

Aspects of Conservatism

History

- It developed after liberalism
- Was originally a defence of aristocracy (Toryism)

Attitude, Not Just Ideology

- To conserve (usually existing privileges)
- Cautious/think before acting/change always causes loss

Human Nature/Psychology

- Negative: passion over reason; is distrustful of humanism and the Enlightenment
- Habitual; desire for the familiar
- **To be a conservative, then, is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded ... [and] present laughter to utopian bliss. *Michael Oakeshott***
- Hierarchy / Paternalism

Change

- Only if absolutely necessary; gradualism

Rights

- Rights are earned by respecting the rights of others in your community; they aren't just by-products of human existence

Government

- Originally it believed in aristocracy (of landowners);
- Now it accepts democracy, albeit in a limited form: the doctrine of "checks and balances".

Economics

- Used to favour mercantilism; now it favours classical (or neo-liberal) economics (few regulations/low taxes/free trade).

The New Upper Class

- Aristocrats → Capitalist Class (e.g. Downton Abbey/Cdn. Senate)

Current Types:

1. Pro-business conservatives (esp. corporations)
2. Authoritarian populism (e.g. Orban/Trump)
3. Libertarians (esp. guns and low taxes)
4. Conservative Christians