

Abstract

This dissertation *Michael Novak and Patrick Buchanan as Major Representatives of Contemporary American Political Catholicism* compares the political thought of two faces of contemporary American political Catholicism represented by the neoconservative Michael Novak and the paleoconservative Patrick J. Buchanan. The first part deals with the context of contemporary political Catholicism and its historical background. The comparison thematizes five problem fields: the issue of democracy and American political system, economic problems, question of foreign policy, the issue of religion and Catholicism and, finally, the conflict over the basis of conservatism. To accomplish the given objective, I analyse the work of both authors, compare their respective ideological positions and set them in the context of other major authors in the given areas and in the context of established political theories. The comparison shows that they both emphasize the significance of the religious and moral aspect of democracy, especially in the American context, however, they do not agree on the universal reach of democratic ideals. In the field of economics, they stand for different views: Novak is an economic neoliberal, while Buchanan a radical economic nationalist. Similarly in relation to foreign policy, Novak typically represents idealist neoconservatism, Buchanan, on the other hand, advocates strict isolationism. As regards religion, they both stress the crucial and constitutive importance of Christianity for the U.S.A. and the western civilization, however, their identification with mainstream Catholicism is different. Novak can be considered as a radical, but established proponent of widely conceived Catholic social tradition. Buchanan – given his particularism, nationalism and rejection of the principles of free market economy and the reforms of the Second Vatican Council – stands off the Catholic mainstream and can be situated towards the edge of the spectrum. In relation to conservatism, Novak and Buchanan represent radical and activist forms of conservatism – neoconservatism and paleoconservatism – which can hardly be reconciled. Given their common conservative position, their respective accents show a major divergence.

Key words: Michael Novak, Patrick J. Buchanan, American Catholicism, Catholic Social Thought, Neoconservatism, Paleoconservatism