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TÍTULO DA TESE EM INGLÊS: Tradition, reason and change

ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the relationship between tradition, reason and change that marks modernity and several currents of modern and contemporary political theory. This relationship is examined considering the ideas of liberal, conservative and communitarian authors with the aim of highlighting differences and similarities between these political theories. Thus, the notions of tradition, reason and change are addressed by placing in dialogue the three theories through authors we consider to be representative of said theories and which have contributed significantly to the topic under analysis. These authors are the liberals Friedrich Hayek, Karl Popper, Michael Polanyi and Edward Shils; the conservatives Edmund Burke, Michael Oakeshott and Roger Scruton; and the communitarian Alasdair MacIntyre. An interpretation, a theoretical synthesis, is developed in result of the systematization of the ideas of these authors and demonstrates that tradition and reason, in the light of critical or evolutionary rationalism, are not opposed and are, in fact, inextricably linked, thus contradicting the thesis of constructivist rationalism which states that reason must reject tradition. Regarding the empirical component, the neo-institutionalist methodological approach, particularly in its discursive variant, combined with the interpretative theoretical synthesis of the relationship between tradition, reason and change – i.e., with a traditionalist approach – is applied to the analysis of the idea of civil society as a tradition. Thus, for this purpose, a systematization of the evolution of this concept is developed, showing how it was originated, how it was transmitted and changed over time, how it has been split and branched out into several distinct traditions, incorporating the political traditions of liberalism and marxism, showing that a competition between these two traditions occurred in the twentieth century and also demonstrating how the prevalence of the liberal tradition contributes to the crisis of the sovereign state.

Palavras Chave: tradition, reason, change, liberalism, conservatism, communitarianism, civil society, State.