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Similarities and Differences between Classical Conservatism, Classic Liberalism, Socialism, and Anarchism

Classical conservatism, classical liberalism, socialism, and anarchism are the ideologies that have similar and contrasting views with respect to human nature, the role of government, and equality. In order to identify the similarities and differences between these theories, it is necessary to consider their main tenets individually and then compare them.

Classical conservatism is a political and social philosophy. It promotes and retains traditional social institutions as the norm of governance (Scruton 31). Its doctrine in relation to equality and inequality is that humans are naturally unequal. In other words, some humans are naturally superior over others. In addition, naturally inferior individuals have to subject to those who are superior over them.

With regard to human nature, this thinking puts emphasis on the human tendency toward irrational behavior. In irrational behavior, humans tend to think and act in ways that are less useful or more illogical than other more rational ways. Traditional conservatism also encourages and supports the freedom of people in society. However, it discourages excessive freedom because people can sometimes use it to break laws. By discouraging excessive freedom, this

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ideology provides humanity with an underlying structure in which people have to act and behave in a morally ethical and responsible way.

Classical conservatism also focuses on traditional political systems in relation to its view on the role of government. Traditional systems comprise of the state, family, and church. According to this philosophy, the role of these institutions is to teach people traditionally accepted ways of behaving in society. By carrying out these roles, these organizations maintain stability in society. In conservatism, stability is of utmost importance. Furthermore, people need constant guidance from traditional institutions to maintain sanity and stability in communities. Society and state are, therefore, inseparable entities in this ideology.

In contrast, classical liberalism is a political ideology that values the freedom of individuals and institutions (Siegel 65). Its view with respect to government is that its powers should be limited in order to avoid dictatorship or authoritarianism. This doctrine does not accept traditional systems as forms of governance. However, it welcomes any valuable ideas from a traditional system of governance in the furtherance of society.

Furthermore, its view with respect to human nature is that humans are capable of thinking logically and rationally. In addition, it supports the view that logic and reason help people find solutions to different problems. With regard to human nature, liberalism emphasizes the importance of individualism. An individual has the right to make a choice or decision. This ideology, therefore, places emphasis on freedom. However, this freedom is not absolute because it prohibits evils, such as murder, theft, and drug abuse. With regard to equality, classical liberalism lays emphasis on individual equality. This doctrine rejects hierarchies because no one is superior over others.

Socialism differs from classical liberalism and classical conservatism in that it focuses on the regulation or ownership of properties, businesses, and land by communities rather than by individuals. Its view with respect to human nature is that humans are rational and social. They can, therefore, interact with each other at different levels. In addition, its view in relation to equality is that all persons are equal in society. In this view, all humans are entitled to roughly the same level of wealth as others. As a result, in socialist societies, the gap between the rich and the poor is not excessively wide. Socialism also encourages a certain level of freedom for all individuals. Furthermore, its view in relation to the role of government is that communities and not individuals should own property. Individualism is discouraged, and government alone must plan the economy.

Another ideology is anarchism. In anarchism, the belief is that that the best government is no government. Its view with respect to the role of government is that everything about governments is repressive. Anarchists oppose any form of governance because their argument is that governments limit the freedom of individuals in society. Furthermore, they argue that governments are responsible for disorder in society. Instead, they support the abolition of states because it will encourage the restoration of order and harmony in society. Its view with regard to human nature is that all human beings have high levels of individual rationality. Anarchism also emphasizes absolute freedom. Through freedom, individuals have the power to further self-development. Furthermore, the view of anarchism in relation to equality is that all individuals are equal in society.

There are various similarities between classical liberalism, classical conservatism, socialism, and anarchism. For example, classical liberalism and classical conservatism both maintain government encouragement of self-development and personal freedom. Both also

emphasize individualism in order to establish harmonious equilibrium in society. Furthermore, socialism, classical liberalism, and classical conservatism emphasize that governments should have a certain degree of control and power over individuals. In addition, socialism and anarchism emphasize freedom of an individual just like classical liberalism and classical conservatism. In addition, socialism, anarchism, and classical liberalism also emphasize that humans are rational and logical. With regard to equality, socialism, anarchism, and classical liberalism stand for the idea of equality of all individuals in society. In all these ideologies, the most underlying similarity is that of freedom of all individuals in societies.

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Works cited

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Scruton, Roger. *The Meaning of Conservatism*. Cambridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. Print.