



Conservatism

Kieron O'Hara

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The real meaning of 'conservative' – today denoting groups as diverse and incompatible as the religious right, libertarian free-marketeers and free-spending neo-conservatives – has been lost to politics. Yet the original conservative ideology, first developed in the eighteenth century by Edmund Burke, was concerned with managing change. Kieron O'Hara argues that genuine conservatism has its own relevance in a complex and dynamic world where change is rapid, pervasive and dislocating. Conservatism transcends traditional politics, and has surprising applications – not least as the most appropriate and practical response to climate change. Kieron O'Hara's *Conservatism* is a revision for the modern age of the traditional conservative philosophy. It shows what a properly conservative ideology looks like and demonstrates that many self-styled 'conservatives' actually promote destructive change in their own and others' societies. Drawing on great conservative thinkers such as Burke and Adam Smith, philosophers ancient and modern from Plato to Wittgenstein, and contemporary social commentators including Nassim Nicholas Taleb, Ulrich Beck and Jared Diamond, this new and strikingly original theory of conservative philosophy lays bare our lack of understanding of our own societies, and shows how risk pervades society and how it should be managed. It also proves that conservatism is distinct from neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism and the extreme positions of today's 'culture warriors'. O'Hara shows how conservatism is an ideology sensitive to cultural differences between the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, East Asia and elsewhere, while highlighting the issues of technology, trust and privacy. *Conservatism* will appeal to anyone interested in the history – and future – of political philosophy and social thought.

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