
Principles Of Conservatism in Politics

Conservatism as a political ideology expresses the views of people who place tradition, order, social stability and the preservation of key institutions, such as religion, property rights, hierarchy and authority as their top priorities. Conservatives tend to oppose radical reforms in society and they strictly relate reason to history and documented experience in selecting political systems and parties that enable members of a society to live good lives. The notion of "good lives" implies a hidden morality, which must be observed in order to achieve arrangements that are in the interest of the society members in general.

Conservatism has its origins in late 18th century when Edmund Burke, an Anglo-Irish politician and author spoke against the French revolution and the capacity of the revolution as a political action to transform society in a new order, where power will be exerted as a tool for good governance.

Conservative parties have been traditionally associated with right wing parties, although the policies deriving for the ideology can differ significantly worldwide as the traditions which conservatives defend can be quite different in different countries and continents.

Opposing liberalism and socialism, conservatism is often criticized as adopting solely an anti-liberal or anti-socialist attitude with no positive proposition of its own. This defense of limited politics has been by some thinkers interpreted as a defence of economic and social inequality and under this perspective as a clear preference to competition. Excess power exercised by radical ideologists, often beyond the constitutional framework, has always been for conservatives the Pandora's box that had to be kept sealed.

According to Huntington (1957) the six principles that form the basis for conservatism are the following:

- a) Man is basically a religious animal, and religion is the foundation of civil society. A divine sanction infuses the legitimate, existing, social order.
- b) Society is the natural, organic product of slow historical growth. Existing institutions embody the wisdom of previous generations.
- c) Man is a creature of instinct and emotion as well as reason. Prudence, prejudice, experience, and habit are better guides than reason, logic, abstractions, and metaphysics.
- d) The community is superior to the individual. The rights of men derive from their duties. Evil is rooted in human nature, not in any particular social institutions.
- e) Except in an ultimate moral sense, men are unequal. Social organization is complex and always includes a variety of classes, orders, and groups. Differentiation, hierarchy, and leadership are the inevitable characteristics of any civil society.
- f) A presumption exists "in favor of any settled scheme against any untried project..." Man's

hopes are high, but his vision is short. Efforts to remedy existing evils usually result in even greater ones”.

Green Politics on the other hand is a term used for expressing the political views of people who place the protection of the environment as their top priority. The key concept of Green Politics is the philosophy of ecological harmony, or ecosophy, adopting the term ecological wisdom and deep ecology as introduced by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naas (1971 as in 1989). With the Global Greens Charter, a document signed by delegates of Green parties coming from 72 countries, all members have committed themselves to the following six principles:

- a) Ecological wisdom,
- b) Social justice,
- c) Participatory democracy,
- d) Non-violence,
- e) Sustainability,
- f) Respect for diversity.

Green parties have always been characterized as left wing parties. Even though the flourishing era for Green Politics has started in the 1960s with the environmental classic, *Silent Spring*, the Rachel Carson’s masterpiece being the catalyst for the environmental movement, there were some early signs of ecosocialism writing in the late 19th century, when William Morris an English writer and artist expressed his opposition to the industrial revolution and the mechanized production. His novel, *News from Nowhere* (1890), can be considered as the ancestor of the literature developed through the 1960s and the decades that followed, where the green alternative is strongly binded with the socialist ideas of that era, a bond that remains more or less intact in its basis until today.

Green Politics are often associated with “environmentalism” and “ecologism” (Dobson, 2007) , the former expressing more a technocrat-like approach to use science and technology for protecting the environment and saving the natural resources and the latter expressing a comprehensive political approach that covers not only the relation between the human and non-human world, but the inter-human relations as well. Environmentalism advocates for changes, usually at a step by step basis, in our policies and practices through institutional means and methods, whereas ecologism promotes more radical reforms that may require even constitutional changes. In that sense Green Politics clearly incorporate ecologism, which is considered to be their first and most important pillar. Social justice is the second pillar and the one which upgrades the theory to an ideology. Protecting the environment does imply protecting human societies in a way that all members could live in a decent way, without poverty and extreme inequalities.

In that sense this second pillar comes from the roots of social ecology as founded by Murray Bookchin (1921-2006), an American author, historian, and political philosopher. His book, *Our Synthetic Environment* (1962) , described a broad range of environmental ills but received little attention, whereas his book, *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982) , had a profound impact on the

emerging ecology movement, both in the United States and abroad. Together with ecological wisdom and social justice comes the pursuit of democracy in practice, favouring public participation and common decision making in the full spectrum of political issues. This is in most of the cases possible only in a state of decentralised governance, which allows for participatory democracy practices to flourish.

The fourth and last of the pillars of Green Politics is the adoption of nonviolence as the basic attitude towards others. It has been inherited from Gandhi's belief that measures that do not promote violence are more effective in the long term and more inspiring to people. An anti-war stance, condemning arms trade was a key moto of the peace anti-nuclear movement of the 1960s, a part of which evolved in the Greens of the 1980s. It is, though, a trembling pillar of Green Politics as on one hand the participation of Green Parties in government coalitions (i.e. the Green Party in Germany) led to some difficult decisions about participating in wars and arms trade policies, whereas at a root level a number of green networks, activist groups or NGOs has developed, promoting direct action defending Mother Earth. Direct Action, Earth First!, Plane Stupid, Rising Tide, Climate Camps are only a few of a long series that for the time being refrain from main stream politics and take immediate action pursuing their goals.

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