

Chapter 1 : American conservatism - encyclopedia article - Citizendium

American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia is the first comprehensive reference volume to cover what is surely the most influential political and intellectual movement of the last half century.

It expresses the instinctive human fear of sudden change, and tendency to habitual action. The arch-royalist and anti-populist Earl of Clarendon, writing the history of the 17th century English Civil War soon after it happened, was instinctively conservative in this broader, un-self-conscious sense. The most distinctive and historically important version of this narrower, self-conscious conservatism rests on scepticism concerning reason in politics. Various precursors of this self-conscious conservatism have been claimed. Aristotle is often cited, for holding that morality and politics "unlike natural science" lack special experts, and that in these areas, human experience over generations is the main source of knowledge. Confucius is another possible precursor. From a later but still pre-Enlightenment era, the English common law notion of precedent, developed by such as Edward Coke " , is a clear influence on self-conscious conservatism Pocock He was a sceptic about reasoning concerning ends as opposed to means, but did not live to see the French Revolution and the arguments underlying it; Dr. The 18th century European Enlightenment aimed to improve the human condition through reform of political institutions. The French Revolution gave powerful expression to this belief, rapidly reinforced by the Industrial Revolution and growth of capitalism. For many contemporary writers, the French Revolution was a liberation of the human spirit, an assertion of reason against irrational feudal authority. Although conservative thinkers opposed the French Revolution, their attitude towards the Enlightenment is debated. He rejected a priori reasoning in politics, notably claims to abstract natural rights, manifested most dramatically in the French Jacobin dream of destroying and rebuilding society. Burke holds that there is a practical wisdom in institutions that is mostly not articulable theoretically, certainly not in advance, but is passed down in culture and tradition. On revolution and Jacobinism, see Graham Conservatism and revolutionary Jacobinism are inter-dependent concepts that arose together, in conjunction with liberalism and socialism. One could argue that there is a conceptual holism between them, in that they cannot be understood independently of each other, and must be inter-defined Hamilton ch 1. Cressy suggests that in the English Civil War of the s, a metaphorical use emerged, meaning sudden, dramatic change in politics or religion. With the Enlightenment, the natural order or social hierarchy previously largely accepted was questioned. Implicit in Jacobinism is what may be termed revolutionary utopianism, which allows the sacrifice of present generations for alleged future benefit. According to critics of utopianism such as Schiller, indeed, one should not even sacrifice oneself for a utopian vision, as do members of revolutionary organisations, such as Nelson Mandela and Joe Slovo of the ANC; Schiller, and Goethe, also provided conservative critiques of French Revolutionary ideals and practices. Present generations possess duties and responsibilities whose original reasons, if they were ever apparent, are now lost. Tradition represents for conservatives a continuum enmeshing the individual and social, and is immune to reasoned critique; the radical intellectual is therefore arrogant and dangerous Kekes For liberals and socialists, in contrast, tradition has value only insofar as it survives rational criticism. Conservatism therefore rests on what may be termed particularist scepticism concerning abstract rational principles. I cannot [praise or blame] human actions "on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction; Burke, WS III: Unlike liberals and socialists, therefore, conservatives are particularist in rejecting universal prescriptions and panaceas; they reject the Enlightenment-modernist requirement that practical rationality is liberated from all particularism Beveridge and Turnbull The parallel is incomplete, however; political conservatives do not deny that there are general principles, they just deny that one should apply them. Their position is an essentially epistemic one "that one cannot know the general principles whose implementation would benefit the operation of society. The conservative vision is that people will come to value the privileges of choice "when they see how much in their lives must always remain unchosen. Nor does its scepticism constitute a critique of society in the Marxist sense. For conservatives, society rests on prejudice, not reason; prejudice is not irrational, but simply unreasoning. Burke advocated

educated prejudice as an antidote to its bigoted forms—arguably, not a rejection of reason, but a scepticism about its inordinate pretensions. Philosophers might speculate about why we have the duties that we do, but prejudice makes us act, without having to calculate all the consequences—or indeed to reason about ends. This is not the irrationalism of Nietzsche or Freud, for whom much of human behaviour is irrationally driven, but rather, a non-rationalist standpoint. It is sceptical about proposals of reform based on a priori commitment to a value such as freedom or equality. Conservatives believe that values of justice, freedom, and truth are important and should be pursued by the state, but they interpret those values in a concrete fashion. It advocates piecemeal, moderate reform, which follows from its scepticism concerning reason, and its valuing of experience concerning human affairs. But change must be cautious, because knowledge is imperfect and consequences can be unintended. According to conservatives, institutions and morals evolve, their weaknesses become apparent and obvious political abuses are corrected; but ancient institutions embody a tacit wisdom that deserves respect. Conservatives are sceptical of large-scale constitutional, economic or cultural planning, because behaviour and institutions have evolved through the wisdom of generations, which cannot easily be articulated. The notion of tradition is central to conservatism, and its self-conscious, contrastive use arises only in modernity. For conservatives, vital political relations are organic. Unlike reactionary thinkers, they regard traditions not as static, but as in a gentle and gradual flux, encouraged by the astute reformer. Reform must be practically and not theoretically-based: I must see with my own eyes—touch with my own hands not only the fixed but the momentary circumstances, before I could venture to suggest any political project whatsoever I must see the means of correcting the plan—I must see the things; I must see the men. Conservatives aim to conserve the political arrangements that have historically shown themselves to be conducive to good lives thus understood. It is reaction and not conservatism that is inherently authoritarian. For conservatives, individuals and local communities are better assessors of their own needs and problems than distant bureaucrats. Free from utopian planning, conservatives hold, society finds its own, largely beneficial, shape. But conservatism is generally regarded as a philosophy, if not a systematic one. Two contrasting interpretations of conservatism distinguish it from mere pragmatism. The judgement of whether something is broken or runs reasonably well appeals to values accepted in the relevant society. Thus conservatives in reasonably functioning socialist, feudal and fascist countries advocate different modes of social organisation and gradual improvement, according to prevailing values. On this view, conservative particularism is relativistic. On this interpretation, particularism does not imply relativism. Revolutionary systems, and autocratic systems with no possibility of incremental change—societies that do not exhibit living traditions—are not amenable to a conservative outlook. Conservatism is situational, but some situations do not permit conservative responses. The sarcastic dismissal of Burke by a liberal defender of the Revolution, J. In the case of public institutions, Mr. Burke had—worked himself into an artificial admiration of the bare fact of existence; especially ancient existence. Everything was to be protected, not because it was good, but, because it existed. Evil, to render itself an object of reverence in his eye, required only to be realised. This non-relativist position is minimally rational and universal, while remaining particularist. This terminology is elucidated further at 2. Lock regards 1 and 2 as an unBurkean choice between constructed opposites, arguing that Burke is not strongly relativist, but recognises temporal and geographical differences that amount to a kind of relativism. Perhaps he overlooks the contestability of conceptions of the good life, and of arrangements that preserve it; liberals, for instance, stress the value of individual freedom, independent of burdensome constraints of tradition. According to 2, there is a conservative conception of the good life, and of the arrangements that preserve it—one that rejects the over-valuation of Enlightenment rationalism and revolution. But as we will see, conservatives must steer a course between unconservative mere pragmatism, and unconservative substantive policy. The issue recurs throughout this entry, especially in sections 2. For Graham, conservative scepticism is not so much a scepticism about the moral perfection of mankind, as a scepticism about the knowledge necessary in politics. Liberals and socialists stress the malleability of human nature under the influence of changeable historical conditions. The anti-conservative Rousseau had an optimistic conception of human nature, blaming government and society for failings that—according to conservatives—belong to individuals. Conservatives, in contrast, regard human nature as weak and fallible, unalterably selfish rather than altruistic. Kekes Scruton

is typical in regarding human beings as frail creatures of limited sympathy not easily extending to those remote in space or time. Scruton. Conservatism is popularly confused with neo-conservatism and with libertarianism. But right libertarians and neo-conservatives, unlike Burkean conservatives, reject state planning for doctrinaire reasons. Conservatives reject ideologies, of which neo-liberalism is one. As Oakeshott argues, a plan to resist all planning may be better than its opposite, but it belongs to the same style of politics. And only in a society already deeply infected with Rationalism will the conversion of the traditional resources of resistance to the tyranny of Rationalism into a self-conscious ideology be considered a strengthening of those resources. It seems that now, in order to participate in politics [one must have] a doctrine. Conservatives oppose rational planning, but do not dogmatically oppose planning that works. Scruton, for instance, believes that a market economy is most conducive to prosperity, but like Adam Smith, insists that markets should work within, and not erode, customs and moral and legal traditions. Conservatism differs from neo-conservatism and libertarianism in motivation or formal features, therefore. It has been argued by Harvey ; Ha Joon Chang that neo-conservatives do not reduce state intervention, but simply shift its priorities, while maintaining its massive scale. Nozick and conservatism seem to share a commitment to the invisible hand of the free market, and rejection of an extensive state. But Nozick is more plausibly regarded as a right libertarian, an extreme classical or neo-liberal. Conservatives avoid such principles. Perhaps neo-liberalism is libertarianism plus related economic doctrines, while neo-conservatism is libertarianism plus elements of traditional conservatism. Neo-liberals like Milton Friedman question drug-prohibition and conscription, which conservatives and neo-conservatives would not. Feudalism is a contested label for the economic system prevalent in Europe from after the decline of the Roman Empire until the 16th century, and which rested on the holding of land in return for labour; in France, it persisted as the ancien regime up till the French Revolution. A sympathiser with the ancien regime such as Burke could therefore be regarded as a feudal romantic. On feudalism, see Dyer , and Pocock. Like some socialists, many 19th century conservatives reacted against industrialism and laissez-faire capitalism with a feudal nostalgia. Conservatism may seem to share the laissez-faire doctrine, imputed to Adam Smith, of the invisible hand—according to which, in a free market, unintended consequences of actions tend to promote the general good. The evolutionary nature and anti-statism of laissez-faire theory appeal to conservatives, but as we saw, they would not reject planning in a doctrinaire way. Hayek valued local, transient, untheoretical knowledge, and advocated unfettered markets on the conservative sceptical grounds that they best realise organic social institutions. For him it is the intellectual justification of inequality and privilege, and the political justification of the authoritative relationships such inequalities and privileges demand.

Chapter 2 : American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia - Google Books

American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia is the first comprehensive reference volume to cover what is surely the most influential political and intellectual movement of the last half century. More than a decade in the making and more than half a million words in length—this informative and entertaining.

See Article History Neoconservatism, variant of the political ideology of conservatism that combines features of traditional conservatism with political individualism and a qualified endorsement of free markets. Neoconservatism arose in the United States in the s among intellectuals who shared a dislike of communism and a disdain for the counterculture of the s, especially its political radicalism and its animus against authority, custom, and tradition. Intellectual influences Among their intellectual ancestors neoconservatives count the ancient Greek historian Thucydides for his unblinking realism in military matters and his skepticism toward democracy , as well as Alexis de Tocqueville , the French author of *Democracy in America* ⁴⁰ , who described and analyzed both the bright and the bad sides of democracy in the United States. Culture and religion In its respect for established institutions and practices, neoconservatism resembles the traditional conservatism of the 18th-century Irish statesman Edmund Burke. Neoconservatives, however, tend to pay more attention than traditional conservatives to cultural matters and the mass media—to music, art, literature, theatre, film, and, more recently, television and the Internet —because they believe that a society defines itself and expresses its values through these means. Western and particularly American society, they charge, has become amoral, adrift, and degenerate. As evidence of the moral corruption of Western culture , they cite violent and sexually explicit films, television programs, and video games, and they point to popular music that is rife with obscenities that have lost their capacity to shock and disgust. Actions once regarded as shameful are now accepted as normal. For example, most people in the West now consider it perfectly acceptable for unmarried men and women to live together and even to have children. Such degenerate behaviour, say neoconservatives, indicates a broader and deeper cultural crisis afflicting Western civilization. The American political scientist James Q. Wilson , for example, traced the crisis to the 18th-century European Enlightenment , which encouraged people to question established authority, to criticize religion, and to reject traditional beliefs. Whatever its source, neoconservatives maintain that this degeneration represents a real and present danger to Western civilization. People without a sense of something larger than themselves, something transcendent and eternal, are apt to turn to mindless entertainment—including drugs and alcohol—and to act selfishly and irresponsibly. Religion at its best is a kind of social cement, holding families, communities , and countries together. At its worst, however, religion can be fanatical, intolerant, and divisive , tearing communities apart instead of uniting them. Most neoconservatives thus believe that the principle of the separation of church and state , as enshrined in the First Amendment to the U. Constitution , is a good idea. They also believe, however, that it has been pursued to extremes by adherents of modern liberalism, who are bent on banishing religion from public life, resulting in a backlash from religious-right conservatives. Neoconservatives also hold that the modern liberal ideal of cultural diversity , or multiculturalism —the principle of not only tolerating but also respecting different religions and cultures and encouraging them to coexist harmoniously—tends to undermine the traditional culture of any country that tries to put it into practice. These trends, they believe, are likely to produce a conservative backlash, such as those that took place in Denmark and the Netherlands, where anti-immigrant political parties became increasingly popular in the s and early s. Economic and social policy In economics, neoconservatives believe that markets are an efficient means of allocating goods and services. They are not, however, wholehearted advocates of free-market capitalism. As Kristol remarked, capitalism deserves two cheers, not three, because its innovative character produces almost-constant social upheavals and disruptions. Capitalism presupposes a willingness to save, to invest, and to defer gratification; at the same time, through advertising and marketing techniques, it encourages people to indulge themselves, to live on credit, and to pay little heed to the farther future. Unregulated capitalism, moreover, creates great wealth alongside dire poverty; it richly rewards some people while leaving others behind. And since great disparities of wealth make the wealthy contemptuous of the poor

and the poor envious of the rich, capitalism can create conditions that cause class conflict, labour unrest, and political instability. At the same time, however, neoconservatives warn that well-intentioned government programs can produce unintended and unfortunate consequences for the people they are meant to help. More particularly, neoconservatives argue that social welfare programs can and often do create dependency and undermine individual initiative, ambition, and responsibility. Such programs should therefore aim to provide only temporary or short-term assistance. Nor should the goal of social programs and tax policy be to level the differences between individuals and classes. Neoconservatives claim to favour equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome. While favouring the existence of the welfare state, they also believe that it should be scaled back, because it has become, in their view, too large, too bureaucratic and unwieldy, and too generous. In domestic policy theirs has been an insistent and influential voice. Foreign policy Neoconservatives have been especially influential in the formulation of foreign and military policy, particularly in the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. Bush, and George W. They contend that power—military, economic, or political—that is unused is for all practical purposes wasted. The military might of the United States should be employed around the world to promote American interests. Neoconservatives wish, in the words of Pres. The all-too-real result of such cynical anti-idealism was another and even bloodier second world war. Thus, idealism, far from being impractical, can produce politically practical and even admirable results. From the s, neoconservative idealism took the form of an assertive and interventionist foreign policy that targeted anti-American regimes and leftist movements abroad. Sharp increases in U. Meanwhile, communist-led rebel movements in Latin America were crushed with the help of U. In the George W. Bush administration, neoconservative officials in the Pentagon and the Department of State helped to plan and promote the Iraq War. Criticism Critics contend that, for all their purported idealism and their talk about democracy, neoconservatives have been all too willing to prop up pro-American but deeply undemocratic regimes throughout the world. With respect to domestic policy, neoconservatives are acutely aware of the possible unintended consequences of well-intended programs. But with respect to foreign policy, such skeptical awareness, according to critics, is almost entirely absent. In the months leading up to the Iraq War, for example, neoconservative planners seemed completely unaware that the invasion and occupation of Iraq might produce horrific consequences, such as large-scale sectarian violence and civil war. Such criticism has led some neoconservatives, such as Fukuyama and Michael Lind, to renounce neoconservatism and to become ardent and outspoken critics. Such criticisms notwithstanding, neoconservatism remains an influential ideology.

Chapter 3 : American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia - ISI's Faculty Resource Center

~American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia~ is an insightful encyclopedic compendium offering a survey of the American conservative movement and its diverse elements.

American conservatism, history Modern American conservatism is not strictly defined, but reflects a set of attitudes in a political and social context. Attempting to define political belief into a spectrum of conservatism on the right and liberalism on the left of a straight line is doomed to failure. Minimally, political opinion can be defined in two dimensions: Additional dimensions may be needed to consider international relations. American conservatives tend to be strong supporters of the free market, but vary in the degree of regulation needed, often to keep that market honest. They vary considerably in the importance they give to individual liberties versus a well-ordered society. At times, and in important ways, it has been leavened with populism and specific social and religious considerations and issues and these factors did not always manifest themselves in the political arena in ways consistent with conservative political theory as understood by all significant elements of the conservative political spectrum. It is certainly possible for one to be a fiscal and economic conservative but not a social conservative; in the United States at present, this is the stance of libertarianism. It is also possible to be a social conservative but not an economic conservative – at present, this is a common political stance in, for example, Ireland – or to be a fiscal conservative without being either a social conservative or a broader economic conservative, such as the "deficit hawks" of the Democratic party. In general use, the unqualified term "conservative" is often applied to social conservatives who are not fiscal or economic conservatives. It is rarely applied in the opposite case, except in specific contrast to those who are neither. There is no one model, and no one person or organization that includes every aspect of conservatism; indeed some themes are mutually at odds or contradictory. The most influential political leaders in recent decades included Robert A. Taft , emphasized the court system as a conservative bulwark against popular threats to the rights of Americans. The "populist" version which includes Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and many recent spokesmen , sees the courts as too elitist and wants more popular control over Supreme Court decisions, often arguing against "activist" judges. A strong opposition to liberal intellectual elites has appeared since the s, attacking the mainstream media, higher education, science, and K teachers organized into the National Education Association NEA and American Federation of Teachers AFT. The main criticism is they are a minority foisting liberal ideas on unsuspecting conservative majorities. Thus teachers are attacked for fostering poor education through government monopoly, inefficiency, high costs and liberalism. Types of conservatism Defining "American conservatism" requires a definition of conservatism in general, and the term is applied to a number of ideas and ideologies, some more closely related to core conservative beliefs than others. Classical or institutional conservatism - Opposition to rapid change in governmental and societal institutions. This kind of conservatism is anti-ideological insofar as it emphasizes process slow change over product any particular form of government. To the classical conservative, whether one arrives at a right- or left-leaning government is less important than whether change is effected through rule of law rather than through revolution and sudden innovation. Classical conservatives tend to be anti-ideological, and some would even say anti-philosophical, [1] promoting rather, as Russell Kirk explains, a steady flow of "prescription and prejudice. Ideological conservatism or right-wing conservatism -- In contrast to the anti-ideological classical conservatism, right-wing conservatism is, as its name implies, ideological. It is typified by three distinct subideologies: Together, these subideologies comprise the conservative ideology of people in some English-speaking countries: Neoconservatism , in its United States usage , has come to refer to the views of a subclass of conservatives who support a more assertive foreign policy coupled with one or more other facets of social conservatism, in contrast to the typically isolationist views of early- and midth Century conservatives. Neoconservatism was first described by a group of disaffected liberals, and thus Irving Kristol , usually credited as its intellectual progenitor, defined a "neoconservative" as "a liberal who was mugged by reality. Small government conservatism -- Small government conservatives look for a decreased role of the federal government and weaker state governments. Small government conservatives rather than focusing of

the protections given individuals by the Bill of Rights, they try to weaken the federal government, thereby following the Founding Fathers who were suspicious of a centralized, unitary state like the United Kingdom, from which they had just won their freedom. They were opponents of the New Deal and its legacy under Eisenhower and Nixon. They were opposed by the neoconservatism of the 1980s. The paleoconservatives stress tradition, civil society, classical federalism and the heritage of traditional Christian civilization]. They see socialism and liberal welfare states as malevolent attempts to remake humanity. Paleos warn that the dominant forces in Western society no longer support conserving the traditions, institutions, and values that created and formed it. Fearful of government, they hearken back to the anti-federalists opponents of the Constitution of 1787 and Thomas Jefferson, and call for decentralization, local rule, private property and minimal bureaucracy. Some like Samuel Huntington argue that multiracial, multiethnic, and egalitarian states are inherently unstable. In contrast to classical conservatism, social conservatism and fiscal conservatism are concerned with consequences as well as means. Social conservatism There are two overlapping subgroups of social conservatives—the traditional and the religious. In social issues the split is between those who tolerate many forms of private behavior and limits on social control, and those who invoke cultural or religious traditions, and advocate the necessity of various social controls and prohibitions. Social conservatives especially have opposed changes in traditional moral codes especially regarding sexual behavior and gender roles such as opposition to divorce, contraception, abortion, homosexuality and gay marriage, and women in combat roles in the military. Most social conservatives are hostile to the use of illegal drugs, and before many supported the prohibition of alcohol. Traditional conservatism "Cultural conservatism" is generally dominated by defense of traditional social norms and values, of local customs and of societal evolution, rather than social upheaval, though the distinction is not absolute. Often based upon religion, cultural conservatives, in contrast to "small-government" conservatives and "states-rights" advocates, increasingly turn to the federal government to overrule the states in order to preserve educational and moral standards. Social conservatives emphasize traditional views of social units such as the family, church, or locale. They would typically define family in terms of local histories and tastes. Social conservatism may entail defining marriage as between a man and a woman thereby banning gay marriage and laws to criminalize abortion. From this same respect for local traditions comes the correlation between conservatism and patriotism. Conservatives, out of their respect for traditional, established institutions, tend to strongly identify with nationalist movements, existing governments, and its defenders: Social conservatives hold that military institutions embody admirable values like honor, duty, courage, and loyalty. Military institutions are independent sources of tradition and ritual pageantry that conservatives tend to admire. In its degenerative form, such respect may become typified by jingoism, populism, and nativism. Some conservatives want to use federal power to block state actions they disapprove of. Thus in the 21st century came support for the "No Child Left Behind" program, support for a constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage, support for federal laws overruling states that attempt to legalize marijuana or assisted suicide. Anti-intellectualism has sometimes been a component of social conservatism, especially when intellectuals were seen in opposition to religion or as proponents of "progress". Traditional conservatism is generally associated with the following views, as noted by Russell Kirk in his book, *The Conservative Mind*: Religious conservatives Religious conservatives focus on rules laid down by religious leaders. In the United States, they especially oppose abortion and homosexuality and often favor the use of government institutions, such as schools and courts, to promote Christianity. A branch of religious conservatism, Dominionism, explicitly believes the U.S. Economic conservatism Fiscal conservatism is the economic and political policy that advocates restraint of governmental taxation and expenditures. Fiscal conservatives since the 18th century have argued that debt is a device to corrupt politics; they argue that big spending ruins the morals of the people, and that a national debt creates a dangerous class of speculators. The argument in favor of balanced budgets is often coupled with a belief that government welfare programs should be narrowly tailored and that tax rates should be low, which implies relatively small government institutions. This belief in small government combines with fiscal conservatism to produce a broader economic liberalism, which wishes to minimize government intervention in the economy. This amounts to support for laissez-faire economics. This economic liberalism borrows from two schools of thought: Fiscal conservatives have

complained about high-spending conservatives, such as Ronald Reagan , George H. Bush , and George W. Bush , especially regarding their high military spending. Some admit the necessity of taxes, but hold that taxes should be low. A recent movement against the inheritance tax labels such a tax a death tax. Fiscal conservatives often argue that competition in the free market is more effective than the regulation of industry, with the exception of industries that exhibit market dominance or monopoly powers. For some this is a matter of principle, as it is for the libertarians and others influenced by thinkers such as Ludwig von Mises , who believed that government intervention in the economy is inevitably wasteful and inherently corrupt and immoral. For others, "free market economics" simply represents the most efficient way to promote economic growth: Most modern American fiscal conservatives accept some social spending programs not specifically delineated in the Constitution. As such, fiscal conservatism today exists somewhere between classical conservatism and contemporary consequentialist political philosophies. The economic philosophy of conservatives in the United States tends to be liberalism. It is also, sometimes, extended to a broader "small government" philosophy. Economic liberalism is associated with free-market, or laissez-faire economics. Economic liberalism, insofar as it is ideological, owes its creation to the " classical liberal " tradition, in the vein of Adam Smith , Friedrich A. Hayek , Ludwig von Mises and Milton Friedman. Classical liberals and libertarians support free markets on moral, ideological grounds: The liberal tradition is suspicious of government authority, and prefers individual choice, and hence tends to see capitalist economics as the preferable means of achieving economic ends. Modern conservatives also derive support for free markets from practical grounds. Free markets, they argue, are the most productive markets. Thus the modern conservative supports free markets not solely out of necessity, but out of expedience. The support is not primarily moral or ideological, but driven on the Burkean notion of prescription: Another reason why conservatives support a smaller role for the government in the economy is the belief in the importance of the civil society. As noted by Alexis de Tocqueville , a bigger role of the government in the economy will make people feel less responsible for the society. The responsibilities must then be taken over by the government, requiring higher taxes. In his book *Democracy in America* , De Tocqueville describes this as "soft oppression". Classical liberals and modern conservatives selected free markets as ideals through different means historically, the lines have blurred under the "umbrella" of the conservative movement. Rarely will a politician claim that free markets are "simply more productive" or "simply the right thing to do" but a combination of both. The archetypal free-market conservative administrations of the late 20th century -- the Margaret Thatcher government in the UK and the Ronald Reagan government in the U. Contrary to the neoliberal ideal, Reagan increased government spending from about billion in his first year in office to about billion in his last year. The interests of capitalism, fiscal and economic liberalism, and free-market economy do not necessarily coincide with those of social conservatism. At times, aspects of capitalism and free markets have been profoundly subversive of the existing social order, as in economic modernization, or of traditional attitudes toward the proper position of sex in society, as in the now near-universal availability of pornography. To that end, on issues at the intersection of economic and social policy, conservatives of one school or another are often at odds. National security conservatism Some conservatives favor a strong military and an interventionist foreign policy e. Both may oppose "internationalism" in the sense of allowing organizations like the United Nations or public opinion in other countries to shape American policies.

Chapter 4 : Conservatism (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

"A must-own title." —National Review Online American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia is the first comprehensive reference volume to cover what is surely the most influential political and intellectual movement of the past half century.

An Encyclopedia was not your typical book party. For starters, many of those in attendance—the event coincided with the annual meeting of the Philadelphia Society—were profiled within or contributors to the book. Across the way was Midge Decter, embedded amid a phalanx of admiring retainers. At the podium stood the pre-eminent historian of the 20th-century intellectual Right, George H. Nash, whose remarks hit a note of ambivalence altogether unexpected at such a gathering. Nash reminded his audience that many a great movement had begun as a church, turned into a business, and ended up as a scam. Would the American Right follow suit? His liberal acquaintances had warned Nash that the encyclopedia was a sure sign of senescence—conservatives turning in upon themselves to stare at their own navels. Yet Nash thought otherwise: This is all to the good. Nor does it present any feigned unity. Nelson—professor at Ave Maria law school and editor in chief and publisher of ISI Books, respectively—let all the many schools of thought within American conservatism and libertarianism, too have their own say. Entries on divisive figures are here given, as a general rule, to sympathetic profilers, which is the only way a book like this could have been assembled without becoming a polemic in its own right. The encyclopedia has been gestating for over a decade—so long, in fact, that many of the most notable entries come from giants of the conservative movement who have since died. Russell Kirk, libertarian paragon Murray Rothbard, and Southern scholar Melvin Bradford all make posthumous appearances with new essays here. All three men, who died in the mids, also receive biographical entries. No less impressive are the entries from still-living titans of the American Right: Stephen Tonsor contributes the profile on Lord Acton; Peter Stanlis delivers entries on Burke and Burkeanism and also on Robert Frost, whom he knew; Ralph Raico writes the entry on classical liberalism. Yet for all the stature of its contributors and the sheer heft of the book itself, at a glance the encyclopedia may seem underwhelming. Few of the entries are more than a page long, and several of those that are do not deserve their length. At the end of each entry comes a short list of suggestions for further reading—typically just three or four books. These supplement the handful of named sources cited in most entries. As big a brick as it is, one might think this compendium would have to be much larger to do its subject justice. An Encyclopedia—not its girth but its pithiness. But it is very nearly so: The limited length of each entry unavoidably imposes constraints, but the encyclopedia largely succeeds in making a virtue of what would otherwise be a handicap. More conventionally conservative topics are treated to several entries: The essay on the late pope, unfortunately, is distorted by a selective political emphasis that glosses over his criticisms of war, capitalism, and capital punishment. Old Right figures, Austrian economists, and Southern Agrarians all get their due. Only politicians are deliberately—and wisely—underemphasized, although somehow Dan Quayle has merited an entry. There are exceptions to the general rule that sympathetic authors handle the more polarizing entries. Particularly where scientific entries are concerned, some mismatches occur. It may be buncombe, but ID deserves to be treated in a manner that at least allows the reader to understand what it is arguing. A parallel defect, meanwhile, mars Boston University education professor M. Readers would have been better served by the Discovery Institute-connected Aeschliman writing on Intelligent Design and Arnhart providing the entry on science. Hence several essays treat historicism, relativism, and nihilism as the roots of all modern leftism. Relativism, too, easily becomes a straw man, and even nihilism is not, properly speaking, synonymous with evil. Presidential scholar Gleaves Whitney provides exemplary entries on the Enlightenment and the French Revolution—the latter, in fact, so good that I thought it might have been written by Stephen Tonsor before I saw the byline—and his essay on nihilism is thought-provoking. This is problematic for at least two reasons. First, perhaps out of a sense of scholarly etiquette, Frohnen never specifically mentions Jaffa in the article, leaving him to be cited only in the cross-references at the end of the piece. By overemphasizing the Jaffa line of argument again, without actually naming him, Frohnen does a disservice to other conservatives who have argued more persuasively that the

American Revolution truly was revolutionary, a view held by men on the Right from Robert Nisbet all the way back to John Adams. An Encyclopedia is also a fitting tribute to the hundreds of men and women who have contributed to conservative thought over the past half-century and more. Donald Atwell Zoll, a mostly forgotten traditionalist who wrote frequently for National Review in its early days and taught philosophy for decades until it was revealed that he never obtained a Ph. Since his fall from academic grace, Zoll has apparently become an elephant trainer. Perhaps therein lies a minatory lesson for the American Right, a reminder for conservatives justly proud of their intellectual tradition of the old cycle that leads from hubris to nemesis and sees even the most principled movements transformed from church to business to scam.

Chapter 5 : American conservatism - Bibliography - Citizendium

American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia. is the first comprehensive reference volume to cover what is surely the most influential political and intellectual movement of the past half century.

Recent politics Berkowitz, Peter. Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: The Future of Conservatism: Conflict and Consensus in the Post-Reagan Era A Time for Choosing: Leviathan on the Right: The Rise of the Conservative Legal Movement: The Neoconservative Mind, Friedman, Murray. Jewish Intellectuals and the Shaping of Public Policy. Cambridge University Press, Neo-conservatism Stelzer, Irwin. Conservatives Without Conscience excerpt and text search Diamond, Sara. With God on Our Side: Up from Liberalism Buckley, William F. Conservatism in America Since A Sourcebook of American Conservative Thought. A Life , full-scale biography, pp. An Encyclopedia , the most detailed reference Doherty, Brian. The Restoration of Order Genovese, Eugene. The Conservative Movement Patron Saint of the Conservatives excerpt and text search Kelly, Daniel. James Burnham and the Struggle for the World: Conservative Minds in America The Rebuke of History: The Old Christian Right: The American Iconoclast Rossiter, Clinton. Barbarians in the Saddle: An Intellectual Biography of Richard M. Weaver Scotchie, Joseph. Buchanan and His Times Scotchie, Joseph. The Core Ideas Greenwood: Before Cheek Jr. Calhoun and Popular Rule: The Political Theory of the Disquisition and Discourse Imperium in Imperio, Malsberger, John W. From Obstruction to Moderation: The Transformation of Senate Conservatism, Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: Conservatives in the Progressive Era: The Taft Republicans of Politics and Culture During the Reagan Years, pages. Keeper of the Rules: Barry Goldwater excerpt and text search Hart, Jeffrey. The Making of the American Conservative Mind: A Biography of Robert A. Taft Pemberton, William E. Making America Conservative in the s Schuparra, Kurt. Triumph of the Right: A Biography excerpt and text search Chambers, Whittaker, Witness , a highly influential memoir his Communist years.

Chapter 6 : The American Conservative

American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia is also a fitting tribute to the hundreds of men and women who have contributed to conservative thought over the past half-century and more.

The history of American conservatism has been marked by tensions and competing ideologies. Fiscal conservatives and libertarians favor small government, laissez-faire economy, low income and corporate taxes, limited regulation, and free enterprise. Social conservatives see traditional social values as threatened by secularism; they tend to support mandatory school prayer and oppose abortion and same sex marriage. Neoconservatives want to expand American ideals throughout the world. The conservative movement of the 1950s attempted to bring together these divergent strands, stressing the need for unity to prevent the spread of "godless communism. All other activities of government tend to diminish freedom and hamper progress. The growth of government the dominant social feature of this century must be fought relentlessly. In this great social conflict of the era, we are, without reservations, on the libertarian side. The profound crisis of our era is, in essence, the conflict between the Social Engineers, who seek to adjust mankind to scientific utopias, and the disciples of Truth, who defend the organic moral order. We believe that truth is neither arrived at nor illuminated by monitoring election results, binding though these are for other purposes, but by other means, including a study of human experience. On this point we are, without reservations, on the conservative side. According to Peter Viereck, American conservatism is distinctive because it was not tied to a monarchy, landed aristocracy, established church, or military elite. There are two overlapping subgroups of social conservatives—the traditional and the religious. Traditional conservatives strongly support traditional codes of conduct, especially those they feel are threatened by social change and modernization. For example, traditional conservatives may oppose the use of female soldiers in combat. Religious conservatives focus on conducting society as prescribed by a religious authority or code. In the United States this translates into taking hard-line stances on moral issues, such as opposition to abortion and homosexuality. Religious conservatives often assert that "America is a Christian nation" and call for laws that enforce Christian morality. Fiscal conservatives support limited government, low tax, low spending, and a balanced budget. They argue that low taxes produce more jobs and wealth for everyone, and also that, as President Grover Cleveland said, "unnecessary taxation is unjust taxation". Fiscal conservatives often argue that competition in the free market is more effective than the regulation of industry. Some make exceptions in the case of trusts or monopolies. Others, such as some libertarians and followers of Ludwig von Mises, believe all government intervention in the economy is wasteful, corrupt, and immoral. More moderate fiscal conservatives argue that "free market economics" is the most efficient way to promote economic growth: However, some American fiscal conservatives view wider social liberalism as an impetus for increased spending on these programs. As such, fiscal conservatism today exists somewhere between classical liberalism and contemporary consequentialist political philosophies, and is often influenced by coinciding levels of social conservatism. Thus it was the British Labour government—which embraced socialism—that pushed the Truman administration in 1947 to take a strong stand against Soviet Communism. They often denounce anti-war protesters and support the police and the military. They hold that military institutions embody core values such as honor, duty, courage, loyalty, and a willingness on the part of the individual to make sacrifices for the good of the country. Social conservatives are strongest in the South and in recent years played a major role in the political coalitions of Ronald Reagan and George W. Fiscal conservatism and Economic liberalism Fiscal conservatism is the economic and political policy that advocates restraint of progressive taxation and expenditure. Fiscal conservatives since the 19th century have argued that debt is a device to corrupt politics; they argue that big spending ruins the morals of the people, and that a national debt creates a dangerous class of speculators. A political strategy employed by conservatives to achieve a smaller government is known as starve the beast. Activist Grover Norquist is a well-known proponent of the strategy and has famously said, "My goal is to cut government in half in twenty-five years, to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub. This belief in small government combines with fiscal conservatism to produce a broader

economic liberalism, which wishes to minimize government intervention in the economy or implement laissez-faire policies. This economic liberalism borrows from two schools of thought: Donohue argues that classical liberalism in the 19th century U. To the vast majority of American classical liberals, however, laissez-faire did not mean no government intervention at all. On the contrary, they were more than willing to see government provide tariffs, railroad subsidies, and internal improvements, all of which benefited producers. What they condemned was intervention in behalf of consumers. It is also, sometimes, extended to a broader "small government" philosophy. Economic liberalism is associated with free market, or laissez-faire economics. Economic liberalism, insofar as it is ideological, owes its creation to the "classical liberal" tradition, in the vein of Adam Smith, Friedrich A. Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Ludwig von Mises. Classical liberals and libertarians support free markets on moral, ideological grounds: Supporters of the moral grounds for free markets include Ayn Rand and Ludwig von Mises. The liberal tradition is suspicious of government authority, and prefers individual choice, and hence tends to see free market capitalism as the preferable means of achieving economic ends. Modern conservatives, on the other hand, derive support for free markets from practical grounds. Free markets, they argue, are the most productive markets. Thus the modern conservative supports free markets not out of necessity, but out of expedience. The support is not moral or ideological, but driven on the Burkean notion of prescription: Another reason why conservatives support a smaller role for the government in the economy is the belief in the importance of the civil society. As noted by Alexis de Tocqueville, there is a belief that a bigger role of the government in the economy will make people feel less responsible for the society. These responsibilities would then need to be taken over by the government, requiring higher taxes. In his book *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville described this as "soft oppression. Rarely will a conservative politician claim that free markets are "simply more productive" or "simply the right thing to do" but a combination of both. This blurring is very much a product of the merging of the classical liberal and modern conservative positions under the "umbrella" of the conservative movement. The archetypal free-market conservative administrations of the late 20th century—the Margaret Thatcher government in Britain and the Ronald Reagan administration in the U. He wanted to increase defense spending and achieved that; liberal Democrats blocked his efforts to cut domestic spending. Federal revenues as a percent of the GDP fell from Federal spending fell slightly from This contrasts with statistics from , when government spending was rising more rapidly than it had in decades. Factions in the Republican Party United States In the United States today, the word "conservative" is often used very differently from the way it is used in Europe and Asia. Following the American Revolution, Americans rejected the core ideals of European conservatism; those ideals were based on the landed aristocracy, established churches, and powerful armies. Conservatism in the United States is not a single school of thought. Jerry Falwell in the s preached traditional moral and religious social values. Christian conservatives are primarily interested in family values. Typical positions include the view that the United States was founded as a Christian nation, that abortion is wrong, that there should be prayer in state schools, that intelligent design or creationism should be taught in schools alongside evolution, and that marriage should be defined as between one man and one woman and not between two members of the same sex. Many attack the profanity and sexuality in the media and movies. A form of conservatism bound within the limits provided within the United States constitution, defending the structures of constitutionalism, and preserving the principles of the United States constitution. A form of conservatism that focuses on low taxes and restrained government spending. A fusion with libertarianism, this type emphasizes a strict interpretation of the Constitution, particularly with regard to federal power. This mode of thinking tends to espouse laissez-faire economics and a critical view of the federal government. Ron Paul and his son Rand Paul have been influential proponents in the Republican presidential contests. A modern form of conservatism that supports a more assertive, interventionist foreign policy, aimed at promoting democracy abroad. It is tolerant of an activist government at home, but is focused mostly on international affairs. Neoconservatism was first described by a group of disaffected liberals, and thus Irving Kristol, usually credited as its intellectual progenitor, defined a neoconservative as "a liberal who was mugged by reality. Bush administration in the Middle East that used the military to promote democracy. In part a rebirth of the Old Right, arising in the s in reaction to neoconservatism, stresses tradition, especially

Christian tradition and the importance to society of the traditional family. Huntington for example, argue that multiracial , multi-ethnic, and egalitarian states are inherently unstable. The magazines Chronicles and The American Conservative are generally considered to be paleoconservative in nature.

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The American Conservatism has a useful introduction that gives an account of its beginnings with the encyclopedia's initiator Gregory Wolfe and Garland Press as [End Page] a response to the Encyclopedia of the American Left and its mutation into an encyclopedia of American conservatism after its transfer to the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) as publisher.

Chapter 8 : American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia by Bruce Frohnen

Social conservatism in the United States is the defense of traditional social norms and Judeo-Christian values. [33] [34] [35] Social conservatives tend to strongly identify with American nationalism and patriotism.

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American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia. Edited by Bruce Frohnen, Jeremy Beer, and Jeffrey O. Nelson (Wilmington, DE, ISI Books, , xxv plus pp.). The American Conservatism has a useful introduction that gives an account of its beginnings with the encyclopedia's initiator Gregory Wolfe and.