

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

Lecture – 04

Liberty: Freedom as Autonomy; Negative and Positive Liberty

Hello, friends. Today, we are going to discuss liberty. We had one lecture on liberty, where we tried to understand liberty through different thinkers and also, discussed the republican notion of liberty. In this lecture today, we are going to focus on two specific things. One is about freedom or liberty as autonomy or freedom as autonomy. We are going to discuss it through the ideas of Immanuel Kant. We will discuss in the second part about the negative and positive types of liberty. We will discuss them through the ideas of Isaiah Berlin along with some criticisms to that kind of conceptualization of liberty.

In the next lecture, we will focus on the idea of freedom as Swaraj and try to understand some of the contemporary debates around the issue of freedom of speech and expression particularly, related to free speech and hate speech. We will then conclude our lecture on liberty.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:43)

Intro

- Liberty or freedom is about individual choices and voluntary actions performed without any restrictions or constraints. Traditionally, liberals believed that a free society is that which allows free action or voluntary actions of individuals to prevail and at the same time, it should limit the use of coercive laws by the state to reduce its interferences in individuals life and thus it should allow and permit varieties of human choices or 'goods'.
- In the first part of the lecture on liberty, we have discussed and examined how freedom or liberty is understood through perspectives of different political thinkers and particularly, focused on the republican nature of freedom. In today's lecture, we are going to discuss, freedom or liberty as autonomy and two specific types of liberty called Negative and Positive liberty. First, we will discuss freedom as autonomy.
- We are going to discuss the concept of freedom as autonomy through the theoretical perspective of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and the two concepts of Negative and Positive liberty through the theorizations of Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997).

2

The basic conception that we have already discussed is that freedom is about individual choices and voluntary action performed without any restrictions or constraints. So,

freedom is understood as a kind of choice or voluntary action which is necessary and is desired to be prerequisite for the utmost development of human personality or individual personality. Therefore in many societies, freedom is considered as necessary, prerequisite for any kind of individual and collective growth. We have discussed that in our introductory lecture. There are many constraints and restrictions on the individual actions or choices that individual faces in his or her life.

We see in many societies, there are genuine tensions or conflict between the choices or decisions made by individuals. The restrictions or control on those decisions and choices that society, family, state, or any other collective groups or institutes faces, pose some restrictions, limits to those individual choices or decisions. So, liberals traditionally, believed that all societies are not necessarily, a free society. That means, it does not necessarily, and automatically, allows or permits individuals to make choices or decisions.

There are certain requirements that need to be fulfilled for a society, to be classified as a free society. The liberals believed that a free society allows free action or voluntary actions of individuals to prevail and at the same time, it should limit the use of coercive laws by the state, to reduce its interferences in individual lives. The prerequisite of free society, according to, liberals is that it must allow individuals to make choices, to do what he or she think is fit for them, and to do or act upon.

As we have discussed, this tension between the state and role of state in ensuring the conditions which then individual can enjoy for his or her actions, or what he or she think is right especially, through notion of republicanism. If we remember, laws are not a kind of impediment or it is not a kind of restriction. But laws and institutions are something, which provides condition for the individual to exercise his or her freedom. So, in that sense, there is tension where individuals are not absolutely, free to do anything, he or she wishes to do. Some of these tensions, we are going to discuss throughout this course. One of the tensions is then, how you can justify, the existence of state or laws?

One conceptualization of liberty is that liberty is enjoyable within the limits of state or laws and its institutions. Not all actions of state or laws are necessarily, safeguarding those conditions. We need to safeguard certain rights which we call them as fundamental rights in our constitution. Similarly, there is such mechanism in other constitutions as

well, which limits state interferences into the life of individuals. The free society, on the one hand, must allow its individuals to make certain choices, to take some decisions, to act upon certain things which they think is fit for them, to perform or act upon.

It simultaneously, limits the coercive laws of the state, to reduce its interference into the individuals lives. And, thus a free society, should allow and permit varieties of human choices. There is no one similar conception of good life or what is desirable and what is not desirable. The good life or notion of good life, or describable or undesirable is something, that is based or left to the individual for deciding it. It is not the duty of the state or any other bodies to tell the individual, what is good for him or her. The free society, then ensures that individuals exercises maximum freedom in making certain choices and decisions, that is, about his or her life.

State should have a very limited role in ensuring that the exercise to rights should be made without any interference either by the state and its laws, or by any external agency. The free society allows varieties of human choices and goods. So, there is no one singular conception of good that one must abide by it. They are individuals, so the assumption, here is that individual is free and rational, and being free and rational he or she knows what is in the best interests of his or her. Therefore, he should be allowed to pursue those goals, to pursue those interests that will lead to a prosperous society, to a free society, or a liberal society.

So, that is the kind of conception about liberty. I have discussed that in the first part of the lecture on liberty. We have already discussed and examined freedom or liberty, the concept and the difference between these two concepts. We have tried to understand it through different thinkers like Locke, Rousseau and John Stuart Mills. And, we particularly, focused on the republican conception of freedom. In this lecture, as I have told you, we will discuss about freedom or liberty as autonomy and negative and positive liberty. The first part of today's lecture will be on freedom as autonomy and in the later part, we will discuss about negative and positive conceptions of liberty.

We are going to discuss the concept of freedom as autonomy, through the theoretical perspective of Immanuel Kant. His period was from 1724 to 1804 and also, we will discuss about the two concepts of Negative and Positive liberty through the theorization of Isaiah Berlin. Isaiah Berlin is one of the most trend-setting political theorists in the

20th century, who radically, altered the whole conception of freedom or liberty. Thus, there remained a tension between the term liberty or freedom that we have discussed in the introductory lecture.

Isaiah Berlin, theorized liberty as not just an aspect of liberty, but he defined it as something which is incompatible, that is positive liberty and negative liberty. The liberty and freedom, we understand as the same political value or political concept and not just as two kinds of conception about freedom on liberty. But, it is altogether different understanding of liberty itself. Liberty according to Isaiah Berlin, we will discuss now. Negative liberty is something, which is desirable. For him, it is true liberty, and positive liberty has the tendency to strengthen the authoritarian regime and something, which is rooted in the psychological conditions of unfreedom.

In Isaiah Berlin, there is a radical shift in theorization of liberty and freedom from different interpretations to a radical differentiation, between the negative conception of liberty and positive conception of liberty. There is a critic to it that we will discuss.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:28)

Freedom as Autonomy

Individual

Act only on that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. - Kant

↓

➤ The understanding of freedom as autonomy is derived from Kant's notion of freedom. He explained freedom or liberty as self-government, that is, individual to govern one's own self and to self-direct his/her own life without being directed or interfered with or restricted by others. An individual is free to act or to do by applying his/her own reasoning capacity or from his or her own laws that an individual gives to oneself. Thus, the autonomous self is free. Autonomy, for Kant, means self-legislation of laws that govern oneself. His basic ideas revolves around the idea of human autonomy. So, Kantian understanding of freedom or liberty is intrinsically related to the notion of autonomy, that is law itself.

3

First if we discuss, freedom as autonomy, Kant emphasised to combine three concepts together to make sense of an individual life, or what is a good life? or what is a moral life? Moreover, how that good and moral life can also, be a free, autonomous and a dignified life as well. He combined these categories like morality, autonomy and freedom together.

In his conception, we will see how, he weaved together these three concepts to make sense of an individual life and to bring about enlightenment, to bring about an organized harmonious life, where the dignity of self as well as the orderly, maintain without any outside interference or external institution. In Kantian conception of freedom, there is a combination of freedom, morality and autonomy, together. This is one of the definitions or what we call a kind of law, or maxim, or formula that Kant talked about how individual, while governing his or her life will act in a particular way, where he or she is not guided by any selfish or narrow, contextual approach to a particular situation. He gave this maxim a kind of universal and an unconditional application.

Kant believed that, individual subject his or her actions or decisions in life to such a maxim, where the maxim does not tell the individual, what to do or not to do in a practical given situation. It gives the individual a moral framework through which one can legislate the laws or take a decision which governs his life. And, in taking that decision or following that course of action, he must abide by this a priori maxim, what we call as a categorical imperative. Kant believed that individuals can be an autonomous person that there is no one else, or an external body, which tells the individual to do what to do or what not to do, but he himself or herself, legislate the law which governs his or her life.

Kant connects it with the concept of morality, humanity, the idea of universality or unconditionality as well. So, if we look at this definition, which act only on that maxim, by which we can at the same time, find that maxim should become a universal law. That means, in a given practical situation, we follow a particular course of action or we take certain decisions which we want others to follow in the same situation, universally and unconditionally. And, if our course of actions or if our decisions, are according to, that maxim, which we want others to follow universally, and unconditionally, then our course of action is justified.

It does not require any external approval or require any other justification. Because it is, justified in itself. The maxim is the justification for the course of action. We can understand it through many examples. One of the examples, one can use is whether we should follow certain means, which we do not want others to follow in achieving certain ends. Now, following that means, may lead us to some immediate gain, but it may not be something, which we want others to follow, then should we follow that means or not. So,

the maxim says, that we should follow only, that course of action which we want others also, to follow in the same situation, universally, and unconditionally.

That provides an ontological understanding of laws or legislation. We can move on to understand this concept of his maxim, while discussing his conception on freedom as autonomy. The understanding of freedom as autonomy is derived from Kant's notion of freedom. He explained freedom or liberty as self-government and this idea of liberty or freedom as self-government, we will also, discuss when we will discuss freedom as Swaraj. He explained freedom or liberty as self-government. It is the individual to govern one's own self and self-direct his or her life, without being directed or interfered with or restricted by others.

In this maxim, individuals make certain decision on his own. There is no one else. Only condition, he or she needs to meet is that this course of action must be followed by others universally, and unconditionally, in the same situation. Freedom for Kant, is the idea of governing one's life, where the direction that we take is self-legislative. An individual is free to act or do by applying his or her own reasoning, capacity or from his or her own laws and not the laws of other or an external agency. Here, the individual as an agent, individual must act himself or herself, there is no one else, to tell him or her, what to do, or what not to do.

The laws that individual follows needs to be universal laws. There is no kind of self specific or context specific approach to course of actions. So, we want ourselves to follow certain course of action which we want others to follow. And, not just make exception to ourselves and want others to follow something else. That kind of a hypocritical approach is not there in Kantian conception of categorical imperative. So, the autonomous self is thus, free. Autonomy, for Kant means self-legislation of laws that governs oneself. His basic idea revolves around the idea of human autonomy. The justification of law is on the basis of its legislation by the individual themselves and not by any external agency.

The Kantian understanding of freedom or liberty is intrinsically, related to the notion of autonomy that is law itself. This maxim is a kind of frame work and it is not a law. The law that individual follows to govern his or her life is self legislated. The only condition

that the individual needs to meet is that law must be something, which he or she wants others to follow or legislate in the same condition universally, and unconditionally.

In that sense, individuals govern his or her life by the legislation which he himself legislates. And, that gives him the autonomy, the freedom to make himself subject to laws which he himself legislate and not by the external body. An individual for Kant is being rational, capable of reasoning and having a moral sense. We will discuss about this moral sense in the next slide. This combination allows the individual to really, exercise his freedom in the truest sense of the term.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:29)

➤ He pointed out the law as moral law which means that 'I know myself as a free person'. Thus, the derivative meaning that an individual obeys the moral law that is created by himself/herself. Hence, every individual needs to comply with his/her own set of moral laws.

➤ Kant's understanding of ethics is grounded on the concept of free will and freedom as autonomy. According to Kant, morality and freedom is inter-related, in other words both these concepts share a reciprocal relationship. For him, to act or do something, freely or without restrictions from outside is to exercise true freedom or liberty and the only correct way to exercise freedom is to act morally or through one's moral actions. So, true freedom, thus, is determined by moral actions of the individuals.

➤ Kant used the term 'Categorical Imperative' or CI to explain the moral laws that is used to exercise freedom or liberty. He states that moral laws do not have certain conditions to follow to do something, or to act, rather it is unconditional in nature. It applies unconditionally and universally to everyone in the society.

He pointed out, law as moral law which means that I know myself as a free person. Now, in knowing this self as a free person, and then, how this person ought to behave in the community among other individual is something, which must be guided by a sense of morality or moral laws. On Kantian conception, what we were discussing about, we can also, refer to his work *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Moral*. Many things on liberty or freedom, I am discussing today is from his work.

Thus, the derivative meaning is that an individual obeys the moral law, created by himself or herself. Hence, everybody needs to comply, with his or her own set of moral laws. Here, the source of moral laws is not then in any religion or practices or ethics, which is outside or external to the individual. Individual himself or herself must act according to, his or her own ethics. In developing those ethics, morality, an individual's

assumption is that a rational person knows how to treat others. Now, in this connection, he has developed a conception called 'kingdom of ends', where the idea is that everyone must have one's own dignity and also, it recognizes the dignity in others.

The relationship between two individuals should not be guided by the personal selfish interests that means, using others for one's own benefit, but to treat others as an end in themselves. That is the morality, ethics, where he believed that if a society which treats everyone with dignity or treating everyone as an end in themselves, and not we as means, to be utilized for our own purpose. Then that society will be peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous. The ethics or morality, Kant talked about is also, then, rooted in this understanding of individual being rational, knowing how to treat himself or herself and also, how to treat other.

Kant's understanding of ethics is grounded on the concept of free will and not on the text or practices or ethics, that is, outside the individual or external to individual and freedom as autonomy. According to Kant, morality and freedom is interrelated and there is a kind of reciprocity. In other words, both these concepts share a reciprocal relationship. For him, to act or to do something, freely or without restrictions from outside is to exercise true freedom. The meaning of true freedom is doing something, without any restriction from outside and external forces.

And, yet the individuals must subject his course of action or decision to certain ethics, morality, or laws that he or she himself or herself legislate. The only, correct way to exercise freedom is to act morally, or through one's moral action. True freedom, thus, is determined by moral actions of the individual. Not by the selfish or narrow motives or the course of action and that cannot be justified as freedom in Kantian conception. The freedom or free agent or free individual must be autonomous, to use his or her rational capacity, to legislate laws which govern his or her life. This is rational law. It is something, which must be self-legislative. In this conception, the true freedom for Kant is not the narrow, selfish motive of individual but something, which should be subjected to categorical imperative.

Kant used the term categorical imperative or what we call C I to explain the moral laws that is used to exercise freedom or liberty. He states that the moral laws do not have certain conditions to follow, to do something or to act. Rather it is unconditional in

nature. It applies unconditionally, and universally, to everyone in the society. It does not make exception to anyone. The categorical imperative is universal, unconditional and do not make any exception to individuals. For him, everyone must subject himself or herself to this maxim.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:54)

Handwritten notes on a slide:

- **'Categorical' and 'Hypothetical' imperative:** Categorical Imperative is governed by the principles of universality, humanity, and autonomy. And it is good in itself. In other words, it does not require external approval or justifications. Hypothetical Imperative, on the other hand is something where meeting pre-determined ends or goals justify a particular course of action. In other words whether an action is good or bad is determined not by the action itself but on the basis of whether that action leads to that desired end or goal or not.
- According to him human beings are able to act or choose to act or do something, by using a 'maxim' or principle. This 'maxim' is something that is self legislated and 'a priori'. That is, it gives the individual a pre-determined moral framework to work and act in a particular way in a given situation and yet remain free and autonomous.
- Thus, CI gives the individual freedom and moral autonomy to legislate the rule he or she himself and herself legislate.

5

So, categorical and hypothetical imperative, we can better understand as what Kant meant by categorical imperative.

The categorical imperative is governed by the principal of universality, humanity, and autonomy. All three conditions- first, universality, that is without any exception or without any conditionality or not context dependent. So, it is applicable universally, or without any exception or condition. The second is the idea of humanity. We must have a sense or a moral ethical response to other individuals. So, the Kantian conception is not making exception for ourselves and do not allow that exception to others, but to subject ourselves to the same ethics, to the same law, which we want others to follow. That is how, a society respect each other's dignity or existence, and it will ultimately, lead to a more prosperous, peaceful and harmonious society.

The idea of humanity or other individual is inherently, there in this conception of freedom as autonomy. Finally, the autonomy is about self-legislation. The categorical imperative, if it meets, these three criteria of universality, humanity, and autonomy are good in itself. So, if we follow certain actions which meet these criteria, then this action

or decision is good in itself, it does not require any justification or approval from outside. That is the categorical imperative. Hypothetical imperative, on the other hand is what we see in real or practical life. Thus, people, individuals, or groups taking certain course of action by having some pre-designed ends or goals in mind.

Their course of action is justified not by itself, but on the condition, where that course of action has lead to that particular goal or end which individuals or groups designed for themselves beforehand. The hypothetical imperative is something, where meeting predetermined ends or goals, justify, a particular course of action. In other words, whether an action is good or bad is determined not by the action itself, but on the basis of whether that action leads to desired end or goal or not. For Kant, that explains the hypothetical imperative.

Kant is talking about categorical imperative as the basis for individual to subject his or her law, or action or decisions in life. Further, the real happiness lies not in the hypothetical imperative, but in the categorical imperative which meets these criteria of universality, humanity, and autonomy.

The justification is not guided by achieving certain ends or goals, but the action itself is justified. It does not require any further approval or external justification. Kant talked about this categorical imperative as the basis of human true freedom or autonomy and morality. According to him, human-beings are able to act or choose to act, or do something, by using a maxim. This is that maxim, the categorical imperative and this 'maxim' is something that is, self-legislated, as I said that there is no clearly, written law for the individual to follow. Individual himself legislate that law, but while legislating that law, he must follow certain conditionalities that is, universality, humanity and autonomy.

This maxim is self-legislated and 'a priori'. That means, before the action starts, this framework is acceptable unanimously, to everyone in society and humanity. So, this maxim guides individual to follow certain course of action or to legislate certain law which is something, 'a priori'. Thus, there is some common understanding about this maxim called categorical imperative.

It gives individual a pre-determined moral framework to work and act in a particular way, in a given situation and yet remains free and autonomous. That is how, he defined

freedom as an autonomy, where individuals, while acting in a particular way, in a particular, pragmatic given situation must follow certain moral framework. This is the moral framework. I have discussed in the previous slide to act only, on that maxim by which we can act, at the same time, and it should become a universal law.

So, the action that we follow, we want others to follow too. It should be universally, applicable and not just to oneself only in any particular context. That is how, individual, while governing oneself or taking a particular course of action will remain yet free and autonomous about his or her life. This categorical imperative gives individual freedom and moral autonomy to legislate the rule he or she himself or herself legislate.

(Refer Slide Time: 31:07)

Negative and Positive Liberty

- The concepts of Negative liberty and Positive liberty are coined by the political theorist Isaiah Berlin, in his work, *Two Concepts of Liberty*. His distinction between these two specific kinds of liberty has put forward another dimension to understand and examine the notion of liberty.

Negative Liberty

- It is understood as 'freedom from'. It refers to those external influences, factors or interferences that restricts the freedom or liberty of individuals. It can be also understood as an answer to the question 'what is the area within which the subject - a person or group of persons - is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons?'
- Berlin states that 'If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree and if this area is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can be described as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved'. Thus, Berlin pointed out that external interferences thus restricts individual freedom.
- However, he believed that such restrictions cannot affect the capacity or capability of individuals to achieve their free goals and aims in life. He considered that incapacity to achieve something in life or to achieve a goal is not unfreedom. For him, every individual knows better about their own interests or desires and none should interfere in it. And minimum or limited role of state should be allowed to restrict interferences in individuals life.

That is the idea of freedom as autonomy. Now, if we look at this negative and positive liberty of Isaiah Berlin, the major conceptualization of liberty, as I have discussed in the beginning of this lecture, it is not just two aspects of liberty, but it is seen as opposite to each other. Isaiah Berlin thought that negative liberty is the only liberty. Positive liberty is something, which we must not accept or acknowledge, as liberty at all. Because he, considered it as something, rooted in the psychological condition of unfreedom.

The concept of negative and positive liberty is coined by Isaiah Berlin in his work *Two Concepts of Liberty*. His distinction between these two specific kinds of liberty has put forward another dimension to understand and examine the notion of liberty, which we will discuss now.

The first is negative liberty. It is basically, understood as 'freedom from'. It refers to those external influences, factors or interferences that restrict the freedom or liberty of individual. Thus, 'freedom from' means those area and conditions of individual life, which is free from interferences or restrictions, or limitations set upon by the external individuals or agents.

It can also, be understood that negative liberty is an answer to this question, 'what is the area within which the subject that which the individual, a person or group of persons is, or should be left to do or be, what he is able to do or be so, without interference by other persons. So, that area of life, where individual or group of individuals are or should be left free to do or to be, whatever he or they want to be or to do is liberty, they should not be interfered by other persons. The negative liberty can be understood in that sense, where it talks about the conditions of liberty which is free from external interferences and restrictions. Thus, it defines 'freedom from'.

Berlin states, 'if I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree. So, what I want to do, but I am restricted from doing that by others that degree of restrictions is a restriction on my freedom'. It is only, understood as that area where individuals are left free to do, what he or she can or should do.

If this area is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can be described as being coerced or it may be enslaved. In this conception, Berlin pointed out, external interferences, thus, restricts individual freedom, and freedom is understood as something, which is free from any interferences or restrictions. He believed that such restrictions cannot affect the capacity or capability of individuals, to achieve their goals and aims in life. Here, the distinction must be understood that being free and the willingness to be free, that means, the agent will to act is not understood as the condition of unfreedom.

Because the condition of freedom or unfreedom is where there is interference or any kind of restrictions posed on the individual and his or her sphere of life by others. The incapacity or incompetence is not regarded as the condition of unfreedom in this kind of conceptualization. He believed that such restrictions cannot affect the capacity or capability of individuals, to achieve their free goals and aims in life.

He considered that incapacity to achieve something, in life or to achieve a goal is not unfreedom. For him, every individual knows better about their own interests or desires

and no one should interfere in it. And minimum or limited role of state should be allowed to restrict interference in the individual life.

There should be a kind of minimal control or restrictions by the state, to ensure that individual's lives are not interfered with by other individuals or group of individuals, or society as a whole. Here, the idea is that the freedom is the only condition, the opportunity for an individual to pursue, what he or she thinks is good for them. In pursuit of that good, they should not be interfered or restricted by others.

So long as, they are restricted and to that degree those restrictions are there that condition can be considered or regarded as the condition of unfreedom, which should be minimal that is, the role of state to ensure individual should have maximum conditions of freedom, to pursue his or her interests without any interference by others.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:07)

Positive Liberty

- It is understood as 'freedom to'. It can be also understood as answer to the question 'what, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?'
- Berlin states that 'The positive sense of the word 'liberty' derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master...I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's acts of will...I wish, above all, to be conscious of myself as a thinking, willing, active being, bearing responsibility for his choices and able to explain them by reference to his own ideas and purposes'.
- Positive liberty refers to the attainment of complete freedom without external pressures or restrictions or constraints. It is the idea of freedom to act according to one's own terms in a free atmosphere. Thus, it refers to the freedom to do or to act. There is a law that guides individuals to achieve their goals in life. Positive liberty makes individuals free from any kind of coercive or oppressive forms of power and liberates individual self and it help to develop a free personality.
- Berlin states that Positive liberty refers to the idea that a self possess two kinds of specific selves. These are called higher self and lower self. The higher self is influenced or motivated by reasons or rational practices that transcend desires or selfish interests of the lower self.

If we look at positive liberty, it is understood as 'freedom to'. It is in contrast, to the negative conception of liberty which is about 'freedom from' any interference or restrictions. It is 'freedom to' and that means, freedom to be something, to realize oneself, to self-realization or self-actualization. So, freedom is an idea or a political concept which is required because it allows, the individual to realize himself or herself, or the collectivities, to pursue those goals or objectives which is in their understanding, good for them.

So, positive liberty, talks about this 'freedom to'. This can be understood as an answer to the question 'what, or who, is the source of control or interferences that determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?'

What to do and how to use one's freedom? Now, positive freedom, talks about what to do and who is going to tell, what to do or what not to do, what is the source of that control on interference, that can determine someone to do or be this rather than that. So, answer to this question is understood as positive freedom.

Further on, Berlin states that 'the positive sense of the word 'liberty' derives from the wish on the part of individual to be his own master. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's acts of will. I wish above all to be consists of myself as a thinking, willing, active being, bearing responsibility for his choices and able to explain them by reference to his own ideas and purpose'. Thus, this notion of freedom or positive freedom is about self-mastery.

It is not just a condition which is negative liberty of individual domain, that is, free from outside individuals. The positive liberty, emphasize on the idea of becoming free to realize oneself, and to be the master of oneself. Now, the danger in positive liberty is its misuse or abuse by the power to be which tells the individual or group of individuals what is good for them.

Basically, freedom as a positive connotation, according to Berlin, is about 'freedom to' rather than 'freedom from'. 'Freedom to' makes someone to realize oneself to achieve once mastery over self. So, positive liberty refers to the attainment of complete freedom without external pressures or restrictions, or constrains. It is the idea of freedom to act according to, one's own terms in a free atmosphere without any control or regulation.

Thus, it refers to the freedom to do or to act. There is a law that guides individual to achieve their goals in life. Positive liberty makes individuals free from any kind of coercive or oppressive forms of power, and liberates individual self. It helps to develop a free personality.

Berlin, states that positive liberty refers to the idea that a self poses two kinds of specific selves. These are called higher self and the lower self. The highest self is influenced or motivated by reasons or rational practices that transcend desires or self-interests of the

lower self. Basically in this connotation or conception of positive liberty, according to, Isaiah Berlin, individuals carry two kinds of self- one is lower self that talks about the selfish desire or self-interests or pursuit of self-interest.

And, then, there is the higher self which talks about reason, rationality that transcend the limits of the self. We can connect this in a way, to hypothetical or categorical imperative as we have discussed. So, the positive liberty is something, that allows individuals to become someone and in becoming that someone, is regarded as the freedom and not merely, the conditions of freedom as like in negative liberty.

(Refer Slide Time: 42:21)

➤ Berlin was very critical of positive liberty and argued that its support lies in the psychological sources of unfreedom. And such individuals are deemed to be 'forced to be free'. In other words, he was critical of the authoritarian and totalitarian misuse or abuse of the positive concept of liberty. And, therefore for him liberty or freedom is always 'freedom from' i. e. Negative freedom.

Negative and Positive Liberty: An Assessment

➤ This analytical distinction between Negative and Positive liberty or freedom is not tenable. As many scholars like Charles Taylor, Gerald MacCallum have pointed out. They have argued that such a simple and straight dichotomy between these two conceptions of liberty simply do not exist. Charles Taylor has pointed out the inadequacy of negative liberty understood as self realization. He argued that negative freedom may be a necessary prerequisite but in itself it is not sufficient for self actualization or realization.

➤ Similarly, Gerald MacCallum has argued about the 'triadic relation' in his conceptualization of liberty. For him freedom involve simultaneous presence of three things – a) 'an agent or a person who is free or unfree; b) constraints, restrictions, interferences and barriers that make the agent free or unfree; c) what it is that person is free to do, or not to do'.

Berlin was very critical of positive liberty and argued that its support lies in the psychological source of unfreedom. The individual, in this sense, can be manipulated by others or other external agents, groups, or institutions to achieve certain things. That is, the kind of situation, where individual may think he or she be free, but actually, he or she is not free, or he or she is forced to be free, or as we have seen in Rousseau.

This psychological source of unfreedom allow others to exercise certain control over one's own life or group's life. So, such individuals are deemed forced to be free. Thus, why others, who tells them what to do, what is freedom for them, and what course of action they should do?

In other words, he was critical of the authoritarian or totalitarian, misuse or abuse of the positive concept of liberty which talks about 'freedom to' becoming something. And, what that becoming is and what it is not is determined by someone else. At least, there is a chance that it will be determined, manipulated, abused, or misused by the totalitarian and authoritarian regimes that tells individuals what to do and what not to do.

Now, this suspicion or misuse, abuse or manipulation of positive liberty allows Isaiah Berlin to criticize, the positive conception of liberty. He considered freedom as negative understanding of freedom. According to him, that is about freedom from any restrictions, from outside. He was the champion of negative freedom. For him, the negative and positive freedom is not just two aspects of freedom, but two kinds of freedom which cannot be reconciled or be compatible to each other. They are opposite or different from each other, where he was proposing that liberty means, 'freedom from'. In other words, it defines the negative liberty.

If we assess this idea of negative and positive liberty, we will find this analytical distinction between negative and positive liberty, or freedom is not tenable, as many scholars like Charles Taylor, Gerald McCallum have pointed out. They argued, such a simple and straight dichotomy or differentiation between these two conceptions of liberty simply, does not exist. So, 'freedom from' is not just sufficient in itself, it must include something, which is more than just the condition of freedom, that means, the opportunity of freedom.

Thus, if one is left free, space or conditions of freedom is not good in itself. The more significant part of that condition is what individual do about that condition of freedom. So, Charles Taylor has pointed out the inadequacy of the negative liberty which Berlin argued about as self-realization. Taylor, argued that negative freedom might be a necessary prerequisite that means, we need a space, where we are free from any restriction, or limits controlled by others. But that in itself, is not enough for self-realization. There may be chances of abuse of that freedom or conditions of freedom by the individuals themselves.

So, they make hasty decisions, if they go and take drugs, because he or she considers that it is good for them. There are some moral elements attached to this idea of what to do with one's own freedom or conditions of freedom. Charles Taylor, argued that negative

freedom might be a necessary prerequisite, but in itself, it is not sufficient for self-actualization or realization. It also, includes the part of what to be. This we can clearly, understood by Gerald MacCallum's triadic relationship between this conceptualization of liberty, which includes simultaneous existence of three things.

One is an agent or a person who is free or unfree. Thus, the understanding of freedom requires an agent who can be regarded as free or unfree. Second is the constraints, restrictions or interferences, and barriers that make the agent free or unfree. So, questions like what are those restrictions, barriers, and interferences, can be regarded as imposition of freedom or unfreedom on that particular agent. Third, is what it is that person who is free to do, or not to do.

It can be argued that this becoming is something, which is also inherently, related to the conception of liberty. Liberty cannot be understood merely, as 'freedom from' any interference, but also, it must include those constraints, restrictions, which set certain limits to freedom or unfreedom. Moreover, the individual acts upon and do something, while trying to become someone.

The liberty or the idea of freedom is a triadic relationship between the agent, conditions, and the agent, who are facing the conditions and becoming something. All these three things are interrelated. In that sense, it is not easy for anyone, to differentiate between negative and the positive liberty, as Isaiah Berlin has argued in his work.

(Refer Slide Time: 49:09)

Isaiah Berlin and Kant: A Comparison

- The main difference between Kant and Isaiah Berlin is the fact that Berlin emphasized on individuals being a free agent and the conditions that make an individual a free agent, whereas, Kant focused on the intrinsic relationship that exist between morality or moral law and with application of reason or reasoning capacity that makes an individual free person and allows him/her to exercise freedom in the true sense.
- Berlin criticized the rationalist thinkers like Kant, Locke and Rousseau. He pointed out that rationality or reason is incompatible with the notion of freedom or liberty. He thus, rejected the view that a moral higher self can dictate over the lower empirical self of human beings. Berlin called such moral or 'rational laws' as fictitious in nature.
- Kant believed that universal moral law is necessary to be a free person as we have discussed while explaining the term used by Kant 'Categorical Imperative'. But for Berlin, freedom is more about freedom from constraints that leave the individuals to do what they think are fit for them to do.

If we make a comparison between Isaiah Berlin and Kant, the main difference between Kant and Isaiah Berlin to be found is the fact that Berlin emphasized on individuals being as free agent, and the conditions that make an individual a free agent. That means, 'freedom from', whereas, Kant focused on the intrinsic relationship that exist between morality or moral laws, and with application of reason or reasoning capacity that makes an individual free person, and allows him or her to exercise freedom in true sense. For Kant, freedom or the idea of freedom and realization of freedom is not something, which is good in itself, or it has a value in itself. It must have connection between autonomy, morality, and humanity.

Those conditions ensure the true realization of freedom in Kant and not merely, explain the conditions of freedom as Berlin has argued. Berlin, criticized many rationalists including Kant, Locke and Rousseau. He pointed out, rationality or reason is incompatible with the notion of freedom. Because in his conception of freedom, freedom means those areas which are free from restrictions or from outside interferences.

He rejected the view that a moral higher-self can dictate over the lower empirical self of human-being. Berlin, called such moral or 'rational laws' as fictitious in nature. It does not exist simply, and if it is, then the chance of manipulation by the totalitarian and authoritarian regime is always there. Therefore, Berlin was very suspicious of this higher order, self or moral assumptions.

Kant believed that the universal moral law is necessary, to be a free person, as we have discussed, while explaining the term used by Kant as categorical imperative. For Berlin, freedom is more about freedom from constraints that leave the individuals to do, what they think fit for them to do.

(Refer Slide Time: 51:22)

➤ Kant can be regarded as a thinker representing positive liberty, as his concept of freedom or liberty focused on self-government of human being, that is, an individual is free to act from laws or more specifically, moral laws that an individual give to himself/herself. These laws are not imposed by any other external forces. However, Kant, at the same time focused on the application of reason or rational faculty that makes person to think and act freely as one wishes without any constraints or restrictions or external interferences. Whereas, Berlin is more in favor of negative freedom.

Conclusion

➤ Liberty is a normative concept and therefore it is open to multiple interpretations. However, what makes the liberty or freedom a central concern is its constitutive element. It 'permits' the individual and collectives to develop itself without coercion or external interferences. And hence, to be considered or regarded as free certain conditions must be met. But that in itself is not sufficient unless once also 'act' or 'will' to act upon those conditions of freedom.

➤ In other words freedom is not merely about an opportunity to be 'left' free but it also must include the elements of acting upon those opportunities of freedom to realize one self.

10

Kant can be regarded as a thinker representing whatever we have discussed as the positive liberty. It means 'freedom to be'. So, the freedom is to be realized or exercised by a free rational agent by acting upon certain principles, and not merely, the conditions of freedom that Berlin talks about

As his concepts of freedom or liberty focused on self-government of human being that is, an individual is free to act from laws or more specifically, moral laws that an individual give to himself or herself. Thus, the self-legislation is a part of the law and it is very crucial for Kantian conception of freedom. These laws are not imposed by any other external forces.

However, Kant at the same time, focused on the application of reason or rational faculty that makes person to think and act freely, as one wishes without any constraints or restrictions or external interferences. In this Kantian conception, freedom, autonomy, morality, and a rational free agent is very much interconnected in the realization of a true freedom and not merely, the negative freedom as we have seen in Berlin.

To conclude, this lecture on Kantian notion of 'freedom as autonomy' and Isaiah Berlin's differentiation between negative and positive liberty, we must understand that being a normative concept, liberty is also, open to multiple interpretations. Sometimes, very opposite kinds of interpretations are seen on the concept of freedom or liberty. However, what makes liberty or freedom as a central concern is its constitutive element.

Freedom is not merely, a condition, but it has some elements which constitutes the individual, the individual society and that makes freedom more desirable than anything else.

The individual society can do something, only when individual and society is free to do that thing. Now, to be free and to ensure what freedom is always, something value loaded and normative. Therefore, it is subjected to multiple interpretations. Some of this, we have seen as part of it. We will discuss about it, when we will discuss the idea of hate speech and free speech.

The constituting elements permit the individual and collectives to develop, itself without coercion or external interferences. Hence, to be considered or regarded as free, certain conditions must be made. But that itself is not sufficient, unless one also, act or will to act upon those conditions of freedom.

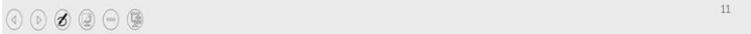
Thus, freedom makes sense, when individual and collective body tries to become something and it has the will to do or become something, which is equally important than conditions of freedom. So, one is free to do something, is not sufficient in itself. One must also act upon conditions of freedom to become something, and that is the constitutive element of freedom, which must be also taken into account. In other words, freedom is not merely, about an opportunity to be left free, but it also, must include the elements of acting upon those opportunities of freedom to realize oneself. Whether it is individual and collective, they must act upon those conditions of freedom.

Then, freedom helps in constituting the self, to realization or self-realization of individual or collective selves, and that makes the concept of freedom or liberty, a central concept in the political discourse.

(Refer Slide Time: 55:44)

References

1. Kant, Immanuel (2002). *Groundworks of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Ed. Tms. Allan W. Wood. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
2. Berlin, Isaiah (1969). 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in his *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. MacCallum, Gerald C. (1967). Negative and Positive Freedom, *The Philosophical Review*, Volume 76, Issue 3 (Jul., 1967), 312-334
4. Barry, Norman. P. (1989). *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Bhargava Rajeev and Ashok Acharya (2008). *Political Theory: An Introduction*. Delhi: Pearson Longman.
6. Hoffman, John and Paul Graham. (eds.) (2015). *Introduction to Political Theory*. New York: Routledge
7. McKinnon, Catriona (2012). *Issues In Political Theory (Second Edition)*. United Kingdom, Oxford University Press.



What we have discussed in this course, you can refer to some of the following books. Immanuel Kant's *Ground Works of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Isaiah Berlin's 'Two Concepts of Liberty' from his *Four Essays on Liberty*. And Gerald MacCallum's *Negative and Positive Freedom*, you must read to understand the critic on Isaiah Berlin.

Some of the other books which we have been referring to belong to the authors like Norman Barry, Bhargav, and Acharya, and Hoffman and Graham. These are the books which you should refer to understand these concepts and also, Catriona Mckinnon's *Issues in Political Theory*. Thus, these are some of the texts, which you can refer to understand 'freedom as autonomy' and the concepts of negative and positive liberty, as we have discussed today.

That is all for today's lecture. Let us know, what you think about the lecture. Write your comments and queries. We will be happy to respond.

Thank you for listening.