

Introduction to Political Theory
Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Jha
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Lecture – 02
Introduction

Hello and welcome friends. Today, in the second lecture on the introduction, we are going to discuss mainly, the relationship between political theory and political ideology. And in the second part, we are going to discuss the key themes and also, the possible direction of research in political theory, in contemporary times.

If you remember in the last lecture, we have discussed political theory, its key components, approaches, methods and also, why do we need a political theory. This part that deals with, why do we need a political theory will be a kind of under current theme in this lecture as well. We will discuss, how political theory is relevant, and different from political ideology and why is it so? Why is it different from political ideology?

(Refer Slide Time: 01:31)

Political Theory and Political Ideology

- Political theory deals with explanatory, normative, and contemplative aspects of politics which is grounded in reason and rational argument. It provides a set of concepts, methods and approaches to systematically study and analyze politics. In doing so, it tries to engage with the 'real' and 'pragmatic' but is not limited to these. Due to its normative nature it also provides the resources for not just making sense of or understanding politics but also to transform it.
- Political ideology on the other hand has acquired negative connotations and seen as fixed, doctrinaire, and closed world views with its emphasis on political actions and capturing state power. However, it also has positive aspects and in that sense we cannot escape ideology. Our political beliefs, actions, and outlooks are shaped by ideologies.
- Ideologies are not intrinsically rational. It rather maintains a strategic relation with reason, that means, ideology accepts reason only when its application can provide any specified ends or results in the practical sense.
- Political theory deals with concepts which are essentially contested. These contestations are result of their ideological interpretations. And in that way political theory is deeply connected with political ideology.

To discuss these similarities or overlaps between political theory and political ideology, let us start with the definition or understanding of political theory which deals with the three aspects of politics or the political, that is explanatory, normative and contemplative.

Political theory, must explain something and that explanation should be relevant to a particular or specific context and this explanation must not be limited to that particular context or the historical time and space. It must also, transcend that context and have a degree of generality, that means, which allow political theory to not just explain politics in a particular society, but also, to provide resources and approaches to explain politics in other societies.

That is why; we can make a distinction when we study Indian politics or American politics or European politics. The focus is on a particular society or a country, or a community. And its scope is limited to that country only. And when we study political theory, there we do engage with a particular, real and pragmatic context, but also, we must transcend that to have a degree of generality or obligation in explaining, analyzing or studying politics in other societies. So, one of the features of political theory is that it must be explanatory.

The second is the normative part of political theory, where the theory is supposed to be not just merely, explanatory or descriptive in nature, but also, it has a normative concern to provide an alternative to provide a resource or mechanism to transform the existing reality or existing practice in any society. Third and finally, it is a contemplative exercise. This is inherent in any political action, political discourse or political argumentation. And especially in political theory, it must be contemplative or reflective, while engaging with a practical, social and political problem. Thus, political theory deals with the explanatory, normative and contemplative aspects of politics. These explanatory, normative or contemplative exercises in political theory are grounded in reason or rational argumentation.

The progression of theory is through logic, reason and rationality, unlike political ideology which we will discuss in a moment. It provides a set of concepts, methods and approaches to systematically study and analyze politics. It is the task of political theory to provide concepts, methods and approaches to study politics systematically and scientifically. In doing so, it tries to engage with the real and pragmatic questions which we have discussed in the previous class that there have been criticisms to political theory as a discipline which deals with abstract concepts or normative questions. And so, it has no significance in the real, practical world. And how, political theory has evolved from that kind of contemplative or nearly, speculative exercise to make it more relevant in

terms of engaging with practical and real life world, we have discussed it in the previous lecture.

But most important thing, we need to remember is that it tries to engage with real and pragmatic, but not limited to these only. That means, when it explains the real or the practical world, it is not limited to that reality or practical issue alone. It must transcend that real or practical situation to have a degree of generality, a general application in explaining or studying politics in other societies too. That distinguishes political theory from say Indian politics or western politics, or American politics etc.

Due to its normative nature, it also, provides the resources for not just making sense of or understanding politics, but also, transforming it. So, it has a transformative potentiality as well and it does so, in a very different way than political ideology does, where it actually, tries to mobilize the masses, to guide them, convince them for a particular course of action, to capture the state, and to transform the society etc.

On the other hand, political theory, also, provides the potential to not just make sense of the existing reality or existing politics and society, but also, to transform it. But it does so, in a more discursive manner to understand the complex or layered nature of the politics and the political situations. By knowing that, one can also then act upon those understanding or study.

So, that comes with the normative concerns or nature of political theory. Now, if we compare political theory with political ideology, we find that political ideology on the other hand has acquired a negative connotation and seen as fixed or doctrinaire and closed world views with its emphasis on political actions and by capturing state power. What defines political ideology is its focus or emphasis on acquiring political power or mobilizing the masses, or leading a movement which aims to capture the state power and through that it transforms the society and polity in a country.

Thus, political ideology is a world view; it is a guide to action, to transform the society and politics on the other hand. In doing so, it has a very negative meaning and we have often come across in our public and political discourse that politicians usually, accuse their opponents in projecting them as ideologically driven, but they consider themselves as driven by the public interests and without being guided by any kind of ideology. So, political ideology generally speaking and we will discuss it in details in a moment, but

political theory and in comparison to political theory, political ideology is seen as fixed or a closed worldview which focuses on a course of action and to capture the state for, to transform the state and society.

This understanding of political ideology as a closed worldview or a fixed doctrinaire system of beliefs is one aspect of political ideology. There is another aspect of political ideology also which is more positive. That is, no matter, how much we criticize the ideology of others, in criticizing that ideology, we are also guided or shaped by political ideology. So, in other words, there is no escape from ideology. Whether we oppose someone or on the basis of which we oppose someone is already and always ideologically driven. The positive side of ideology is then not merely a kind of closed world view which is true to its some extent, but there is other positive aspect of political ideology as well which allow us to criticize, to capture, and to transform the social realities.

The political ideology is something, which is already and always there to shape our beliefs, opinions and political actions. So, our political beliefs, actions and outlooks are always shaped by ideologies. Now, ideologies are not intrinsically rational and that is, also, different from political theory. Here, political ideologues used reason, rationality and logic as long as using of reason, logic and rationality, helps them to achieve certain practical purposes or practical end results.

So, their relationship with reason or rationality is more strategic in comparison to political theory, where the argumentation must proceed through logic and rationality. Political ideology uses reason or rationality, but as long as, it helps it to achieve its practical ends or desired results. Now, political theory, deals with concepts which are essentially contested that we have discussed. All the concepts that we discussed in political theory, be it equality, liberty, justice, democracy, rights and so on are essentially contested. That means, there is no one, singular, common, consensual understanding or definition of these terms.

Now, these essentially contested nature of political theory is a result of these ideological interpretations. So, in the political discourses, there is a multi or numerous presence of different ideologies that tend to interpret these terms differently. It leads to this contested nature of political theory and in that way, political theory is also deeply connected with

political ideology. There cannot be a clear cut separation of political theory from political ideology. So, within political theory different traditions, like Marxist, liberal, socialist, and feminist traditions exist. Thus, political theory and political ideology, in that sense also, overlap each other and they are deeply interconnected.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:25)

What is Political Ideology?

Ideologies are usefully comprehended not as defective philosophies, but rather as ubiquitous and patterned forms of thinking about politics. They are clusters of ideas, beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes usually held by identifiable groups, that provide directives, even plans, of action for public policy-making in an endeavor to uphold, justify, change or criticize the social and political arrangements of a state or other political community.

- Michael Freedon

- Although, the origin of political ideology can be traced back to the origin of the state, the term ideology was coined by *Antoine Destutt de Tracy* after the French revolution to study political ideas systematically and scientifically. So, ideology was supposed to be a 'science of ideas'.
- However, the term ideology soon acquired a negative and pejorative meaning. And in the political arena you often find politicians accusing their opponents as ideologically driven/guided and themselves as free from any ideologies.
- It is seen as a set of beliefs guided by 'idealism' which has very little to do with reality. In fact according to Marx, it conceals the actual material interests of bourgeois. However, in turn Marxism itself developed as an ideology which aspire to create an egalitarian and class less society. So, no matter what the claims are, all political actions and movements are guided by political ideologies.
- The easiest way to identify any ideology is to look for a suffix like 'ism' and thus Liberalism, Conservatism, Marxism, Socialism, Feminism, Post-structuralism, Environmentalism, Gandhism and so on all are ideologies.

3

If we discuss, what is political ideology, let us begin with this Michael Freedon definition or a description of ideology, where he writes, ideologies are usefully, comprehended not as defective philosophies, or as we have been discussing it merely, as a negative connotation or negative understanding of political ideology. Ideologies are usefully, comprehended not as defective philosophies, but rather, as ubiquitous and patterned forms of thinking about politics.

So, what characterizes political ideology? It is ubiquitous and patterned forms of thinking about politics. They are clusters of ideas, beliefs, opinions, values and attitudes, usually held by identifiable groups that provide directives, even plans of action for public and policy-making endeavor to uphold, justify, change or criticize the social and political arrangements of state or other political communities.

The defining feature of political ideology is its ubiquitous nature and patterned forms of thinking about politics and these ubiquitous patterned forms of thinking, and the groups who carry this patterned forms of thinking are identifiable. So, in the public, political discourse, we can identify and associate the individual, groups with different forms of

ideologies and these clusters of ideas, beliefs, opinions, values and attitudes together constitute a worldview to provide a direction, or even a plan of action to formulate policies in an endeavor to do all these things, to uphold the existing status quo, to justify or change it, or to criticize the existing social structure in any state and society.

Thus, ideology plays a very significant role in the political development of any society's transformation. It is a set of beliefs and ideas which has a pattern of thinking among the identifiable groups of people who tries to either justify or change, or uphold the existing structure of politics in any state and society. That is the significant understanding of ideology. However, we need to remind ourselves that when ideology was coined, it did not have the same connotation or understanding.

So, we can trace the origin of political ideology to the origin of state. The political actions or the ideas which propelled political actions are as old as perhaps the state or any forms of collective thinking. One can trace the origin of political ideology to the origin of a state. However, the term ideology was first coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy after the French revolution. His objective was to study political ideas which will help, transform or emancipate, or empower society systematically or scientifically without any prejudices and free itself from metaphysical and contemplative thinking.

Thus the origin of ideology was to study the political ideas systematically or scientifically. Therefore, ideology was supposed to be 'a science of ideas' and not ideologically driven by different political groups or parties. Political ideology as terms suggests is about studying any idea, or political ideas scientifically systematically. It is therefore, a science of ideas.

However, the term ideology soon acquired a negative and pejorative meaning. In the political arena, as I have discussed, we may often come across political groups or leaders or followers, accusing the other of ideologically driven and themselves as guided by public interests and not by any political ideology. So, in popular perception, it is seen in a negative sense, as a closed worldview, fixed doctrinal worldview which distorts or has very little or no significance to the real, practical and political world.

It is seen as a set of beliefs guided by 'idealism'. So, idealism, we can also, see it as a kind of utopia. All political movements or political ideology has a particular end or a kind of utopia, or objectives to achieve by transforming the existing social and political

realities. So, it is political ideology, seen as set of beliefs guided by idealism which has very little or no significance to reality, as it exists. In fact, according to Marx, one of the political scientists, it consist of the actual material interests of the bourgeoisie.

Ideology, he defines, as 'false consciousness'. It is more than an action or a kind of political action for empowerment or emancipation. Ideology, actually, distorts or conceals the real interests of the propertied groups or those who are better off. So, in *Germany Ideology*, he argued that political ideology is false consciousness which conceals the actual oppressions or injustices of masses, and also, it conceals the material interests of the bourgeoisie. However, Marxism itself, developed as an ideology which aspired to create an egalitarian and a classless society. More on this, we will discuss later.

Therefore, no matter, what the claims are, all political actions and movements are guided by political ideology of one kind or the other. So, any political criticism or political action or movement are always set or guided, or inspired by a particular ideology. Sometimes, there may be simultaneous presence of many ideologies within an ideology; there are different varieties or interpretations of that ideology, as we will see, when we will discuss liberalism. But all the political actions and movements must be guided by a particular form of political ideology.

Now, for us, to identify, if political ideology is to look for a suffix like 'ism'. We have all kinds of isms starting from liberalism to conservatism, Marxism, socialism, feminism, post-structuralism, environmentalism or ecologism, or Gandhism etc are all ideologies. These all have particular ways of looking at the world. They want to reconstruct or restructure the world in a particular way and assign the role or particular role to particular groups and individuals, according to their description or expectation of that society or individual and groups.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:23)

- Taken negatively, we usually associate ideology with dogmas, authoritarian and doctrinaire world views that distorts the reality and therefore is a threat to free, tolerant and democratic society. On the other hand, taken positively all ideologies can not be equally true, no matter how promising to common people, such as Fascism, Nazism, and Fundamentalism of all kinds.
- Karl Mannheim in his book, Ideology and Utopia (1929) explored the questions that can we discuss ideology without being ideological ourselves? His answer was by locating the social positions of the intellectuals, who can relatively distance themselves from the social classes, to examine or study the merits/demerits of any ideologies. However, it is not always true. There have been intellectuals justifying the horrors of Nazism or Fascism and many other kinds of fundamentalisms.
- We need to study the ideology in both its aspects – negative and positive. On the one hand it is problematic and distorting on the other it is inescapable. Although, there have been 'end of ideology' and triumphant of capitalism and liberalism debate, we have seen the constant elasticity, revival and reassertion of these ideologies that makes the politics a dynamic, complex and conflictual arena.

Talking negatively, we usually, associate ideology with dogmas, and authoritarian doctrinaire. Authoritarian and doctrinaire worldview, distorts the reality and therefore, it is considered as a threat to free, tolerant and democratic society. So, usually, over all understanding or interpretation of ideology, despite its promises of the glorious future or to reconstruct, or transform the society, and to bring about glory and empowerment, it is considered as dogma or authoritarian, doctrinaire worldview which is a threat to the free, tolerant and democratic society. That is one negative connotation of political ideology.

Now, positively, if we look at the positive aspect of ideology that political actions require certain inspiring values, norms or set of beliefs, then, political ideology also, provide those beliefs, values and norms. In that sense, positively, all ideologies cannot be equally true, no matter, how promising to common people is such as Fascism, Nazism or Fundamentalism. These are also, the ideologies which promise a better future and in promising that, instead of future, they require loyalty and followers. So, their actions are future oriented and in the process of achieving that future or bringing about that future, they require loyalty or followers.

And this kind of utopian aspect of political ideology is present in all the ideologies. But does that mean all the ideologies are equally true or valid. And we should all have a neutral judgement about all forms of ideologies that everything is correct and relative. So, no one particular ideology has a monopoly.

On the one hand, if we think of ideology, merely, as a dogma or an authoritarian, doctrinal belief system, then it is a very negative connotation and yet we cannot skip the influence of political ideology. On the other hand, if we take political ideology as a positive thing, then all forms of political ideologies are correct. It is equally, problematic that we cannot justify ideologies like fascism and Nazism, or fundamentalism of fundamentalist ideologies of various kinds which are genuinely a threat to a number of communities within or outside that society or state, as it has brought about in the case of Nazism, we have seen in the 20th century, lots of horror or catastrophe to the society.

So, can we justify all forms of ideology because of its having some or a positive aspect of it. Now, to understand this paradox, Karl Mannheim wrote a book called *Ideology and Utopia* which is considered as a modern classic. He explored this question that can we discuss ideology without being ideologically ourselves. Can we have a critic or any study of political ideology is possible without ourselves being ideologically driven? Now, his answer is to look for a political class or what he calls intellectuals, who can study these ideologies in somewhat objective manner and his answers were based on locating the social position. So, any ideology and position to that ideology has certain positions and therefore, to judge a particular ideology becomes problematic.

Even when we criticize the other, our own positions are also based on certain assumptions, ideology or certain perspectives. Now, how to overcome that and study political ideology that Karl Mannheim produced and provided an answer. Here, he was looking for locating the social positions of intellectuals, who could relatively distance themselves from the social classes, to examine or study the merits or demerits of any ideology.

To study the political ideology, we need distancing from the social classes; various social classes and then perhaps, our understanding can be more convincing and persuasive. However, it is not always true that intellectuals who can relatively distance themselves from social classes, are supposed to study political ideology objectively. However, it has not been the case always.

We also, found intellectuals justifying the horrors of Nazism and Fascism, and many other kinds of fundamentalism. Now, how, to tackle these paradoxes of the negative and the positive sides of political ideology. Therefore, what is required is to study the

ideology in both its aspects that is negative and positive. On the one hand, it is problematic and distorting. On the other, it is inescapable. So, there is no escape from ideology. Although, there have been debate like end of ideology or triumphant of capitalism or liberalism, yet we have seen the constant elasticity, revival and reassertion of this ideology that makes the politics dynamic, complex and conflictual arena.

We need to study, political ideology in its both negative and positive aspects as there is no escape from political ideology. Now, to have a more systematic, scientific or rational understanding of ideology or a political movement, or a political action, requires tools and approaches of political theory.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:37)

Now we shall discuss few major political ideologies.

Liberalism & Its Critics

- Liberalism has many internal varieties and it is truly an elastic political ideology in a sense it tends to absorb its critic to make it relevant and more inclusive. For example John Rawls (*A Theory of Justice, Political Liberalism, and Laws of People*). It basically focuses on individual as rational agent who knows what is best for him and her and he should have maximum freedom and opportunities to do that. Their material worth can be best judged in a free market economy. The role of state and society then is minimal, only to reconcile and regulate individuals interests through an 'objective' and 'neutral' laws and constitution. This is one of the most dominating political ideology in modern world. John Locke, Adam Smith, Thomas Paine, Hayek, Nozick, Milton Friedman many other are proponent of this ideology.
- However, Liberalism has many critics from within and without. Within: Communitarians and Multiculturalists like Taylor, Sandel and Kymlicka. Instead of Liberalism's focus on abstract-isolated individuals and universal rights, they talk about socially and culturally embedded individuals and their group differentiated rights. Without: Marxism is the the biggest critic of liberalism and capitalism. Instead of individual Marxism emphasis is on Class as a unit of social-political analysis.

5

Now, if we discuss, very briefly, some of the major political ideologies of modern times are also present in the contemporary era too. First and the most dominant political ideology is liberalism. We will also discuss the critics of liberalism.

So, in modern politics and society, we feel, study any institution of governance or politics or parliamentary form of democracy which is rooted in the beliefs and values of liberalism. Therefore, it is the most dominant political ideology of modern times or even in our contemporary times. However, it also, has many rivals or critics, and Marxism is perhaps, one of the biggest critics of liberalism that we will discuss. So, let us first discuss this liberalism which has many internal varieties. There is no one, singular conception or set of beliefs about liberalism. It has evolved from its classical to the

modern, and to the more contemporary version of liberalism, to some other alternative political ideologies, such as communitarianism, multiculturalism which are also, evolved from political liberalism.

But these varieties, also criticize some of the core beliefs and principles of liberalism. Liberalism has many internal varieties and it is truly, an elastic political ideology. It tends to absorb its critics, to make it relevant and more inclusive. So, liberalism has evolved over a period of time, but absorbing the critic or critical aspects of many of its critics. From the exclusive emphasis on individual to a more egalitarian or welfare oriented politics and political ideology, liberalism has evolved and absorbed its critics within its fold, and that makes it a truly elastic and also a dominant political ideology.

There cannot be and there is not one singular set of beliefs which we assign to liberalism. It had acquired many distinct and at times often contradictory principles, norms and values. So, we can discuss it with this example of John Rawls and his three books called *Theory of Justice*, *Political Liberalism* and *Laws of People*. Now, these three books of John Rawls which started with a kind of universalistic approach in liberalism that means, liberalism is not confined to any particular history or particular social context. It has application in all kinds of society.

We think about modern democracy, parliamentary form of democracy or rule of law or constitution and its neutrality. And objectivity, gives it a kind of universal application. John Rawls, started with developing a theory of justice which will be universal in a sense, to arrive at a theory of justice which can have universal application. And if, it is implemented correctly, then expectation was that end result will be just. So, he started with the liberal premise of arriving at a theory of justice which will be universal in nature.

Now, with the critic, he developed in *Political Liberalism*, a pluralistic or a more pluralistic approach to the theory of justice or different conceptions of political theories or what he calls the primary goods and the idea of primary goods. So, different ideologies and different groups can still come together to have a kind of common consensus. Further, in the *Laws of People*, he went one step ahead to include even those who are visibly contradictory to each other, respecting their laws and still maintaining

some kind of common, minimum obligation to each other and maintaining harmony and peace in society.

So, in Rawls, we have seen a progression from a more classical liberal premise to a more contemporary premise, where he acknowledged or took into account the different orientations, approaches to politics among different societies within a large state in polity. However, liberalism basically, focuses on individual as a rational agent who knows what is best for him or her, and therefore, it desires that state and polity should give individuals maximum opportunity and freedom to explore, what is good or best in his or her interest. So, it also, argued that the material worth or the actual worth of the individual can be best or a thing can be best judge by a free market economy. There should not be any regulation or control over the economy or exchange of trade.

Liberalism has the premise of individual as a rational agent who knows what is best in his interest and he should have maximum freedom, and opportunity to explore that. Secondly, the best judge of worth of an individual or a thing is the free market. The role of state and society in this understanding is then minimal, only to reconcile and regulate the individual interests through an objective or neutral law and constitution.

In liberal philosophy, liberal approach, constitution and laws are expected to be neutral and objective. So, this is one of the most dominating philosophies of political ideology in modern world. John Locke, Adam Smith, Thomas Paine, Hayek, Nozick, Milton Friedman and many others are proponent of this ideology. It has many inner varieties too. We will discuss it in a moment. However, liberalism has many critics from within and without.

So, within, there are communitarians or multiculturalists like Taylor, Michael Sandel or Will Kymlicka and instead of liberalism, they focus on abstract isolated individual who is rational. These theorists, multiculturalists or communitarian theorists are arguing about socially and culturally embedded individuals and group differentiated rights. Thus, in liberalism, the individual is considered as rational. Therefore, certain rights are fundamental for this individual and these rights are given to the individual because of him or her being the human being, the individual and not because he or she belongs to a particular caste, group, or a particular community.

In contrast, multiculturalism or communitarian thinkers believed that individuals do not live or exist in an isolated society. He or she is part of a larger network of groups and communities. Therefore, he or she is an embedded individual and they should be given certain rights which are taken into account as the background of that individual. The minorities in different liberal democracy with its majoritarian tendency requires the state to recognize the background of individuals and accordingly, it provide him or her rights which are different from the universal rights as it is there in liberal philosophy.

Within liberalism, we have philosophy or ideology like multiculturalism or communitarianism which believes in the socially and culturally embedded individual and group differentiated rights. Now, liberalism faces greatest challenge or criticism from Marxism where instead of individual as like in liberalism, Marxism emphasis on class as a basic unit for social and political philosophy. We will discuss the philosophy of Marxism in a moment. We need to understand that liberalism continues to be a very relevant political ideology in our contemporary times.

(Refer Slide Time: 39:53)

➤ Similarly, Social democrats, Feminists and environmental activists are equally critical of liberalism. However, liberalism remains a dominant political ideology and it has proved to be elastic enough to absorb the critics within its fold as is clear from the example of John Rawls discussed earlier.

Marxism

➤ Marxism is one of the most contested political ideology in the modern world which is revered by the half of the world and devoured by the another. For a long time it had divided the world into two warring camps. It claims to speak on behalf of dispossessed working classes. It considers liberalism and capitalism as bourgeoisies ideology where as they regard their own theory as 'scientific' and aspire to emancipate the world from their present oppressive conditions of existence by creating a classless an stateless society. The basis of this ideology was the writings of Karl Marx, Engels, Lenin, Gramsci and others. Like liberalism it has its own internal varieties and continue to be relevant even today in the era of new liberalism.

However, it faces many challenges. It has also, provided condition for the emergence of different ideologies. For instance, liberal feminism or social democratic, or liberal democrats or liberal egalitarianism.

Liberalism remains a kind of elastic political ideology and it includes different variants of political thoughts and thinking within its own domain. So, social democrats, feminists

and environmental activists are equally, critical of liberalism. However, liberalism remains a dominant political ideology and it has proved to be elastic enough to absorb the critics within its fold as is clear from the example of John Rawls that we have discussed earlier.

It absorbs its critic to make itself more accommodative, flexible and hence, more relevant. It continues to change or acquire new characteristics, according to the changing nature of political discourse and political development. From the classical liberalism to modern, to contemporary and then again, this New Right, we have seen the constant elasticity of political ideology in liberalism.

Marxism is one of the most contested political ideologies in the modern world which is revered by half of the world and devoured by another half. So, half of the world admire or appreciate and take Marxism as a ray of hope from their existing oppressions and injustices. On the other hand, the other half of the world sees Marxism as the biggest challenge and communism which is emerged out of Marxist writings or worldviews is seen as the biggest threat to the existing social and political world.

It caused many revolutions such as Russian revolution, Chinese revolution or in Vietnam or Cuba, there were many political movements still in many parts of the world guided by or inspired by the ideology of Marxism. The political contestations in different societies emerged from the Liberal strands or the Marxist strands of political thought. So, Marxism is one such contested political ideologies and for a very long time, it had divided the world into two warring camps.

If we remember, the history of cold war and the division of world into two groups led by USA on the one hand or USSR on the other hand, was guided by these opposite political ideologies of liberalism, capitalism or free market, and communism and classless, stateless society or utopia. So, it claims to speak on behalf of the dispossessed working class. One of the legitimacy for Marxism is on the basis of its explanation of inequalities, especially, social and economic inequalities, that is widely prevalent in a capitalist, liberal society.

It considers liberalism and capitalism as bourgeoisie ideology, whereas they regard themselves or their own theories as scientific and inspire to emancipate the world from their present oppressive conditions of existence by creating a classless and stateless

society. That is how, it replaces, it claims to provide alternative to the liberal ideology. So, the basis of this ideology was the writings of Karl Marx, Engels, Lenin, Gramsci and others. Like liberalism, it has its own internal varieties too.

From the writings of Karl Marx and Engels to Lenin and further on to Gramsci, we see an evolution in Marxist political ideology as well, as it is there in liberalism. So, the New Left or Post-Marxist is the progression of thought and set of beliefs in Marxism itself. It remains relevant in a new liberal era, where every time there is a slowdown in economy, there is the resurgence in the interest of Marxist, Marxism and Marxist writings.

(Refer Slide Time: 45:11)

Socialism

- Socialism emerged as a sharp critique to the liberalism and capitalism. It criticizes capitalism for the socio-economic inequalities which has lead to alienation and has reduced the working masses merely as a labor force deprived of suitable human conditions.
- Socialism aims to emancipate human beings from socio-economic inequalities by avoiding the extremes of both Liberalism (Capitalism) and Marxism (Communism) and to emphasis on the collective efforts. It criticizes institution of private property. One of the early socialists Pierre Joseph Proudhon declared property is nothing but theft. Charles Fourier was another early socialist who criticized capitalism and drew attention to re-organizing the production and distribution system that prevails under capitalism. The major proponents this ideology are Social democrats.

Socialism as an ideology emerged as a sharp critic to Liberalism and Capitalism. It criticizes Capitalism for the socio-economic inequalities which has led to alienation and it has reduced the working masses, merely, as a labour force deprived of any suitable human condition. Socialism aims to emancipate human beings from socio-economic inequalities by avoiding the extremes of both Marxism and Communism on the one hand, and Liberalism and Capitalism on the other hand. It tries to reconcile or bridge the extremes of both liberalism and Marxism, to provide a better alternative for the emancipation of the masses.

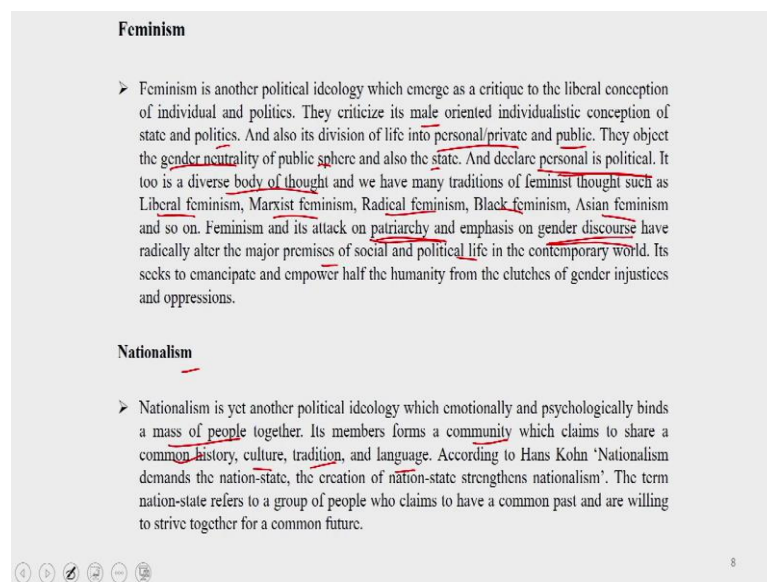
It criticized the institution of private property and focuses on the collective ownership or community ownership of the resources. One of the early socialists like Pierre Joseph Proudhon declared property as nothing, but theft. Charles Fourier was another early

socialist who criticized capitalism and drew attention to reorganize production and distribution systems that prevailed under capitalism. The major proponents of these ideologies were social democrats.

In India, if we remember, in the post-independent movement, socialism was very dynamic or appeared as a promising political ideology, immediately after independence in the first and second decades. So, if we recall Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev or Ram Manohar Lohia, they were all leaders of the socialist party and they wanted to avoid the extremes of both the hollow promises of liberal ideology, on the one hand which provided both political and legal equality. But it did nothing about the actual, social and economic inequalities.

And on the other hand, it avoided the extremes towards left which tries to radically alter or rupture the existing status quo, to bring about revolution, to bring about radical changes in the existing social reality. So, it tries to avoid the extremes for bringing about emancipation or to remove the social and economic inequalities in society.

(Refer Slide Time: 48:05)



Feminism

- Feminism is another political ideology which emerge as a critique to the liberal conception of individual and politics. They criticize its male oriented individualistic conception of state and politics. And also its division of life into personal/private and public. They object the gender neutrality of public sphere and also the state. And declare personal is political. It too is a diverse body of thought and we have many traditions of feminist thought such as Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, Radical feminism, Black feminism, Asian feminism and so on. Feminism and its attack on patriarchy and emphasis on gender discourse have radically alter the major premises of social and political life in the contemporary world. Its seeks to emancipate and empower half the humanity from the clutches of gender injustices and oppressions.

Nationalism

- Nationalism is yet another political ideology which emotionally and psychologically binds a mass of people together. Its members forms a community which claims to share a common history, culture, tradition, and language. According to Hans Kohn 'Nationalism demands the nation-state, the creation of nation-state strengthens nationalism'. The term nation-state refers to a group of people who claims to have a common past and are willing to strive together for a common future.

Feminism is another political ideology which emerged as a critic to liberal conception of individual and politics. So, in Liberalism, individual is a rational agent and therefore, there is no gender sensitivity, in liberal philosophy because it claims of neutrality and objectivity. That means, it is gender blind and the political arena or state and its institutions are considered as open for both genders. But in the actual practice or in the

actual functioning of politics, we have seen, how women have to struggle for getting recognition as an equal member of society with having equal rights and opportunities. For basic rights like right to vote, woman had to fought a long and hard battle.

Therefore, Feminism is very critical of the liberal conception of individual and politics. They criticize the male oriented individualistic conception of state and politics. So, the discourse or the language is dominated by a male oriented approach to both politics and state. And it also, divides the life into a private, personal life and it deals more with the public sphere.

So, in the liberal philosophy, religion is considered as the matter of private life and the state deals with matters related to public life. Feminists are very critical of the gender neutral public sphere and the state. They declared that the personal is also political and like Liberalism or Marxism, Feminism is a very diverse body of thought. And we have many traditions of feminists like Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, Radical feminism, Black feminism, Asian feminism, etc. They are united in terms of fighting for the oppressed conditions or existence of half of the humanity, but they also, have a variety of approaches and methods to interrogate, to interpret, and to participate in the public and political life.

Feminism and its attack, particularly on patriarchy and its emphasis on gender discourse have radically altered the major premises of social and political life in contemporary world. In comparison to Liberalism and Marxism, or Socialism, Feminism is of recent origin in 1960's. It started with the claim of personal is political and in 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, it has acquired more radical turn. And now, with the focus on patriarchy, we see, how it alters the major assumptions in our social and political life and in our public institutions. How it is making the public or political discourse sensitive to the gender requirements of particular groups, be it women or men, or the LGBT community, that is, lesbian, bisexual, gay or transgender etc. Thus, they recognize their rights, needs, being sensitive to their requirements and constantly alter the major premises of our political life.

Nationalism is one such ideology which is considered as an ideology, but it is very different from political ideologies like liberalism and Marxism, or Socialism or Feminism. So, we can be a nationalist, but being nationalist, we are also, open to be a

Liberal or a Marxist or a Feminist etc. However, nationalism tends to provide emotionally or psychologically, a group of people or a large mass and then bring them together, to form a community and give them an identity which transcends other identities that is based on ascriptive identities such as caste, gender, class etc. So, it emotionally and psychologically binds a mass of people together and its members forms a community which claims to share a common history, culture, tradition and language.

And we have seen, how in 19th and 20th century, there have been different waves of nationalism and how it altered the geography of the world into different nation-states and how nationalism is powerful, psychological and political tool for social and political movements in different countries. We are familiar with the anti-colonial struggle in India, Asian and African countries and its latest third wave of nationalism. So, it had started in Europe and then, the second wave was in Latin America. But the most recent and the third wave is from the anti-colonial movements in Asia, Africa and there is a again, a positive and negative side to it.

It is also, seen as emancipatory or liberating for many people. It is also, seen as divisive or exclusive, where the loyalty of people or groups of people is confined to a geographical territory and it does not extend to the large humanity. However, it is a very powerful political ideology in modern times, which aspire to form a particular community, a nation of one's own and to which one is psychologically and emotionally connected. So, this term nation-state refers to a group of people who claims to have a common past and they are willing to strive together for a common future.

(Refer Slide Time: 55:05)

Post Structuralism

- It is often seen as a critic of meta narratives and less constructive in terms of suggesting a blue-print for alternative course of action. However, post-structuralists have also developed an alternative model of politics and ethics. It rejects any foundational grand meta narratives. It is a move away from teleological world views and grand theories which often result in immeasurable cruelties and oppressions. It tries to examine and identify the structures of injustices and oppressions to enable any emancipatory politics possible.

Ecologism and Environmentalism

- It is a contemporary ideology which started in 1960's. It focuses on the desire of the ecologists to protect the ecology, biosphere or nature as a whole, unlike the environmentalists who are basically concerned about the environmental and its consequences on human beings and their lives. Ecologism is not a typical human-centric or anthropocentric approach like environmentalism rather ecologism is eco-centric and it strongly asserts that nature has an intrinsic value that human needs to realise and preserve. Leopold and Nacess pointed out that all humans are dependent on ecology or 'biosphere'.

Now, very briefly, this new ideology like post-structuralism which has again, radically altered the major premises in political theory. However, it is often seen as a critic of meta-narratives. It is still being very less constructive in terms of providing or suggesting an alternative to the alternative course of action, that is its critics. However, the post-structuralists, such as Foucault, Derrida and many others have also developed an alternative model of politics and ethics. In this alternative model of politics and ethics, they reject any foundational or a grand meta-narrative of a theory or ideology.

So, it is a move away from the teleological worldview that believes there is one starting or end point. And there are various stages in between. The time is linear time. The teleological or linearity in the political ideology or the premises or assumptions of political ideologies are rejected by the post-structuralist thinkers and theorists. And it claims to relativism or identifying the structure of oppression and injustice rather than having a grand meta-narrative or utopia about the future, as it is there in many other ideologies.

It is a move away from the teleological worldviews and grand theories which often result in immeasurable cruelties and oppressions that we have seen in the case of Fascism, Nazism or many other fundamentalist ideologies in the world which promises a better future with a grand narrative. But in the process, it unleashes violence; it indulges in cruelties or oppressions which are rejected by the post-structuralist thinkers.

And in contrast to that kind of grand meta-narratives, it tries to examine and identify the structures of injustices and oppressions, to enable any emancipatory politics as possible. So, it does not provide emancipatory politics or blue print for emancipatory politics in a sense of grand narratives or grand theory. But it tries to explore the structures of injustices and oppressions, and how to examine and identify them, to make any kind of emancipatory politics possible.

It cut across different ideological divides of earlier times and tries to work in a very small mundane way, to create a more emancipatory society. Now, finally, ecologism and environmentalism, it is a contemporary ideology which started in 1960's and it is also, a shift from the excessive focus on the human to a non-human, to include environmental concerns or climate change concerns in the domain of political theory.

We have separate topic on the environmental ethics which we will discuss. Ecologism is a contemporary ideology and it focuses on the desires of the ecologists to protect the ecology, biosphere or nature as a whole. Unlike the environmentalists, who are basically, concerned about the environmental and its consequences on human beings and their lives, ecology is not a typical human centric or anthropocentric approach like environmentalism is.

Rather, ecologism is eco-centric and it strongly asserts that nature has an intrinsic value that human need to realize and preserve. So, Leopold and Naess pointed out that all humans are dependent on ecology and biosphere. In this ideology, the shift is away from excessive focus on human or anthropocentric approach to politics or society, to include the concerns of ecology and ecology in its totality, and not in its relationship with human or vice-versa, as it is there in environmentalism. This is also a kind of new and recent development in political theory.

(Refer Slide Time: 60:19)

➤ Ecologists further believes that industrialisation is the major factor for the degradation of ecology or nature. It focuses on a sustainable society by emphasizing on limited consumption of natural resources by humans. Whereas, environmentalism and environmentalists focuses on the uniqueness of human-beings as living rational beings in the post-Enlightenment phase and it places human beings outside and above the nature.

Major Themes in Political Theory

➤ Liberty, Equality, Rights, Justice, Power, State and Sovereignty, Democracy, Citizenship, Politics and Environmental ethics

10

Ecologists, further believe that industrialization is the major factor for the degradation of ecology or nature, and it focuses on a sustainable society by emphasizing on limited consumption of natural resources and we are all increasingly the victims of these excessive consumption of natural resources for our industrial purposes or developmental purposes. So, ecology, in contrast to that kind of consumptions argues for a minimal consumption of natural resources.

So, whereas, environmentalism and environmentalists focuses on the uniqueness of human beings as living rational beings in the post-enlightenment phase. It places human beings outside and above the nature. The ecologism is in contrast to that kind of approach which focuses on human or keeps human-being as rational individuals in the centre of all its philosophy.

The major themes that we are going to discuss in this course is liberty, equality, rights, justice, power, state and sovereignty, democracy, citizenship, politics and environmental ethics. So, these are some of the key themes that we will discuss and there are multiple interpretations or conceptualization of these terms. Many of these terms are also interrelated such as liberty, equality and rights, liberty, equality and justice that we will discuss, when we will take up these issues in the next classes.

(Refer Slide Time: 62:19)

New Directions in Political Theory

- As politics is an ever-changing phenomena so is political theory which tries to systematically study and analyze it. In terms of methods, concepts and approaches, political theory derives excessively from western political thought and philosophy. But there is a shift now to engage with non-western traditions of political thinking as well and to develop a dialogue with them to make political theory truly a global discipline.
- The concerns of political theory are also accommodative of new changes and developments. First, humans are no longer the only exclusive concerns for political theorists, they now have to increasingly take into account non-human factors such as animal rights, climate change, environment and so on. Second, developments in science and technology such as genetics can potentially alter the major premises of equality in political theory. Similarly there is no singular and definite answer to the questions of democracy, liberty or Justice. It needs to be explained contextually and historically.
- It is true that political theory overlaps with political philosophy, ideology and thought, however, a degree of generality, normative concerns, question of state and political power, individual and community remain some of the major concerns of political theory. Unlike political ideology it does not aspire to capture the state power. But it does allow the resources and discursive terrain to not only make sense of the political but also to transform it. And that makes political theory a very fascinating discipline of study.

11

Finally, this new development or directions in political theory, if we see, that politics is an ever changing phenomenon, so is political theory which tries to systematically, study and analyze it. So, in terms of methods, concepts and approaches, political theory derives excessively from the western tradition of political thought and philosophy. But there is a shift now to engage with the non-western traditions of political thinking as well and to develop a dialogue with them and to make political theory a global discipline.

So, this is a new direction in political theory, where it tries to engage with the non-western political thought and philosophy, to make political theory a more global discipline. The concerns of political theory are also accommodative of new changes and developments. Humans are no longer, the only exclusive concerns for political theorists. They now have to increasingly, take into account non-human factors such as animal rights, climate change, environment and so on.

As we have discussed in the new political ideologies like ecologism, there is a concern for the new concerns, for the political theories and second, development in science and technology such as genetics can potentially alter the major premises of equality in political theory. Similarly, there is no singular and definite answer to questions of democracy, liberty and justice. It needs to be explained contextually, and historically, which political theorists tries to do.

It is true that the political theory overlaps with political philosophy, ideology and thought. However, a degree of generality, normative concerns, questions of state and the political power, individual and community remains some of the major concerns of political theory. Unlike political ideology, it does not aspire to capture the state power, but it does allow the resources and discursive terrain to not only make sense of the political, but also to transform it. So, political theory is not helpful in making sense or understanding of the political society, but also it provides the resources or judgements, and discursive terrain to transform it.

This ability is not just to explain or understand, but also to transfer political theory which is a very fascinating discipline of study. I hope, when we will study and discuss different concepts and terms, we will become more and more familiar with different layers of political debates and discourses in any society, including, Indian society and also, to develop a judgment which is very different from an opinion about any political and social issue which is contentious by nature.

Thus, political theory as a discipline enables us to make sense of the complexities, the multi-layered conceptions or conflictual terrain of politics. And to have one's own judgment about it, I hope, when we will conclude this course, we will develop some of those skills, methods and approaches to do that.

(Refer Slide Time: 66:19)

References

1. Rajeev Bhargava and Ashok Acharya (eds.), *Political Theory: An Introduction*, Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2008.
2. Andrew Dobson and Robyn Eckersley (eds.), *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
3. John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig and Anne Phillips (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
4. Gerald Gaus. *Handbook of Political Theory*, London: Sage Publications, 2004.
5. John Hoffman and Paul Graham (eds.), *Introduction to Political Theory*, New York: Routledge, 2015.
6. Catriona McKinnon. *Issues In Political Theory (Second Edition)*. United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 2012.

On this lecture, you can refer to some of these books like Rajeev Bhargava and Ashok Acharya's, *Political Theory and An Introduction* and Andrew Dobson or Robyn Eckersley's, *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge* and again, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory* is a very helpful book to understand many concepts and some of the themes that we have discussed so far in these two lectures. These other books, you can refer to understand some of the things that we have discussed.

Thank you and let us know, what you think about this lecture. We will be happy to respond to you within twenty-four hours.

Thanks for listening.