

1.Individualism – where people take personal responsibility for their actions

2.Organic society – where people have positions in society and that everyone integrates and has obligations to the community

3.Human nature - They believe that humans are imperfect and cannot be changed

4.Order & Hierarchy – Essential to the continuation of society for there to be structure and leadership

5.Tradition – This refers to the beliefs, institutions, customs, and practices handed down from one generation to the next

6.Inequality – There is an acceptance that while this has negative connotations it is a necessity for society to progress

7.Private property – They stress the importance of property as a way for people to be part of society and as a way to contradict socialism

8.Pragmatism - Goes against the idea that Conservatism is fully opposed to change. Realisation that there needs to be a working relationship between governed and government

Conservatism can be used describe somebody’s personality traits as being conservative, but you can have conservative elements of political ideologies or parties. For example Stalin has been called a conservative communist, Tony Blair was seen as conservative in the Labour Party.

References

1.www.plato.stanford.edu

2.www,study.com