

**Introduction to Political Theory**  
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**Lecture - 3**  
**Liberty, Part I: Introduction & Republican Conception of Freedom**

Hello, friends. Today in this lecture, we will discuss about the key concept called liberty. We are going to have three lectures through which we will discuss different aspects of it. It is one of the most essentially, contested concepts in political theory. It has different connotations, conceptualization and there are different strands of political discourse and debates on the question of liberty.

We are going to discuss the definition of liberty and will try to understand some of the political thinkers and their ideas, about their conception of liberty. And then, we will move on to the republican notion of liberty and also, to know about the negative and positive conception of liberty, as argued by Isaiah Berlin, and to understand certain responses to such kind of a conceptualization. We will also, discuss about free speech and hate speech, what is freedom of speech and expression and what can be a reasonable limit or restriction to the freedom of speech and expression. Finally, we will also, discuss the idea of freedom as moral autonomy or what Gandhi calls Freedom as Swaraj.

These are some of the key themes through which we will try to understand liberty and its different conceptualizations. In today's lecture, we are going to focus mainly, on the understanding of liberty or freedom through some of the key thinkers. Also, we will focus more on the republican conception of liberty.

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**Introduction: What is liberty?**

- The concept of liberty signifies a notion of choice and absence of any constraints; external or state's interferences in exercising one's own choices in order to lead a good life. It emphasizes on the curtailment of restrictions or impediments, if individuals or human beings are to lead a meaningful and purposeful life.
- It is, in other words, opposite of subjugation, coercion, control, and domination of one by the another. And, it is desirable for the progress of both individuals and communities. However, it runs into a problem and contestation in a society where individuals to individuals; groups to groups; individual to groups ideas, opinions, and beliefs differ. So is the case in the relationships between law and state on the one hand and individuals and the society on the other.
- Liberals emphasize on the need of liberty/freedom. The classical liberals described liberty as the natural right of the individual. Liberty, thus, for them was freedom of choice i.e. freedom from restraints. Modern liberals describe liberty as the condition essential for developing individuals own skills and talents to develop a personality of their own without any kind of restrictions.

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As a way of introduction, many of us are aware of how liberty or what we call freedom is regarded essential or a precondition for any meaningful or dignified life for both the individual and community. We will find in our political discourse, political debates or in our history books about the struggle for freedom. And freedom is regarded as the prerequisite or the first condition for any other goods to happen for individual or the community.

The significance of this concept also, leads to some of the other challenging aspects attached to the question of freedom. What are those challenges, we are going to discuss that over the course through these three lectures. But we need to keep in mind that liberty in its absolute sense, if understood as freedom from restraints, then it cannot be absolute freedom from all kinds of restraints. So, it is not possible to realise freedom in that particular sense, as understood for freedom like freedom from all kind of restraints.

What should be the possible limits and who is going to decide, what should be the possible limits or restriction to liberty and freedom? These are some of the philosophical and moral questions that we are going to discuss. And, the other aspect of this theme is the idea of freedom of speech and expression, and when and how this freedom of speech and expression can possibly, lead to undesirable ends. How to restrict that and which authority, under which rule can reasonably, restrict such freedom of speech and expressions?

In other words, how it can prevent from turning free speech to hate speech. So, these are some of the crucial aspects of this theme of liberty. The concept of liberty signifies a notion of choice and absence of any kind of constraints. The basic understanding of liberty or freedom is about choice. Thus, both individual and community has a choice to make decisions and in making their decisions, they are not constrained by any authority or any force, external to them.

Liberty or freedom is about autonomy of individual or community from any kind of restrictions, while they are making decisions or while they are deciding about their choice. They want to pursue that choice or decision for whatever their conception of good or a proper life is. So, the concept of liberty then signifies a notion of choice, both for the individual and community. And also, it signifies an absence of external restraints or state interferences in exercising one's choice in order to lead a good life.

So, if we remember in political discourse, we often find institutions of state or its ideologues arguing about a good life and to lead that good life, they prescribe certain course of action, decision, and policies to be followed by the people. Now, that conception of good life as designed by the state and its authority is inherently, inimical to the free progress or to make a condition for living a dignified life, or a free life for individual or society.

The danger of state or its institutions designing a conception of good life for the individual and certain policies to be followed by them is essentially, problematic. Because, it restricts individual liberty to make decisions, to have certain choices and to pursue the life which he or she wants to pursue. It means, notion of choice which is absence from any kind of external constraints, be it a group of individuals or community on the one hand, or the state and its institutions on the other, while exercising his or her own choice.

That is, the very basic fundamental understanding of liberty or freedom. It emphasizes on the curtailment of restrictions or impediments, if individuals or human beings are to lead a meaningful and purposeful life. The basic contentious understanding of liberty lies in a meaningful and purposeful life, which is in control of what is meaningful or what is purposeful life. Is it the individual and community themselves who decides about what is meaningful life or what is purposeful life or is it the state or an external authority or

institutions which decide for them? What is good and purposeful for them? In that sense, when state and its institutions, or certain moral ideologues dictates what is good life or what is purposeful life, then it curtails or restricts individual or community freedom or liberty, to make decisions and choices that is always, dangerous. How that can be dangerous, we will discuss later.

Basically, liberty is about maximizing the scope for individuals to make decisions. In other words, to limit the restrictions or impediments on individual choices or individual decisions, to make certain decisions and choices about their lives, or about their conception of a good life. In other words, opposite of subjugation, coercion, control and domination by one over another. Thus, liberty can be understood in this sense as well which is as I have discussed about choice or freedom from external restrictions. On the other hand, we can also understand freedom or liberty as absence of subjugation, coercion, control and domination of one by the other. In the context of India, we have had the experience of colonialism, where the nation was ruled by a foreign country and we were subjugated to their dictates and conception of public life, or what they considered as a rule or principle of governance.

In that condition, we were fighting for the freedom from the British rule. It has the collective aspect to it as well. It has the individual aspect attached to it, where we will discuss it in details, when we will discuss Gandhi and his conception of Swaraj. For him, Swaraj is freedom and that freedom includes both individual and a collective life. In other words, we can understand freedom and liberty as an absence or opposite of subjugation, coercion, control and domination. It is desirable for the progress of both individuals and community.

So, the decision or the ability to make choices that concerns one's life is necessary for the progress of not just individual, but also, for the community or their collectivities. However, this concept of liberty runs into problem as there are many contestations over its meaning, particularly, in a society, where differences arises between individual to individuals, groups to groups, individuals to groups or vice versa, and their ideas, opinions and beliefs differ in many ways. How to reconcile their differences as these differences are often conflicting, and opposite of each other. Now, in that kind of situation, to ensure an equal space for all the groups, and individuals to pursue what they

think as good for them is something, which requires some moral considerations, and philosophical reflection which we are going to discuss.

The idea of liberty or freedom as opposition to subjugation, coercion, control and domination of one over the other is easily said, but in practice, it runs into many problems, contestations, especially when there is a society, where many individuals, groups of individual, and groups with other groups vary from each other, differ from each other, on their beliefs, faith, ideas and opinions. So, to reconcile such differences is often contradictory and conflicting. Now, these kinds of contestations are there when individual interacts with state or vice-versa. Questions of contestation are such as what are the fundamental rights, what are the inalienable rights, where are the limits against the state and where they cannot interfere concerning the individual or it is about relationship between groups or communities, and the state or vice versa, or individual and community, and community or individual again, etc.

In these kinds of inter-relations between an individual group and state, there is a kind of contestation in meaning, in conceptualization about what could be the reasonable restrictions that can be put for the individual liberty or freedom. So, these reasonable constraints or restrictions may vary. Therefore, from society to society, from context to context depending upon different considerations and what are those considerations, we will discuss, especially, when we will discuss about John Stuart Mills.

Liberals emphasize on the need for liberty and freedom. As we have discussed in our introductory lectures, liberalism and its emphasis on the individual and the whole of political and public institutions, or a structure is to ensure that the individual has enough scope to develop his or her own personality. For them, liberty and freedom is absolute prerequisite for a prosperous and free society. So, for them, liberal or liberty, and freedom is absolutely, necessary. The classical liberals described liberty as natural or inalienable rights. An individual has certain liberties or freedom which is inalienable. Thus, the whole discourse of rights, natural rights, fundamental rights and legal rights are based on the idea of certain natural rights, to individuals which is there in the classical liberal philosophy.

Liberty, thus, is about freedom of choice or freedom from restraints. Now, what could be the reasonable restrictions which are debatable subjects? Different liberal philosophers

have different understandings of such reasonable restrictions. But none-the less, their conceptualization of liberty is freedom of choice or freedom from restraints. It will vary from individual to individual and thinkers even among liberalism. But, necessarily, the conceptualization requires freedom of choice or freedom to make decisions, or freedom from any external restraints. Thus, modern liberals, describe liberty as the essential condition for developing individual skills and talents, to develop a personality of their own.

The idea of individuality or one's own self, and one's own judgement requires certain pre-conditions for human-beings to develop, such as, individuality to develop some judgements which he or she can call as his or her own. That requires a pre-condition which is called liberty. Thus, liberty or freedom provides an individual with a scope to develop his or her personality, to develop his or her own choice, opinion, and judgement. It requires, complete freedom from any kind of external restraints.

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**Freedom and Liberty**

- Freedom and Liberty are often used interchangeably. However, these two terms analytically differ from each other.
- Liberty is a negative term and is more about autonomy of the individual from the interference of group or community, whereas freedom a positive term and is more about being or participating in the community.
- Liberty is understood as absolute autonomy or freedom from all constraints. It is an ideal which can not be realized in the absolute sense of the term on the earth. So, what we are left with is freedom that is liberty under the constraints of law. Philosophers like Hannah Arendt make a conceptual difference between these two concepts. For her, Liberty is a negative concept where as freedom entails participation in public affairs. So, according to her freedom is not merely about absence of restraints but one's ability and willingness to participate in the public life and constitute 'the republic'. Thus she emphasized upon the actual realization of freedom through one's public activities.
- However, for our purpose we will use it interchangeably. As we will see later that these aspects are well conceptualized in liberal and republican & positive and negative conceptions of liberty.

These two terms are also necessary, to understand which we often use interchangeably, that is freedom or liberty. Although it is used interchangeably, however, these two terms analytically differs from each other. So, liberty can be understood as negative and is more about the autonomy of the individual from interferences by any group or community. It is about isolating the individual or separating the individual from groups

or community, and then, conceptualizing his or her freedom in a complete autonomous or an isolated existence of him or her from the larger society and community.

It is more a kind of negative term, whereas, freedom is understood in positive term that is more about being or participating in the community. We will discuss this point, when we will discuss again the republican conception of liberty, where liberty is not just having freedom and autonomy from the community, and living one's life the way one want to live. But, liberty or as it is understood in a positive sense of freedom is more about being and participating in the larger self, or in the community life.

In the actual realisation of liberty, it is not possible to enjoy or exercise liberty by keeping oneself aloof and indifferent from the larger public life. It is only, through participating or acting in public collective life that we realise our freedom. So, it is more of a positive freedom which argues about participation, or being or engaged in the public life, and by participating in the engagement, we actually, realise our freedom and not the other way round.

Thus, liberty is understood as absolute autonomy or freedom from all constraints. It is an ideal. So, one cannot really, achieve it or realize it in its absolute sense on earth. Although, we can aspire for liberty understood as complete freedom or freedom from all kind of external restraints, yet it is not possible, it is not pragmatic to have an individual who can enjoy such existence. Because one of the fundamental characteristics of individual is that he or she requires an associational life.

Associational life requires the existence of others and therefore, when the other self interacts with others, what could be the space where the self is free and what could be the scope, where there can be minimal or reasonable restrictions on the freedom of the self. So, these are some of the contentious questions that we need to discuss. Liberty in that sense, understood as absolute freedom is impossible to have a form of associational life on earth. What we are left with this freedom and it is understood as liberty under the constraints of law.

The rule of law restricts or poses certain restrictions and limits to individual choices, individual movements, individual decisions, etc. Whether that rule of law is justifiable or not, and how far, the rule of law is justifiable or not, should we have the rule of law or any restrictions or not, these are some of the considerations which we think about liberty

which is understood as freedom within the constraints of law. Here, the law enables the individual to develop himself or herself into a personality or individuality, that he or she aspires to become.

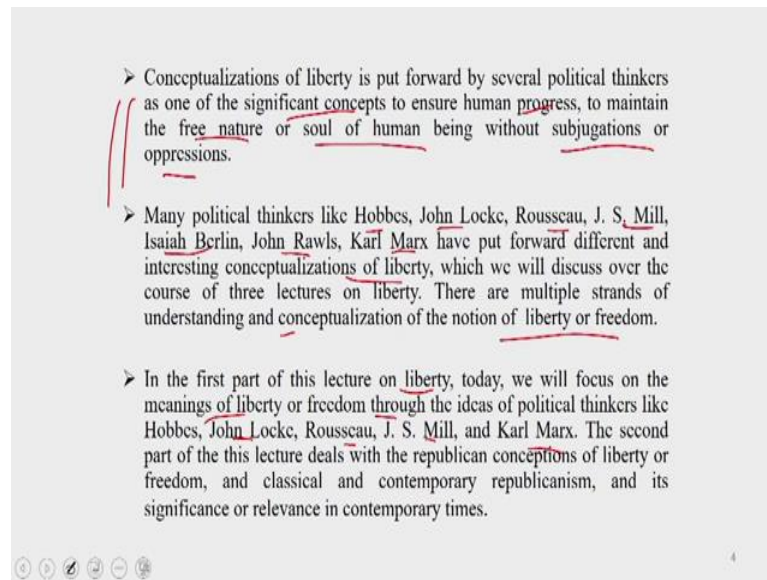
Philosophers like Hannah Arendt made a conceptual difference between these two concepts. For her, liberty is a negative concept, where freedom entails participation in public affairs. So, this participation is necessary, to realise one's freedom and it is not a kind of isolation or an autonomous life, disconnected from the larger community life. According to her, freedom is not merely, about absence of restraints, and rights that has different consequences. In general sense of the term, if liberty is understood as we know it is my business, there is no one else who should interfere with what I think is good or not.

It has many other moral implications which we will discuss later on. For Hannah Arendt, freedom is about participation and not just about freedom from restraints. Actually, in participating, one realises one's freedom and one's ability and willingness to participate in the public life and to constitute the republic. So, this participation and constitution of republic or collective life is something, which provides the condition in the first place to realise oneself, to make certain decisions which concerns one's life. If that participation or acting in the public life is absent, then, there will be no republic, no collective self which provides the condition in the first place for the individual, to realise his or her own self, to make decisions about his or her own life.

To create those conditions, it is absolutely necessary, to actually participate and engage in the public life to construct a society or a republic which will enable or provide the condition for the individuals, to make certain decisions which concerns their life. Thus, she emphasised on the actual realisation of freedom through one's public activities and not by living an isolatory, autonomous, and individualistic life. However, for all purposes, we will use these two terms of liberty and freedom interchangeably, as we will see later these aspects of negative or positive conception of liberty and freedom. We will conceptualize these terms, when we will discuss about the notion of republican or liberal, and positive and negative conception of liberty.



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Conceptualization of liberty is put forward by several political thinkers as one of the significant concepts to ensure human progress, to maintain the free nature or soul of human being without subjugation or oppressions. So, all political thinkers, although they differ in their conceptualizations of the term, they agreed to the significance of this concept as necessary, for human progress and to maintain free nature, or free will of individual souls from any subjugations or oppressions.

Many political thinkers like Hobbes, John Locke, Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Isaiah Berlin, John Rawls and Karl Marx have put forward different and interesting conceptualizations of liberty which we will discuss over the course of three lectures. So, there are multiple strands of understanding and conceptualizations on the notion of liberty and freedom. In the first part of this lecture, on liberty, today, we will focus on the meanings of liberty or freedom through the ideas of political thinkers like Locke, Rousseau, Mill and Karl Marx. In the second part of this lecture, we will focus on the notion of republicanism or the republican notion of freedom, its classical and contemporary conceptualizations, and relevance in contemporary times.

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**John Locke and Liberty**

- His framework of liberty is based on morality. It is grounded on the laws of nature and notion of equality. He argued that liberty is a natural right and is universal. No individual should harm any other individual. He talked about protection of life, liberty and property. He emphasized on the absence of constraints to attain liberty. He pointed out Liberty is meant for all and so it must be held by all equally without any restrictions.
- For him, right to liberty needs to be secured along with right to life and property. He pointed out that liberty precedes both the emergence of a political and civil society.

**Rousseau and Liberty**

- Rousseau considered liberty as a collective goal of individuals to be realized in a society. His concept of liberty is individualistic in nature but it is based on the collective good or larger good of human beings as a whole. He pointed out that liberty can be achieved by abandoning one's selfish interests, desires, or motives.
- For him, liberty in the very individualist sense, enables individuals to create an unjust and unequal society. For Rousseau, liberty is freedom or liberation from a state of un-freedom as it emerged in the civil and political society.

*Individual* (handwritten in red)

*General Will* (handwritten in red)

In John Locke's theory of liberty, he argued on liberty as necessary for the growth of individuality and this liberty is something, which he regarded as existing in the 'state of nature'. If we are familiar with this social contract tradition of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, we will find, they argued about the 'state of nature' and how, from the 'state of nature' state comes into existence. They focused on why individuals should obey the state and what are the rights which state must protect, and if it does not protect, what are the alternatives or the choices that individuals or society may have in that condition.

In the social contract tradition, Locke argued that individual has certain rights which precede the civil and political society, which he constituted for the collective or the political life. These rights are namely, liberty and property. So, along with liberty, he equally considered life and property. Thus, liberty, right to life, liberty and property is something, which he regarded as inalienable rights of individual, existed in the 'state of nature' as well. The responsibility or duty of the state is to protect or ensure individual right to life, liberty and property.

His justification or conceptualization of liberty was based on the notion of morality and it was grounded on the laws of nature and notion of equality. He argued that liberty is natural right and therefore, it is universal. So, no individual should harm any other individual. He talked about protection of life, liberty and property as necessary, prerequisites for the individual to develop, or to makes one's individuality his own. So,

that distinctive nature of individual life or individual conception of good life is possible, when state protects or ensures certain rights. These are rights to life, liberty and property.

He emphasized on the absence of constraints to attain liberty. He pointed out liberty is meant for all and not just for few. These are certain rights which are equally, available for every single individual or citizen in the state and all individuals then must respect each other's right to life, liberty and property. The state is there to ensure that these rights are not interfered with. For him, the right to liberty needs to be secured along with right to life and property, and he pointed out that liberty precedes both the emergence of political and civil society, as I have explained earlier.

The next thinker whom we will discuss is Rousseau and his conception of liberty which is in contrast to Lockean understanding of liberty. Locke's liberty is more about individual, but in Rousseau's conceptualization, liberty is regarded as the collective goal of individual needs to be realised in society. So, his concept of liberty was individualistic in nature, but it was based on the collective good or larger good of human beings as a whole. But it is termed as general will. This general will is known as the will of individual and collective, at the same time.

Now, we will not go into the complexities of this concept of general will. In Rousseau's, understanding of liberty, the individual freedom could be realised in association with the larger collective good of the society. So, he pointed out that liberty could be achieved by abandoning one's selfish interests, desires and motives, and these are the reasons, why the society was not equal or why there was no freedom in society. I mean civil society or the society that is constituted after the 'state of nature' because the individuals are guided by their selfish interest, desires and motives that restricts freedom that creates inequality in society.

For him, freedom of individual is in accordance with the freedom of the society or the collective as well. So, for him, liberty, in the very individualistic sense, enables individuals to create an unjust and unequal society. For Rousseau, liberty is freedom or liberation from the state of unfreedom, as it emerged in the civil and political society.

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➤ He believed that people are liberated only through obedience to law. An individual can be a free individual only by becoming an integral part of the collective group, community or whole of people.

➤ To quote Rousseau, he said 'a free people obeys, but it does not serve, it has leaders but no masters; it obeys the laws, but it obeys only the laws and it is due to the strength of laws that is not forced to obey'. For him, an individual is free only when he/she is free of personal servitude. His understanding of liberty can be traced back to one of his popular phrases in his work, *The Social Contract*, where he states that 'Man is born free but everywhere he is in chains'.

**J. S. Mill and Liberty**

➤ In his essay, *On Liberty*, Mill talked about the protection of individual liberty from state interferences and other kinds of social interferences. His understanding of liberty is grounded on the lifelong interests of man. He emphasized on the importance and significance of individuality to cultivate the proper self of human beings. He said that no individual opinion should be suppressed by the collective or majority decisions.

He believed that people are liberated only, through obedience of law or what he calls general will. So, an individual can be a free, only by becoming an integral part of the collective group or society or community and not by living a life which is independent and autonomous from the collective or community life. To quote Rousseau, he said 'a free people obey, but it does not serve, it has leaders, but no masters. It obeys the laws, but it obeys only the laws and it is due to the strength of laws that is not forced to obey'.

For him, in this conceptualization, individual is free only, when he or she is free from personal servitudes. That means, he governs his or her life, according to, to the law or what you call general will, but that general will is not a kind of dictate or a kind of law which put him in the condition of servitude. His understanding of liberty can be traced back to one of his popular phrases which many of us are aware of which is there in the social contract, where he states, 'man is born free, but everywhere he is in the chains'.

The political or the civil society gets constituted after the 'state of nature' created the conditions of unfreedom. How to ensure freedom for each and everyone in these conditions of unfreedom is what he argued about general will, where the will is free from individual interests, motives for selfish objectives and the objective of the group or the individual is in accordance with the larger good of the society. So, in this conceptualization, he went on to the extent of forcing individuals and there lies the danger in Rousseau's conception of freedom, where he argued that even the few person

will, if it is in the larger interests of society, can be considered as the general will. And, there is always the danger that the authoritarian or the dictatorial regime may use his approach to force their conception of good life, to force what they think is good for the rest of the society.

He argued, the general will ensure the freedom for each and everyone, and others who do not obey the general will can be forced to be free. Now, this kind of conceptual conceptualization makes the understanding of liberty problematic. As I have explained that many dictatorial or authoritarian regimes, or groups can use this approach to justify, their interferences or restrictions on the freedom of others.

The next thinker, we will discuss about is John Stuart Mill. Mill is perhaps, one of the finest supporters of individual conception of liberty. In his essay, 'On Liberty', we will talk about the protection of individual liberty from state interference and other kinds of social interferences. His understanding of liberty was grounded on the lifelong interests of man. He emphasized on the importance and significance of individuality, to cultivate the proper self of human-beings.

The individuality, personality, individual judgement and opinions are something, which is possible to achieve only, when the individuals have the liberty or freedom from external restraints, be it state or society or other individuals and groups. He said, no individual opinion should be suppressed by the collective or majority decisions. Sometimes, it happens in the public discourse or the political discourse, some kind of voices can be regarded as undesirable or illegitimate, or the hate speech or untruth. And against those kinds of considerations, Mills argued that no opinion should be suppressed especially, if it is the minorities opinion.

Because for him, the society can prosper together, when all the opinions are allowed to be expressed freely without any kind of constraints. What are the possible benefits of such opinions, we will discuss about it, when we will discuss again the idea of freedom of speech and expression, or free speech and hate speech. It is perhaps, good to know that freedom and liberty is something, which ensures all kinds of opinions to be expressed freely without any restrictions and that will ultimately, create a society which will be more prosperous and free.

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➤ For him, liberty is valuable as an end in itself. He pointed out that only free actions or freely chosen actions performed by an individual can make him/her a free person in the real sense. He focused on the right to free expression, thoughts and freedom of speech, principle of individuality, and limits to authority or authoritarian nature of power in the state.

➤ He pointed out that there should be minimum restrictions on individual liberty to prevent 'harm to others'. In his words, 'the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others'.

➤ He also made a distinction between a 'self-regarding' function and 'other's-regarding' function. A self-regarding function is that where an individual can exercise absolute freedom and the other's-regarding function that interferes with the freedom of others can be reasonably restricted.

**Karl Marx and Liberty**

➤ He argued that the inability to express one's self expresses unfreedom or curtailment of freedom. He put forward four stages to explain denial of liberty or freedom to majority of individuals in society. They are as follows:

- a) the agent is alienated from the product (signifying the labourers).
- b) the agent is alienated from one's productive activity.
- c) the agent is alienated from one's own human nature.
- d) the agent is alienated from other human beings.

For him, liberty is an end in itself. So, liberty is not justified because it creates conditions for other goods to be achieved. For Mill, liberty is an end in itself. He pointed out that only free action or freely, chosen actions were performed by an individual could make him or her a free person in real sense. So, he focused on the rights to free expressions, thought and freedom of speech, principle of individuality, and limits to authority and authoritarian nature of power in the state.

There are many dangers to the individual freedom and liberty, and those restrictions are often against the interests of individuals pursuit of what he or she considered as good life, what is his or her conceptualization of good life as Mills also, argued. We will discuss, how state can reasonably, put certain restrictions to individual actions. For him, the opinions, the speech and expressions, the freedom of thought is something, which we all must regard as desirable, or we must respect even, if it is contrary or opposite to our own opinions or ideas.

He pointed out there should be minimum restrictions on individual liberty. It should be only, when it has potential to harm others, otherwise, the individual should have the maximum freedom to lead one's life. In his words, the only purpose for which power can be rightfully, exercised over any member of a civilized community against his will is to prevent harms to others. So, this is the only, possible criteria for posing any restrictions and limit to individual freedom and liberty.

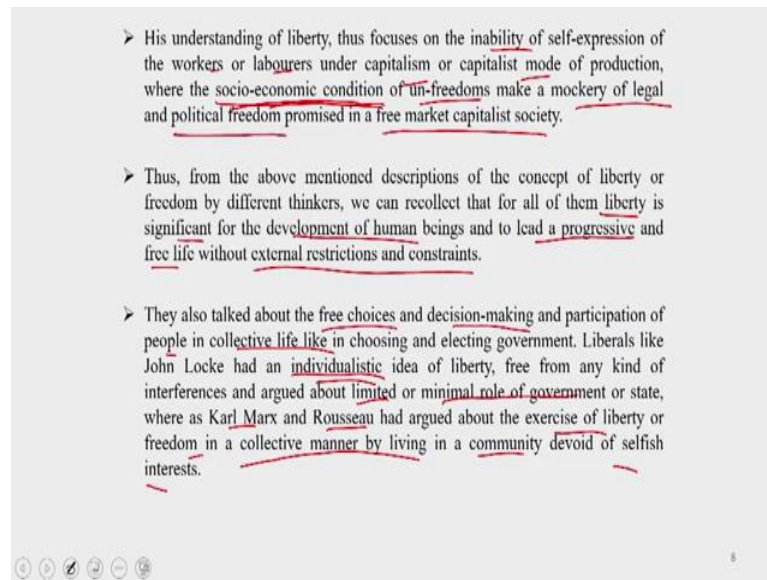
He also, makes a crucial distinction between what he calls self-regarding functions and other-regarding functions. Of course, in actual pragmatic practical life, it is often very difficult to maintain a distinction between self-regarding function or other-regarding function, but we can conceptually, understand it or those actions related to individuals or which has implications to individual life is called self-regarding functions. Like what I wear, what I eat, where I go for education, what profession I choose are some of the things which concerns individuals or myself.

In these decisions or actions, there should not be any limitations at all, whereas, the other-regarding functions are those actions of individuals which can have potential, which has implications on others and which can potentially, harms others. Like smoking in the public space or taking drugs or listening to loud music which can possibly, interfere with others right, to have a leisure life without any interference, to listen to their choice of music, etc So, in the other-regarding functions, there can be certain reasonable restrictions posed by the state. These are some of the limitations that he argued about.

In John Stuart Mill, we will come to his ideas, when we will discuss him again. Here, the argument is about absolute freedom of individual, to lead his or her life, according to, his or her own personality without any constraints. Some reasonable constraints can be put when those actions are potentially, harmful for others. Karl Marx and his conception of liberty were basically, about his idea of alienation, where the freedom was available for the majority of people in a capitalist free society is not really, available for the majority of individuals. So, he argued, that the inability to express oneself expressed unfreedom or curtailment of freedom.

He put forward four stages to explain the denial of liberty or freedom to majority of individuals in a society, where the agent for which he referred to the labourers or the workers were alienated from his own productive activities, from his own nature or individual, and from other human-beings. In this way, the individuals in this society lived an alienated life and this alienated life did not allow him the conditions or ability to express his self because he lived a kind of disconnected life from his own labour, from his own activities, from his own self and from the other selves. Thus, in this kind of society, one couldnot really, talked about freedom as self expression.

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His understanding of liberty thus, focused on the inability of self-expression by workers or labourers under capitalism or the capitalist modes of production, where the socio-economic conditions for the large number of masses or socio-economic conditions, a kind of unfreedom for them made a mockery of legal and political freedom promised in a free market capitalist society. For them, the liberal, political or legal freedom was hollow in the absence of social and economic conditions of freedom.

Thus, from these above mentioned thinkers and their conceptualization of freedom, what we get is that for all of them, liberty is significant for the development of human-beings, and to lead a progressive and free life without external restrictions and constraints. They also, talked about free choice, decision-making and participation of individuals or people in the collective life, like in choosing and electing government.

So, liberals like John Locke had an individualistic idea of liberty, free from any kind of interferences and he argued about limited or minimal role of government or the state. Whereas, Karl Marx or Rousseau, argued about the exercise of liberty or freedom in a collective manner by living in a community devoid of selfish interests. So, the realisation of liberty or freedom for Marx and Rousseau is about living in a community devoid of one's own selfish interest.



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**Republican Nature of Liberty or Freedom**

- The term republicanism refers to a particular kind of liberty or freedom. A distinction can be made between the republican conception of liberty and the general or ordinary sense of understanding liberty or freedom. The ordinary sense of liberty describes liberty as freedom from constraints or from state interferences. In this sense, liberty demands 'non-interference' in the choices and decisions of individuals by any external influences, arbitrary or authoritarian power. Whereas, republicanism is grounded on the value of political liberty and it specifically, emphasize on liberty as 'non-domination' from any kind of abusive, authoritarian or arbitrary power. Thus, in this understanding liberty/freedom is rooted in the idea of political liberty as 'non-domination'. This idea of liberty is thus, different from the liberty as 'non-interference' as expressed by political thinkers like J. S. Mill, John Locke as we have discussed. *Liberal*
- Republicanism explains political liberty that specifically focuses on structural independence, that is, the condition of not being forcibly subjected to any authoritarian, unlawful or arbitrary forms of power. Pettit states 'a person or group enjoys freedom to the extent that no other person or group has the capacity to interfere in their affairs on an arbitrary basis'. Some of the republican thinkers are Skinner, Viroli, Maynor, Laborde, Costa, Honohan, & Taylor and so on.

If we look at the republican conception of freedom, the term republicanism refers to a particular kind of liberty or freedom. A distinction can be made between republican conception of freedom or the way; we generally, conceptualize freedom in our ordinary discourse. In ordinary sense, liberty describes liberty as freedom from constraints or from state interference. So, in this sense, liberty demands non-interference. This we can also, understand as the liberal conception of liberty which is about freedom from restraints and interferences of the state. Now, the republicanism is grounded on the value of political liberty and it specifically, emphasize on liberty as non-domination and not freedom of restraints.

How to ensure this non-domination from any kind of abusive, authoritarian or arbitrary power is by acting upon to create a public or republic based on civic virtue or an associational life. So, in this understanding, liberty or freedom is rooted in the idea of political liberty as non-domination. This idea of liberty is thus, different from the liberty as non-interference, argued by many liberal thinkers like Mill, Locke as we have discussed. Republicanism explains, political liberty and that specifically, focuses on structural independence or the role of institutions which provides the condition for individual to exercise his or her freedom.

That is the condition of not being forcibly, subjected to any authoritarian, unlawful and arbitrary forms of power. Pettit, one of the republican scholars or thinkers writes that a

person or group enjoys freedom to the extent that no other person or groups have the capacity to interfere in their affairs on an arbitrary basis. There is a slight difference in the conceptualization of liberty as freedom from restraints or liberty, and freedom as freedom from non-domination.

To ensure freedom from non-domination, it requires certain participation, engagement on the parts of individual within the larger collective public life, whereas, freedom of restraints have a conceptualization, where individual is seen as free and autonomous from the larger collective life and it should not interfere with the matters related to an individual. Some of the republican thinkers are namely, Skinner, Viroli, Maynor, Laborde, Costa, Hanohan and Taylor.

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**The Classical Republicanism**

- It is understood through the writings of thinkers like Machiavelli, Milton, Harrington, Montesquieu, Blackstone, Jefferson, Madison, Adam Smith, and others. They all emphasized on some of the significant political values such as the importance and need of 'civic virtue' in society, that is community feeling or consciousness; active political participation to expose corruption and remove its negative consequences; the need of a constitution and rule of law. Thus, it can be argued that the republican thinkers did not ask for a limited or minimum role of the state. But their vision was of a state where the values of 'political liberty' and 'civic virtue' could be maintained. For them, a constitutional government would perhaps, govern citizens democratically and provide them with security, rights, freedom and justice to live a content life.
- They believed that republican liberty is largely possible or it can be realized in a community life, where individuals or human beings together can learn to contribute in their own ways to make their life worthy of living together in a society.

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We will discuss some of their thoughts here. The classical republicanism is understood through the writings of thinkers like Machiavelli, Milton, Harrington, Montesquieu, Blackstone, Jefferson, Madison and Adam Smith and many others. Now, they all emphasized on some of the significant political values such as the importance and need of civic virtue in society, that is, community feelings or consciousness, active political participation to expose corruption and remove its negative consequences on the larger political life, the need of a constitution and rule of law. These are some of the necessary, prerequisites for them to realise freedom, to enable the individual to realise his or her

freedom is something, which requires a public or republic based on civic virtues, like individual participation in the collective life.

It can be argued that the republican thinkers did not ask for a limited or minimum role of the state, as we find in many liberal thinkers, but their vision was of a state where the values of political liberty and civic virtue could be maintained. For them, a constitutional government would perhaps, govern citizens democratically, and provide them with security rights, freedom and justice to live a content life.

Instead of arguing for a minimalist state or looking at state as a necessary evil, republican thinkers and scholars argued for a state which will be based on the idea of political liberty or civic virtue which will create conditions for the individuals to live or lead his or her life in a dignified and content manner. So, they believed that the republican liberty is largely possible, or it can be realised in a community life, where individuals or human beings together can learn to contribute in their own ways, to make their life worthy of living together in a society.

In this conception of liberty and freedom, it is not about individuals living his life independently, of the collective life, it is coming together of individual to create a public, to create a republic which will ensure the liberty or freedom for everyone, which will fight certain evils in the public lives like corruption. So, freedom for them, is then not just about enjoying the way one likes to live one's life, but about participation in the public life, to contribute in the public life, to make it more democratic, to make it more egalitarian, to make it possible from arbitrary rule of the authoritarian or the dictatorial regime.

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➤ The classical republicans and republicanism finds its resemblance and relevance in the Aristotelian idea of a Greek polis which also retained the vision of constructing a good life of people in a polis and that is possible through active public participation and 'civic virtue'.

➤ The classical republicans believed not all laws are arbitrary to human freedom or liberty.

**The Contemporary Republicanism**

➤ They believed in the civic humanist interpretation of the classical republicanism, that is to focus on cultivating 'civic virtue' to remove corruption and to provide conditions for individual progress. Some of the contemporary republicans are Arendt, Skinner, Pettit and so on.

The classical republicans and republicanism finds its resemblance in the relevance in the Aristotelian idea of a Greek polis which also, retained the vision of constructing a good life of people in a polis that is possible, through active public participation and civic virtue. The famous definition of citizenship in Aristotle is one's ability to govern and rule and be ruled in turn. So, every single individual is capable of ruling the rest and similarly, he is also, ruled by the rest. In other words, this conception of liberty or good life is through participation in the public life and only, through the participation in the public life, one can truly, enjoy his or her freedom.

The classical republicans believed not all laws, therefore, are arbitrary to the freedom or liberty. Locke, provided the condition for the individual to realise his or her freedom is in contrast to the liberal conception of freedom which regards the laws, state and its institutions as necessary evil, as some kind of restriction and it should be made reasonable. Here, in the republican conception, we see the idea of liberty is facilitated by the rule of law and individual themselves who participate in an active manner to constitute what is rule of law and what is republic.

The contemporary republicanism, believed in the civic, humanist interpretation of the classical republicanism, that is, to focus on cultivating civic virtue and this is something, which is missing in our contemporary political discourse as well, where we fight for the rights which is self-regarding. That means, we are bothered only, about those rights

which concerns me and not as collective as a whole and that creates a kind of discontent or disconnect between individual liberty or the liberty of the society or the larger selfhood as well.

The realisation of freedom and liberty requires an individual to cultivate certain civic virtues as we have discussed in Hannah Arendt and many other thinkers, also. So, it focuses on the re-interpretation of the classical republicanism and focuses on cultivating civic virtues, to remove some of the social evils like corruptions and provide conditions for individual progress. Some of the contemporary republicans are Arendt, Skinner, Pettit and many others.

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- The contemporary republicans have argued that public participation and 'civic virtue', that is community feeling and consciousness could be important tools or means for securing and preserving political liberty and to fight any arbitrary rule or coercive power.
- The contemporary republicans broadly emphasize on promoting freedom or independence from any kind of arbitrary, coercive or authoritarian rule. They feared that autocratic or dictatorial governments could pose a threat or challenge to the very idea of political liberty that is so essential for individual growth.
- They argued that if there are no criminal or civil laws then citizens would have no idea of what freedom is or what free inter-relationships mean between and among the individuals. In that situation coercive or arbitrary ruler can forcibly curtail their freedoms. Hence, to make republican freedom exists and to be enjoyed and cherished, it is necessary to have a legal system or rule of law. As Hayck argued, 'laws is not invasive of liberty but its necessary precondition'.

The contemporary republicans argued that public participation and civic virtue is community feeling and consciousness could be important tools or means for securing and preserving political liberty, and to fight any arbitrary rule or coercive power. So, this public participation and civic virtue is necessary, for any kind of freedom or political freedom to be enjoyed, or to fight the corruption, or arbitrary coercive rule in any society. The contemporary republicans, broadly, emphasize on promoting freedom or independence from any kind of arbitrary, coercive or authoritarian rule.

They feared that autocratic or dictatorial government could pose a threat or challenge to the very idea of political liberty, that is, essential for individual growth. If we understand liberal conception of liberty as freedom from restraints and individual should be

concerned or guided by his or her own selfish interests or motives and, if they do not contribute or engage in the collective life or in the making of the collective life. Then the chances are that collective life will be governed or ruled by the undemocratic or dictatorial or authoritarian ruler which can pose a threat to the very condition of liberty or freedom which is so essential for the individual to progress.

They argued, if there are no criminal or civil laws, then citizens would have no idea of what freedom is or what free inter-relationship is mean between or among the individuals. So, the idea of rule of law or what is civil law or criminal law gives the individual, a sense of what is freedom or what does it mean to relate with others, or other groups. In the absence of rule of law, the coercive or the arbitrary ruler can forcibly, curtail their freedoms. Hence, to make republican freedom exists and to be enjoyed and cherished by all.

It is necessary, to have a legal system or rule of law as Hayek argued that law is not invasive of liberty, but it is a necessary, precondition for them. The laws and rule of law is not a kind of infringement or invasion of individual liberty or freedom, but it is a prerequisite for any kind of liberty to be enjoyed or protected, or to be cherished by others.

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**Republicanism and Political Institutions**

- Republicans believe that public-political institutions are essential for the protection of individual freedom. Thus, they argued about the proliferation of democracy through its various institutions like legislatures, courts, and rule of law, idea of federalism, constitution and so on. They argued that to act and make these institutions run properly and democratically, some discretionary powers are provided to the public authorities like in the hands of courts, public agencies, bureaucracies, legislatures to make laws and decisions concerning protection of freedom, to secure society from corruption and other social evils.
- The objective or goal for the republicanism is to sustain and enhance democracy and democratic ideals, ethos and values to build a rights bound or obliged society, and a free society that respects the true value of freedom without domination of arbitrary power and subjugation. They wanted individuals to value their worth as citizens and to contest or participate in elections; to commit themselves to the right to vote; and to choose their own representatives to remind them of their duties.
- They emphasized upon the role and functions of political institutions to curtail and restrict the excessive and arbitrary powers of the state executive. Instead of having a coercive and centralized form of government, the republicans argue about federalism and a decentralized government.

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The focus of republicanism is on political institutions. For them, political institutions are something, which provides an enabling condition for the freedom or liberty to be enjoyed.

They believed that political, free public and political institutions are essential for the protection of individual freedom. They argued about the proliferation of democracy through its various institutions like legislature, courts, rule of law, ideas of federalism and constitution. For them, these institutions provides the conditions for individual to protect, to make sense of his or her liberty, and actively, participate in the public life and these institutions also, work as a check and balances to the excessive centralisation of power or to the arbitrary use of power by the authoritarian or corrupt rule.

The objective or goal for the republicanism is to sustain and enhance democracy and democratic ideals, ethos and values to build a right bond or obliged society, and a free society that respects the true value of freedom without domination of arbitrary power and subjugation. They wanted individuals to value their worth as citizens, and to contest or participate in all public activities, such as election, to commit themselves to right to vote and to choose their own representatives, and to remind them of their duties.

The condition of freedom that we have is dependent on the participation that we have in our public life. To demand freedom or liberty without engaging in the public life is something, which is problematic that creates problems or tensions in society. So, they emphasized upon the role and functions of political institutions, to curtail and restrict excessive and arbitrary powers of the state executive. Instead of, having a coercive, centralised form of government, the republicanism or republicans argued about federalism and a decentralized government.

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**Relevance of Republicanism**

- Republicanism broadly contests the power relations of domination and subjugation to exercise freedom or liberty and make sense of liberty as 'non-domination'.
- It is in contrast to the idea of minimalist state and emphasize on democracy, democratic ideals and values which are essential for the protection of rights, freedom and justice of people from arbitrary rule.
- They focus on the value of 'civic virtue' in order to fight social evils like corruption, and to check selfish interests and arbitrary exercise of power by the authorities. It argues for political liberty, rule of law, and public participation to create the conditions necessary for the realization of true freedom.

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What is the relevance of republicanism? They broadly, contest the power relations of domination and subjugation to exercise freedom. So freedom is, freedom from domination. To ensure freedom of domination, it requires public participation, public engagement, to create public, to create political institutions which will ensure or which will create the conditions for the individual to exercise his or her freedom. It broadly, contests the power relation of domination and subjugation, to exercise freedom of liberty and make sense of liberty as non-domination, in contrast to freedom as freedom from restrictions.

It is in contrast to the idea of a minimalist state and emphasis on democracy, democratic ideas and values which are essential for the protection of rights, freedom, justice of people from the arbitrary rule. They focus on the value of civic virtue in order to fight social evils like corruption, and to check selfish interests and arbitrary exercise of power by the authorities. It argues for political liberty, rule of law and public participation to create conditions necessary, for the realisation of true freedom. So, the republican conceptualization of freedom and liberty is about creating condition which requires the participation of every individual in the public collective life.

This is all for today's lecture. In the next lecture, we are going to discuss negative and positive conception of liberty along with, free speech and hate speech.



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3. Hoffman, John and Paul Graham. (eds.) (2015). *Introduction to Political Theory*. New York: Routledge.
4. McKinnon, Catriona (2012). *Issues In Political Theory (Second Edition)*. United Kingdom, Oxford University Press.
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For this lecture, you can refer to some of these books like Norman Barry's, *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory*, from Bhargava and Acharya's, you can read a chapter on liberty. Similarly, Hoffman's, *Introduction to Political Theory*, you can look at the chapter on liberty. Similarly, from the *Issue in Political Theory* and to know more about the conception of republicanism, you can read on republicanism in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*.

These are some of the texts which you can refer to. In the next lecture, I will be giving you some more readings on this concept of liberty. Thank you for listening.

Thank you all.